

THE OTHER HARMONY

A SELECTION FROM THE WRITINGS AND SPEECHES

OF

The Right Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI,

P.C., C.H., LL.D., D.LITT.

Edited by

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PREFACE

Here is a little volume of selections from the writings and speeches of the Right Honourable Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. It seeks to represent the best of Mr. Sastri's thought and style.

Mr. Sastri is one of the choice and master spirits of our age. A conspicuous and venerated figure in our own country, he is in many parts of the world regarded as a philosopher-statesman, comparable in his command of experience and learning to Balfour, Haldane, Morley and Asquith. But to us, Mr. Sastri possesses much more than the poise and versatility of a scholar-statesman. He is a fine flower of our culture and mirrors in himself the great tradition, the profound culture, the deep serenity and the unselfconscious dignity of India. Like Mahatma Gandhi, he has brought to politics the highest moral virtues. A politician for the greater part of his life, he has always risen above the limitations of a political career. His life is one long record of magnanimity in politics and has its unique lesson for the young.

Dryden's phrase "the other harmony of prose" is well-known. It indicates the true quality of great prose which enraptures the soul and delights the ear. Mr. Sastri's prose is of this quality,—an easily-maintained elevation of thought and a never-failing harmony in style being its most arresting characteristics. Mr. Sastri's style is that of one who ever seeks peace and harmony and avoids crudity and

strife. It is the style of one who in obloquy and praise has practised for years the virtues of *satya* and *kshama*, and has striven, in the heat of debate and the energy of propaganda, to maintain a sense of fairness, proportion and balance. It is given only to a few to achieve intellectual and moral greatness like Mr. Sastri's and to embalm that greatness in splendid prose.

Mylapore, Madras. }
26th August 1945. }

T. N. J.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I am indebted to Messrs. G.A. Natesan & Co. for permission given to me for including Sastriar's "Books That Have Influenced Me".

Madras }
10th January, 1949 }

PUBLISHER

A CONFESSION OF FAITH* (1940)

Of Brahmana parentage in the Tanjore district, I was born in poverty, but inherited a good brain. My parents pinched themselves hard to keep me at school and college. My father was of the priestly class; but, having no regular clientele, had to forage far and near for a bare subsistence. My mother, born in a secular family, was proud by nature and, as soon as I could understand, used to confide to me her humiliation at the privations which he endured and the insults which he submitted to from the well-to-do. She had a melancholy and pious disposition and, by unwearied resort to street expositions of scripture, garnered a vast deal of mythological lore. She found in me an eager listener. I remember my father often saying to me: 'Go in and ask that shrew, she knows more than I.' Pushed before my time into the dark mysteries of sin, hell's torments and the malignancies of devils, I heard with trembling a course in *Seshadharmā*, where the author sets out a fully elaborated table of man's transgressions of the eternal law and the punishment for each transgression. To drive home these lessons, I was taken to a temple on the walls of which were depicted in lurid colours the scenes of hell with sinners undergoing tortures calculated to make the spectator's flesh creep. The horror of the pictures has not yet wholly faded out of my mind. At seventy-one the night still has fears for me. For several years while in the forms of the high school, I scarcely slept without a prolonged nightmare in which

* From the *Indian Review*.

horrid goblins danced weird dances and made faces at me. Relief would come only in the morning when I woke with my young body perspiring and unrefreshed. Life, however, is not without compensations. Some dreams, not many alas, were comforting and reassured me. One in particular gave me an ecstasy of religious satisfaction so much so that I did not expect a sympathetic hearing from any one and would not share it even with my mother. It goes on record now for the first time. As I lay asleep praying in a boy's way for salvation the sky was suffused with a soft glow, out of which the eye glimpsed parts of a divine figure, filling the firmament, recumbent, face earthward. The outline filled in quickly, the light became brighter, and the form of Maha Vishnu, with majestic beauty, disclosed itself to my enraptured vision. He lay head north and feet south. To the right and left were ranged gods and goddesses and *munis* familiar in our story. At the same time the splendour of the great one increased beyond description. But, I knew not how, my eye, more fortunate than Arjuna's, could gaze and adore and not be blinded. At the culmination the effulgence seemed, as I recollected the trance in later years, to admit of only one description, if description it may be called. Let the reader turn to the twelfth sloka in the *Gita* chapter of the All-comprehending Form. 'If a thousand suns could be conceived to blaze together in the sky, the united brilliance might approach the resplendence of the Supreme.'

Though brought up on inadequate nutriment, I was a strong boy and spent many hours out of doors,

mingling in the street and river-bed sports and excelling in several of them. By this means the gloom of my inner life was held in check, and I grew up a healthy though delicate lad, maintaining a balance between seriousness and self-indulgence. In my teens, owing to the acquisition of a modern outlook, my mother's influence waned. Taken all together I was a favourable specimen of the early products of English education. I lost faith in the accustomed rituals and ceremonies. Religious thought, however, was sustained by an indefeasible longing for salvation. The personality of Jesus Christ fascinated me. But my peace of mind was shattered. Life's integrity could not continue in the growing dichotomy between belief and practice. This phenomenon is common in all educated communities, but at that time was stigmatized as a peculiar curse of new India. Gradually I was attracted to the experimental school of philosophy, which I blended in a manner peculiar to myself with the pessimism of Buddhistic teaching. Life took on a sombre hue. Moral judgements stiffened to the point of severity. Pleasure and laughter seemed illegitimate and were always dogged with remorse. Speech too was an indulgence next door to sin and must be limited to necessity. The doctrine of Karma held me in the grip of its logic. I was a determinist and had no doubt whatever that free will was a delusion and a snare. *Samsara* could be transcended only by a rigidly practised contraction of activity ending in its complete annihilation. The *Gita* precept of action without attachment came later, and though I have welcomed it with open arms, has not succeeded

in establishing itself as a guide to practical conduct. Works are idle without efficiency; efficiency is, at the present stage of man's evolution, dependent on combination, perseverance and zeal; these seem hardly possible without careful calculation from time to time of the result of effort. Is all this attainable without *Sanga*? I would fain believe it is, but reason forbids. My heart revels with ineffable rapture in the last eight verses of the *Bhakti* chapter. Their melodious rhetoric haunts me. Their lofty idealism penetrates my soul through and through. I do not believe that, as a compendious code of ethic, it can be paralleled in the world's literature. When, however, I try to get hold of the various precepts, they fly heavenward and leave me disconsolate and prostrate. So I shift, like a drifting log, between resolution and paralysis of will, between hope and blank despair. The struggle between the head and the heart, described with self-revelatory pathos in religious writing, rages perpetually within me. It is only my lifelong practice of self-control that cloaks the gnawings of my inmost being behind a bland expression of face.

T. H. Huxley, J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer emptied my mind of its slight doctrinal equipment. Many agnostics attain a tranquillity of spirit which I envy. I am hagridden by the idea of nothing after death. I long in my inmost being for some experience, some revelation, some authentic sign to bring the consolations of religion within my reach. George Eliot somewhere portrays the content and the certainty of the uncultivated mind and asks whether it is not a blessing when compared to the

desolation that is created in our heart by the wisdom of science and philosophy. Negation has unspeakable terrors for the likes of me. There are moments, let me confess, when I should answer in the affirmative the rhetorical question of the philosopher, 'Will you prefer the contentment of the pig in his sty to the agitation and turmoil of the inquiring mind?' But a wise poet has said that there is more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds. To believe what is not proven to one's satisfaction is to abdicate the sovereign quality of our kind—reason.

The years have wrought a slight change in me. It is perhaps unusual. Instead of hardening, my nature has softened a little. Travel in lands where they make more of life than we do in India has tinged the austerity of my youth with hedonism. Introversion has lost a little ground, and extroversion has gained it. Laughter and enjoyment are no longer taboo. I don't judge my brethren nearly so harshly as before. Charity, the greatest of the great things of life, informs my thought and deed more than ever. Action, not inaction, is my principle now, alas, too late. I try, following the *Gita* up to a point, not to be excessively elated by success or cast down by defeat. Moderation is still to me the silken string that runs through all the virtues. I would print in large capitals the sixteenth sloka of the sixth chapter of the *Gita*, in which the aspirant to yoga is enjoined to shun over-eating and fasting, over-sleeping and vigil alike. Bacon too in his worldly wisdom was a lover of the golden mean. From a boy slogans and panaceas have left me cold.

Only the highways of philosophy for me. *Swamis* and yogis, givers of the sacred ash and whisperers of miracle-working mantras, have never allured me. The new and shortlived *isms* that infest this fair home of genuine speculation and philosophy and promise us shortcuts to salvation have passed by without quickening my spiritual pulse. I cannot sign away my judgement in any sphere to another, however great and worthy.

MY FIRST MEETING WITH GOKHALE* (1925)

It happened in the Easter of 1906. Gokhale had summoned me for a personal interview in connection with my application for membership of the Servants of India Society. He then lived in Shanwarpet, Poona, in the house now called, after its owner, Gandhi-wada. I think I stayed four days as his guest. Messrs. Dravid and Barve took charge of me. Though they were all attention, he would make frequent enquiries as to how I was getting on, so that I felt now and then I was taking away his mind from more important subjects. My Madras habit of taking coffee in the morning instead of tea was, I am afraid, a source of trouble; for to this day the Deccani cook of either sex has not learnt how to prepare this beverage without a touch of cardamom and a week's allowance of sugar. After a trial or two I professed a partiality for tea, but my host discovered the real origin of my new taste and fretted himself and asked Dravid several times what good it was his being a Madrassi if he could not make good enough coffee. Would he at least arrange for a conveyance and drive me to the railway station where I could have my fill of as black coffee as I cared for. Another Madrassi friend came in likewise of Gokhale's banter. It was a medical man whom they called Dr. Iyengar. His name was Ramaswami; he was Gokhale's intimate friend at the time and came nearly every day to dinner. He had nearly forgotten his Tamil and spoke it with great deliberation, with many drawls and pauses, much like

* From the *Servant of India*.

a foreigner learning his first lessons. For reasons not hard to imagine Tamil is in special disfavour among those not born to it, and Gokhale shared to the full the prejudice of the scoffing world. He used to say it consisted only of consonants, chiefly guttural. So poor Iyengar and I had to perform our duets in clicks and dissonances, while he called all the establishment to hear our performance. He would himself laugh aloud and clap his hands in sheer childlike enjoyment. In fact he never lost this faculty of simple pleasure and used, whenever he was tickled, to strike the table or bench where he sat with one hand if the other was not free. My partner did his best, but I soon tired of the game and denounced him. I do not know where he is now. The last I heard was that he was lecturing on Indian philosophy in America and had sent Gokhale a nice volume containing his discourses. My food too distressed the Poona household exceedingly, though even in those untravelled days of mine my palate had much adaptability and I would not have famished in any part of India. Of the Madras dishes the best known and most widely appreciated outside the peninsula is the *sar*, which Gokhale, to show off his knowledge of Tamil, always called *saram*. After Gopal, his cook even then, had essayed it unsuccessfully once or twice, I was transferred for a meal to the house of Dravid, whose former wife was a Madrassi and was supposed, therefore, to be good at South Indian dishes. She was, however, a perfect stranger to them, and after an evening of great cordiality and vain attempts to remember Tamil expressions deep down in the family

consciousness, I returned to the *Chappati and Ambti*.

I remember a warm debate over names. Gokhale did not approve of the Madras style of calling each man by his proper name; he could not understand why the Dravidian folk seemed to disown their families, while the rest of the world were proud to designate themselves by their family titles. I tried to have my laugh at what I stigmatized as an imitation from the West. In this, however, I was mistaken so far as the Deccan was concerned, for in the Mahratta chronicles people are known by their family names, Gokhale itself occurring with a fair degree of frequency. Even now I cannot think, why when a man is asked his name, he must mention that of some unknown ancestor or obscure village and keep his own for a small circle of familiar friends and relations. But to my discomfiture I find the younger generation of Madras sometimes abandoning the dear old sensible style. It tries your temper to read M. L. Kshirasagar on a visitor's card, and, when you have buttoned up your coat and put on the turban for a great interview, to find your old pupil, Madhava Rao, walking in with a timid step and asking with a familiar smile, "Don't you remember me, Sir?" Will anybody tell me why Subramanya Iyer should conceal his identity under the name of Karpur? I confess I am not fully reconciled to Mr. Natarajan's son being also a Natarajan.* That day, however, the odds were against me. Natesa Dikshita, who ought to have

*K. Natarajan, the editor of *The Indian Social Reformer*, whose sons and daughters are also Natarajans.

stood by me for the honour of Madras, had already joined the undistinguished crowd of *Dravids*,* and Dr. Ramaswami Iyengar put his provincial pride into his pocket and capitulated.

One of the men I met during this visit was Mr. Visvesvarayya, who had not been knighted and who, by the way, in spite of his irreproachable modernity, has not chosen to call himself Mokshagundam. He was then in charge of a water works scheme for Poona and came to see Gokhale who was President of the Municipality. After he left, Gokhale spoke of him in high terms and added, surveying me up and down with compassionate disapproval, "You see, how correctly he is dressed; he is equally precise in his work and in his engagements. If I had such men to deal with in all my business, I could wish for nothing better." My inclination after this was to keep at a respectful distance from him; but what was my surprise when, on Gokhale taking me to the Hira Bagh Club and leaving me in the hands of Mr. Visvesvarayya, he actually took me round the place and presented me to his friends just as he would have presented any respectable visitor! I have met him several times since then and every time I have thought of Gokhale also, to whom, in spite of striking superficial differences, he bore a deep similarity in scrupulous observance of the courtesies of social life, in strict regard for duty, in catholic outlook and in passion for work.

In seeking admission to the Society which he had founded the previous year, I was doubtless

* 'Dravid' means 'one from the south',

moved as much by admiration of his public work and character as by the ideals which underlay its constitution. One does not like to write with fulness or freedom on what is cherished reverently in one's inmost heart. Among the minor traits of character which then impressed themselves on my mind, I should like to mention, besides the faculty of childlike pleasure already noted, an earnestness in talk which held you in thrall and an eagerness of look which seemed anxious to carry you along. His ideals quickly possessed you, you found yourself overwhelmed by his ardour. He conducted me over the site that he had selected for the Society, mostly jungle and rock at the time; he roughly sketched his building plan; then he showed me, high on the neighbouring ridge, the spot where he had sworn in the first members—Dravid, Devadhar and Patwardhan. All the time some subtle element in his personality filled me with the conviction that Poona was the proper ground for all selfless work, that the Society was the first chosen instrument for the uplift of the motherland and that he was the leader best fitted to allure the youth of India to brighter worlds. I felt the answering glow in me, but what with my inexpressive face, what with the sudden paralysis that overtook my tongue, he might have thought me a mere clod of earth. The words were miles away when I needed them most.

Another time too during this visit they played me a trick, but of a different sort. The moon was shining bright and we stepped out into the open space in front and occupied the seats which had been thoughtfully placed there. Gokhale had wound

himself fully up on the subject of Poona and her primacy among the cities of India. Had not his master, Ranade, called her the metropolis of India and Bombay her suburb? Was she not the *Punya Bhumi* on which he had performed the continuous sacrifice of a life filled with pure thought and noble purpose? Then he touched on the Deccan Education Society and Karve's magnificent work and went on to recall the glory of the Peshwas, uniformly obscured in the history of India as written by Englishmen. As if to clinch the whole matter he looked up at this point and burst out, "Did you ever see a sky like this? Poona alone can boast of it." I had followed him in his flight with glad and wondering spirit, but somehow my wing broke just then. A sudden impulse to contradict seized me. I was not going to be enslaved. Was I not a pedagogue, commissioned to curb the wanderings of fancy and prune all extravagances of thought and expression? So I said half protestingly, "I have seen such clear nights in Madras as well." He turned to look at me and then it occurred to me that I must further elucidate the truth of my remark and add something inane about the serene sky of tropical regions. The spell broke and the magician became dumb.

I am sure Gokhale forgave me, but I haven't yet.

One day when we were alone he asked whether I would mind a little personal talk. Of course I said how greedy I was for it. "Quite sure?" he demanded by way of fixing me absolutely. Then he referred to a little comment I had made in a

biographical article about him in the *Indian Review*. After narrating the incident that led up to his apology to the Government of Bombay and the European soldiery employed in the plague operations of Poona, I had deprecated the rancour of public criticism of him at the time and summed up by stating that the episode was an instance where public opinion was more in the wrong than the unfortunate victim of it. The grammatical implication that the unfortunate victim was also in the wrong hurt him deeply. He was anxious he said, that I should understand the matter in its full bearing on the proprieties of public life. He had not made the apology without consulting the best and wisest men of the time. It behoved a critic of other men's conduct to hold their honour as his own. When one had aspersed another's character in public and found himself unable to substantiate the charges, the proper course was to own up manfully. To leave a sting behind in the apology was neither righteous nor sportsmanlike. I felt edified and expressed my gratitude. A feeling of relief seemed to come over him as he said 'I don't as a rule talk to people on this subject and I promise not again to refer to it in our conversation.' And he kept his word to the end.

*The passage in the *Indian Review* ran: "By dint of quiet, unsparing exertions he not only recovered the lost ground, but soon made fresh conquests, until now most people regret the rancour of their former criticism, and the unfortunate episode is remembered as a proof not so much of Mr. Gokhale's weakness as of the hasty judgement of the public."

THE STORY OF MY ADMISSION* (1926)

Twenty years ago I was a happy man. My health was excellent. The blessing of domestic love I had in abundance. In the school where I taught I had won the attachment of my pupils and the confidence and respect of my colleagues. In the middle of 1905, however, my contentment was upset by a small pamphlet marked "confidential", which Mr. G. A. Natesan sent me. It was the Prospectus and Rules of the Servants of India Society, which had been just started. The language and sentiments, no less than the ideals set forth in it, made a special appeal to me. When noble thoughts are united to noble words, they have a way of seeming to simple minds as their own. Again and again I would ask myself, have I not been reaching out for something like this, though I could never have given it clear expression? So I took a copy of the pamphlet when I went to Benares in the December of that year to attend the Indian National Congress. My companions were Professors Ramanathan and Lakshminarasu of Pachaiyappa's College, with whom I had a great deal in common and whose judgment I had learned to trust. To Mr. Ramanathan I had always looked up for advice in difficult matters. He closely approaches the ideal of dispassion and impartiality which we associate with the true scholar. He is the last person to disavow his responsibility, but he has never abetted me in any evil, while he has aided me in much good. They both read the pamphlet, praised it warmly

* From the *Hindu Annual*, 1926.

and said what a fine thing it would be if Madras could send a fit member to the Servants of India Society. I did not declare my intention to them, but felt that it had stiffened into a resolution. During the Congress session I wrote my application. The important passage ran:

"I am a schoolmaster in Triplicane with about 17 years' service. I graduated B.A. in 1888 and am now 37 years old. My age, I fear, may be against me, as I may not have many years more to give to the service of my country. Nor have I the confidence that I can do very much in the few years that lie before me. Such as I am, however, I offer myself and hope to be accepted. I don't write this letter under an impulse of the moment; but the idea has been long in my mind, and it was for this purpose chiefly that I made up my mind to come here as delegate."

Within a few days of returning to Madras I asked for the good offices of Mr. V. Krishnaswami Aiyar, who wrote to his friend Mr. Gokhale, "A friend of mine, a man of deep earnestness, high character and marked ability, author of your life in Natesan's *Indian Review*, offers himself for enrolment among your Servants of India. It seems he wrote to you while at Benares and has had no reply. I can confidently recommend him, for he is sure to prove one of your trusted lieutenants." In the second week of February, I received a letter from Mr. Gokhale. A good half of it was devoted to explaining the delay in acknowledging my application. This, I discovered later, was habitual with him. He invited me to go to Poona and stay with

him a few days so that I might learn the nature and full consequences of the step that I proposed to take. Accordingly I went in the first week of March. Of this visit I have once before given an account. Suffice it to say now that Gokhale made an easy conquest, and I promised definitely to join the Society. The following note was made at the time by Mr. Dravid:

“Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, Headmaster of the Hindu High School, Madras, had come here to see our First Member and I am glad to announce that he has finally given his word to join us in the month of September, when our First Member returns from England. As we are at present constituted, I think we may well congratulate ourselves on the new recruit we have secured to our ranks.”

In the event, the Managers of my school would not let me leave in the middle of a term, and I had to postpone my resignation till the end of the year. From my experience of these months, I would not advise any one to remain long in the status of “mortgaged member”, to use Mr. Dravid’s expressive phrase. Friends and relations know that time is a valuable ally in the work of wearing your resolution away, and without at any moment betraying an anxiety to bring the matter to an issue, quietly take it for granted in a hundred ways that you cannot be serious as to the contemplated change and that you are not going to be such a heartless person as to frustrate the expectations uniformly entertained on all sides. It was from students that I got some approbation, but it was

mostly of the silent kind. One political leader wondered why, while he and others were at hand, I should go to Poona for guidance in public matters. Another reminded me that 37 was not the age prescribed in our books for becoming a *vanaprastha*. A third admonished me that one who left a large family unprovided for was not likely to do much good to the community. "Was not teaching noble enough service to the public?" asked another and went on to point out that my salary was so small in proportion to my ability as to make it a self-sacrifice, if that was the glory I sought, to continue in the teaching profession. Others drew the future in the sombre colours of uncertainty and probable failure and even danger. I cannot remember that I received active sympathy or positive incitement from any friend. If some applauded my action, they took care not to let me know of it. My friend Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyar was in this class. The story that it was on his persuasion that I changed from schoolmaster to Servant of India is entirely baseless. Long afterwards he told me of altercations with his wife during which she had blamed him for bidding others do that which he was unwilling to do himself. When she desired him to use his influence and save me for my family, he said in self-defence, "It is more than I can do. It is hard enough, when a noble deed is done, not to cry *shabash*; to try to dissuade the doer is a crime of which I will not be guilty". Some one started the fable that, when Mr. Gokhale's call came, I was slow to respond on account of my poverty, and that, to overcome my scruples, Mr. Krishnaswami

Aiyar paid me a sum of ten thousand rupees. In the then state of Madras the fable gained some currency. If it was denied and denounced with earnestness, the calumniator was not silenced, he only said, "Wait and see. Mr. K.'s will contains a provision to that effect." He had been dead ten years when this yarn was revived and published in the press on the eve of my departure to London for the Imperial Conference of 1921. If a prompt repudiation could have established the truth, it should not have proceeded from me or from any one intimately connected with me. At this distance of time I confess to a feeling of mild surprise and sorrow that so many should have been willing to credit a story so obviously meant to besmirch a fraternity of three men, one of whom was ready to sell himself, another to buy him up, and the third to take unto his bosom an article so sold and bought.

I am proud to say that my mother and my wife made no scenes and took the separation in a resigned spirit. They knew that my resolve was fixed and had no hope of breaking it. The worst they feared was that I was going to become a sort of ascetic and renounce all association with the family. To satisfy them that such was not the case I undertook to take my wife to Poona and live with her there. This softened the edge of their grief. The farewell demonstration in the school was touching in the extreme. I was moved as I never had been before, and for a moment doubted the wisdom of forsaking the pupils and friends whose love was so deep and so unaffected. I faltered in my speech and can now

recall only two circumstances vividly. Referring to the unfavourable criticism which had been made in certain quarters of my action, I described my supposed malady as a hypertrophy of the patriotic conscience. At this an influential editor in the audience nodded significantly, as if to say, "Exactly, them's my sentiments." That threw me out completely, and it was after much hesitation that I picked myself up again. I then alluded to the novelty of political *sanyas* and the trials and tribulations which it might bring. Against these my only shield was my faith in the righteousness of the cause. Here I quoted the famous verse from Valmiki in which Kausalya pronounces a parting benediction on her son:

"Yam palayasi dharmam tvam dhritya cha
niyamena cha
Sa vai Raghava sardula dharma stvam abhi-
rakshatu"

(Let *dharma* keep thee from harm, the same *dharma* that thou followest with such steadfastness and self-denial.)

Many are the occasions since then on which I have invoked this sloka for the comfort of my soul. When the world fails and doubt lays siege to the heart, there is nothing for it but to fall back on your conscience, if you have been true to it.

Mr. Gokhale desired me to attend the famous Dadabhai Naoroji Congress of Calcutta in December 1906. I wrote back, "I shall certainly attend the next session of Congress . . . if only to look on our G.O.M. It would be the greatest misfortune of one's life to have missed a sight of him when he was so near." I

not only saw and heard him in Congress, but had the exceeding good fortune of being presented by Gokhale to him along with others as belonging to the Servants of India Society. This was immediately after the close of the Congress, but it was not till the 15th of January of the new year that I was actually admitted member. The place was the upper storey of a house in Rowland Road, Ballygunge, and the time early morning. I had been enjoined to bathe and not to break my fast till the ceremony was over. I remember being in a highly chastened mood, although there had been no vigil or prayer the preceding night. Gokhale's deportment was solemn and inspired me with something like awe. As I pronounced the phrases of each vow after him, I was seized with terrible misgiving as to my being able to keep them in a tolerable degree. But the trial was quickly over. Next day I started on my travels in East Bengal, which was then only beginning to recover from the effects of the first partition agitation. The political interest, profound as it was, did not affect my young and untravelled heart so much as the varied charms of that fascinating country. I long to revisit those scenes again. Who could forget the warm welcome and the hot food of Bengali homes, the broad and limitless waters of the Podda so liable to heavy mists, the sweet and attractive personality of Asvini Kumar Dutt, who had not yet ceased to be the 'king' of Barisal, the undulating streets and glorious sunsets of Chittagong, the buxom beauty of Manipuri women who sang and danced even as the *gopis* of Vraja did to the magic flute of Sri Krishna, the

odoriferous gardens of Tejpur and the seven holy lakes where lovely Usha laved of old, and the romantic traditions that hang like gossamer over the Hill of the Weary Horse across the Brahmaputra near Gauhati?

RANADE*

Speaking once about Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ranade expressed the view that in the case of gods and saints or *rishis* we celebrate their birthdays, while in the case of men we celebrate the anniversaries of their death. He proceeded to justify this distinction on the ground that men's greatness is not fully proven until the last moment. The time of passing away therefore acquires supreme significance and needs commemoration. Till last year the anniversary of Ranade's death was celebrated in Maharashtra. This year, when the day came round, you decided to let it pass in order that two days later you may celebrate the centenary of his birth with solemnity. By this change Ranade takes rank hereafter with Sankara, Ramanuja and teachers of like calibre, whom popular acclaim has enrolled among those to whom *Jayanthis* are appropriate but not *Sraddhas*. This elevation to sanctity of a dead person is attended in the Roman Catholic Church with formalities calculated to examine and publish the grounds on which it is based. The world is thus furnished with the credentials of the new saint. The proposal is registered before a Congregation of Cardinals, and in the manner of judges trying an important suit, they proceed to hear arguments on both sides. The objections to the proposal are first stated by an officer called *Advocatus Diaboli* or Devil's Advocate, who tries to make out that the person on whose behalf the honours of

* Address delivered on January 18, 1942, at Bombay on the occasion of the centenary of Ranade's birthday.

sainthood are solicited is not worthy of them. The Congregation of Rites next hears the *Advocatus Dei* or God's Advocate, who answers the objections and maintains that the proposed elevation or canonization, as it is called, is fully deserved by the character and pious acts of the candidate, if a dead person can be so called. Ranade's life has been scrutinized over and over again these forty years. Its lights and shadows are known to the last point of minuteness. No fresh evidence or consideration need be waited for. The public, though not assembled in solemn congregation or invested with Papal authority, may well proceed to affirm that Ranade will be gathered unto the brotherhood of saints and prophets of Maharashtra, whose names and deeds he has made immortal. Shall we at this gathering imagine ourselves clothed for a brief hour with the dignity of a Court of Cardinals? Application having been made to Our Eminences that henceforth the 18th of January every year be consecrated as a day of Ranade *Jayanthi*, let us give audience now to the opposing pleader. There he stands in his sable gown, with voice and accent befitting its dignity and betraying no premonition of coming defeat.

"The man whom your Eminences are requested to canonize is no ordinary man. I am not concerned to deny him some good qualities and some good deeds. It is enough for my purpose to show that his character is disfigured by some serious defects and that certain of his deeds fall short greatly of the standard that should be reached by a brave and unselfish servant of God. For many years he advocated the remarriage of girl widows in his commu-

nity; but when his wife died and he had an opportunity of acting up to his precept, he took a maid of tender years and sheltered himself behind the command of his father. Having taken tea at the table of European missionaries along with other Hindu reformers, he bowed his head to orthodoxy and underwent *prayascitta* or penance, leaving his companions in the lurch. Professing to hate idolatry, he would visit temples and discourse to casual crowds on the comparatively refined theism of which he was an avowed adherent, thus proving himself a latitudinarian. He had the dirty habit of taking snuff and was, besides, so shabbily dressed that he shocked European observers by the frayed shirt that peeped through his sleeves and the shortness of his trousers. Though endowed with a fine physique, he never kept it up to the mark by regular exercise, but allowed his health to deteriorate; and, as he at the same time worked hard and incessantly, he is believed to have shortened his life. He presented to friends and visitors a stern and gloomy aspect and, being devoid of light or amusing talk, was by no means a pleasant companion. Even at dinner he would start serious topics and ply his guests with hard questions about social and economic conditions in their neighbourhood. While walking, he would fall into moods of meditation and take no note of his companions or surroundings. When he wished to be rid of an unwelcome visitor, he resorted to the harsh expedient of setting him a literary task, such as summarizing a dry Government report, and the unfortunate party could not appear again before him. These counts may appear

slight in an indictment on this occasion, but they are evidences of an unsociable temper, which must have prevented Ranade from being a centre of cheerfulness and fellowship. In fact his sensibility seems to have been below par. Seldom moved to an outburst of anger even under provocation, of indulging in a fit of righteous or generous indignation, he seemed almost a pachyderm, and those that approached him scarcely felt the warmth of sympathy or intimate fellow-feeling. In his attitude to money he made no attempt to reach the ideal of indifference prescribed by the requirements of scripture, but he was known to measure his charities and gifts with excessive nicety of calculation. Another ethical precept too he practised with an odd inversion of emphasis; instead of remaining unaffected by praise or blame he would be impatient when praise was sounded in his ear, but greedily listen to blame, saying he must profit by it to the extent that it was just. An admiring friend once used this quaint phraseology in putting a favourable gloss on Ranade's inability to enter readily into the feelings of fellow-creatures: "He loved humanity at large, and men in units did not interest him so largely." How could a man with so many oddities and crudities win the affection of those around him? To be admitted into the blessed fraternity of saints one must have had more attractive qualities and more lively sympathies than Ranade ever had. If we added together the comfort he gave to widows and orphans, the sympathy and help he extended to suffering neighbours and the tendance he bestowed on the sick and the afflicted,

the sum would be small indeed, considering the opportunities and the facilities with which he had been liberally endowed."

* * *

"I now take the field as God's advocate. I am upheld by the overwhelming strength of my case.

My learned friend has made the most of a bad case. If this is all he can say, my task is easy. Ranade was not a perfect man. What man is perfect? If a man's nature were fully rounded and smooth, other people could scarcely get hold of him at any point, and every time they try to make contact with him they must turn back baffled, as from the touch of a freezing object. Don't we want our heroes to have a few human weaknesses to ensure our kinship to them? If they always did the right thing at the right time in the right way, we should suspect that they were not real, but creatures without blood belonging to the realm of pure fancy. Ranade, I admit without hesitation, had his foibles. I am surprised my learned friend did not mention to the Court that Ranade lost one of his eyes largely through excessive reading in insufficient light and was in later years afflicted with a slight deafness. He generously forbore all allusion to the nickname of Baby Elephant, which his unusual size and awkward bearing earned him among his fellow-students. In the early days he did not join freely in sports and games but was engrossed in his studies, which had an uncommon range and made him an object of awe and wonder. Once his principal, Sir Alexander Grant, caught him reading aloud from Alison's History of Europe, bareheaded and with legs

sprawled on the table before him. Ranade should certainly have disposed of his lower limbs in less barbarous fashion and otherwise also remembered that he was not in his own private place. But if Sir Alexander himself took no notice, why need we? Certain of the shortcomings ascribed to Ranade are only seemingly such, they are really good points for which he must be given credit. For instance, it takes a really big man to recognize that even a rustic has some knowledge and experience which might be of use to the student of village life and village economy, and Ranade was too big a man to miss an opportunity of learning something. Some play was made with his setting tasks to people in order to drive them away. Each one of us knows of one or two fussy friends who have nothing to do and just come into our working room for a chat and will take no hint that you would prefer to be alone. Ranade might make enquiries about the average rainfall of Mahabaleshwar, the number of girls' schools in the Thana district, how Sri Rama disposed of the thousand odd *astras* that he acquired in his travels, the arguments against the *laissez faire* theory brought forward by the German economists or the exact doctrinal differences between the various branches of the Brahmo Samaj. If the visitor had nothing to say on these subjects, what was Ranade to do but to take up the latest Government report on the Police Department and ask him to come back two days later with a summary under five heads? Each was sure of a long holiday from the other. It is true Ranade showed no mercy to his body and when people spoke of his habit of

industry he would say, "Habit! it has become a vice with me." We all wish he had known how to relax now and then, but surely unwillingness to lose even an hour of our brief waking life is not a sin deserving to be punished. He was accused of imperfect sympathy with the wants or sufferings of individuals. It may be true of him as of many others that he loved and cared for man rather than men, but we have Gokhale's unimpeachable testimony that he was by nature kind and sympathetic. Here are his words: "One more great quality of his I would like to mention on this occasion, and that was his readiness to help all who sought his help and especially those who were weak and oppressed. He was accessible to all—even the humblest—at all hours of the day. No one ever wrote to him without receiving a reply. He listened patiently to everyone, whether he was able to help him or not. This indeed was to him a part of his practical religion." If his heart were difficult to touch, how could it be said of him "There is not one man of whom our departed brother was ever heard or known to have said an unkind word?" He readily forgave, harboured no resentment and made no enemies, if he could help it. By his teachings from the pulpit of the Parthana Samaj and by his incessant social reform activities he incurred the open and unrestrained wrath of the orthodox party, but he was never known to lose his temper and return abuse for abuse. Even during the violent controversy of 1895 over the venue of the Social Reform Conference his forbearance and equanimity were exemplary. When he made his accustomed speech as President, he mentioned no

names, recalled no ugly incidents, avoided all personalities and ascribed the unfortunate turn of events to the fact that in Poona, unlike other places a variety of methods were adopted instead of one sole method. Of these different methods the one that he most approved was that of persuasion, and the one that he most discountenanced was that of rebellion. To many ardent spirits what they called progress was God's own work, and those that obstructed it were like *rakshasas* whom it was a merit to condemn and destroy. They delighted in war against orthodoxy and thought nothing of separating themselves and forming a distinct group of their own. Social affinities and family ties were consumed by the fire of conviction, and many a young man fancied that, by disregarding parental authority when he heard the call, he was testifying to the sovereign power of social reform. Ranade pointed out that the Brahma Samaj in Bengal and the Arya Samaj in the Punjab, which chose this heroic path, had come to a standstill when the first momentum was exhausted. His own method was to reason, to expostulate and to allure to brighter worlds. The movement would necessarily be slow, but it would be sure and carry forward the whole community. He never forgot, and would never let others forget, that reform was for all and not merely for a few. When compelled by adverse circumstances to halt, he was content to do so, hoping that the next step would be firmer and longer. At bottom Ranade's heart was gentle and peace-loving. His father was apparently a tyrant and made no attempt to understand Ranade's progressive spirit

or his zeal for reform. Occasionally he appears to have adopted questionable tactics to keep Ranade from moving forward. Ranade no doubt struggled and struggled hard, but would not break up his home and go his own way. Many of his friends lamented his failure as an apostasy. But enough has been said to convince those who can judge with charity that Ranade's principle of carrying the community along was the mainspring of his action, and not merely the fear of his father's extreme displeasure. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, who was close to Ranade in the work of reform, said of him: "The idea of displeasing anybody was too much for him, and he wanted all to unite and work together. He erred because his soul was gentle, his heart charitable." My learned friend on the other side adopted without reserve or qualification the verdict which the prejudice and passion of the time delivered against Ranade. I have not the hardihood to assert that Ranade was wholly right. But it is safe to assume that, where a complicated question of principle was involved, a man of the moral stature of Ranade struck the balance true and fair and did not allow mere expediency or cowardice to determine his conduct.

Ranade was cast in a big mould in body and in mind. He was a giant. His studies had amplitude and depth far beyond the common. History, politics, economics, blue books, Sanskrit literature and Marathi literature,—these and similar subjects made up his gargantuan fare. His knowledge and experience in the official and non-official sphere were at the service of a patriotism, fervent and sleepless,

which comprehended all the sections and elements of our population. Like a true *rishi* he had toleration and mercy for all and planned and laboured for all alike. His Marathi sermons are considered by competent judges to constitute a valuable and inspiring course in the doctrine and practice of theism. He rehabilitated the character of Sivaji and the empire that he founded. Of Indian economics he laid the ground-work, showing how the maxims and principles of English writers would not apply to the conditions of our country unless corrected in great part by the writings of German authorities on the subject. He took a leading part in the growth of the Indian Economic Conference, studied the conditions of agriculture and the peasantry in their various phases and became an unequalled authority on questions of land revenue, land tenure and land improvement. On Indian Finance his views commanded equal attention and equal respect with those of Dadabhai Naoroji. His close study of constitutional and administrative problems of India and other countries was laid under contribution by the organizers and leaders of the Indian National Congress, and it is well known that his advice and guidance were at the disposal of the Subjects Committee wherever it met year after year. The Indian Social Conference was founded by him in 1887, and at every subsequent meeting of that body during the next 13 years he presided and delivered addresses replete with wisdom, comprehension and insight. His mind was also devoted to problems of Indian education, and his membership of the University governing bodies was signalized by unremitting

efforts on behalf of the Marathi language and literature and of the health and longevity of Bombay graduates. In all departments of national endeavour and uplift he was a pioneer, and it would be the bare truth to say of him that he was the most considerable and influential among the builders of Modern India. He himself once enumerated the elements that go to the making of a great man—"earnestness of purpose, sincerity in action, originality, imagination and above all, the power of magnetism—we might call it vital or spiritual magnetism". These he possessed in rich measure. Add to them the achievements catalogued above, and you have a record of greatness so imposing that a teacher or *rishi* of old may be proud to call it his own. The name *rishi* was in his judgment so exalted in import that, when he desired to pay anyone the highest honour for character, he applied the name to him. More than once in his speeches we see Mr. N. M. Parmanand described as "our political *rishi*". Why, Ranade himself was deserving of the title in the eyes of many of his contemporaries. It was surely nothing uncommon in his life as well as afterwards for his admirers to speak of him as the modern *rishi*. A scene vividly comes to my mind when this happened in my hearing. Some time after I joined the Servants of India Society, Principal F. W. Bain lectured in the Small Hall of Poona, and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta took the chair for him. Mr. Bain, the crusted tory that he was, made some remark deprecatory of the general character of our people or of some particular movement of the time, I forget which. Sir Pherozeshah at the end of the

meeting castigated him in vigorous phrases and with emphatic gestures, which were greeted with rounds of applause. But the applause rang louder than ever when he cited for authority "the late Mr. G. Ranade, the modern *rishi*". The order of *rishis* exercised a powerful fascination over Ranade's mind. In the hierarchy of homage he would accord them the throne of eminence. In the address called *Vasishtha and Visvamitra*, the last in the great series (which Gokhale had to read for him in Lahore), the concluding passage is a paean to the glory of these semi-divine teachers and a devout wish that their line may be continued without end. It is my proud office to-day to plead that Ranade be admitted to this Holy Order and that this celebration be the first of a succession in future which will redound to the benefit of posterity as well as to the fame of the man who came into the world a hundred years ago to-day.

My task is not complete. I have yet to make out that, if our latest *Acharya* had wisdom pure and undefiled, he had also a tongue, eloquent and commanding, with which to proclaim it. There must be a good few here who have sat at his feet more than once and heard his discourses. That good fortune came to me only once. The scene was in Anderson Hall, Madras, and the time was an evening in December, 1898. A great crowd waited expectantly to hear Ranade on "Southern India a hundred years ago". We felt surprise without a touch of admiration, as a big figure moved forward with slow deliberate steps. As the lineaments became clear, a faint feeling of disappointment rose in our breasts,

but we kept it under as somewhat premature. But in a few seconds the figure pulled a kerchief, coloured as I remember, and applied it to the nose which was running and made strange noises. The opening words did nothing to reassure us, and as the handkerchief and the nose persisted in their joint activities, our spirits sank within us. Whispers of dissatisfaction and poutings of lips went round, but scarcely relieved our feelings. Soon, however, things seemed to change. One good remark caught our attention, we strained our ears. Lo, and behold! the handkerchief went back to the pocket, the voice gained distinctness, the sentiments captured our fancy, and as if by magic the face became bright with intelligence. Half a dozen sentences, and our eyes were fixed on the speaker. Thereafter, all through the speech he held us as in a spell. I thought I was listening to a superior being, all aglow with wisdom which seemed a part of him,—so easily, so naturally, so unostentatiously did it keep flowing into me. There was pindrop silence in the hall, I don't think the audience laughed or cheered once. If they did, I didn't hear it.

The published speeches have solidity and mental nutriment which are astonishing. One may go again and again to them with profit. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar's eulogy is not overdone. "Those weighty and eloquent annual addresses, wise with the wisdom of the heart, powerful with all the power of his great intellect, majestic with the majesty of his lofty and commanding personality." There is no art either in the sentences or in their grouping. You don't come across a light, humorous remark; no passing allusion

to the trivialities of thought or gossip. The nearest he comes to a joke is when he asks: "Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our caste indulged in all the abominations, as we now understand them, of animal food and drink which exhausted every section of our country's Zoology and Botany?" The nearest he comes to impatience or indignation is in this passage: "If we were stronger and more manly, more prudent, more abstemious and more thoughtful, millions would not live and breed as if they were members of the brute creation, and not men and women made in the image of God for a higher purpose than to live and die like the butterflies." The joke and the indignation are alike grim and meant to sting, not to amuse and improve. As you read through, you seem to see Ranade slowly assembling the details from one quarter and from another, inviting your gaze to the accumulation, and slowly and patiently leading you to a realization of your duties and prospects. The style is by no means varied, picturesque or pleasing. But it is weighty without being ponderous; profound without being mystic; edifying without being homiletic. One reader complains that Ranade has no partiality for Anglo-Saxon. Another grumbles that grammar and idiom do not get the respect due to them. A third is saddened by the frequent inelegances and solecisms. But all are subdued to attention by the dignity of the diction and the high level on which the argument moves without once declining on a false or discordant note. When you are lifted above the small and the grovelling, when you are freshened by the gentle breezes of the

upper air, you forget the unsightly objects you have left behind and the inconveniences through which you have ascended. Or maybe you feel like a tourist that has been dragged through mean lanes and pebbly tracks, and suddenly finds himself entering a stately edifice with imposing corridors and noble columns and spacious halls, the *ensemble* harmonizing in every part and ravishing his inner soul with a beauty of proportion and symmetry of which he had never dreamed. Criticism is hushed, judgment is awed, and the only feeling left is one of joy and complete satisfaction. To prove that I have not been indulging my imagination, I pray you to listen patiently while I read a certain passage which concludes one of his addresses. It is not the most familiar of the Ranade quotations, but it appears to have flowed without effort from the body of the discourse.

* * *

“The chief point, however, that is to be considered in this connection is, who should be these Gurus of the future? It is with this view that I have endeavoured to place before you a brief account of the true Gurus of the past, namely the Rishis who were both Brahmarishis and Rajarishis, only distinguished from one another by their individual inclinations and abilities. We must keep that ideal before us, if we mean to prove ourselves the worthy descendants of our earliest ancestors. Of course the teachings and the methods and the subjects taught in these days must be made to suit our new exigencies and environments, but the spirit animating the teachings must be the same as that which led the

first settlers to cross the Vindhya Range, and establish their colonies in the South. By reviving our ancient traditions in this matter we may hope in the near future to instil into the minds of our young generations lessons of devotion to learning, diversities of studies and personal loyalty to the teacher, without which no system of school or college education can ever bear any fruit. This, however, is not all. In addition to these lessons, our new teachers must know how to introduce their pupils to a correct appreciation of the forces which are at work in the wider world outside, and which, in spite of temporary checks or seeming reverses, represent all that is best in human efforts for the elevation and happiness of man. Our teachers must enable their pupils to realize the dignity of man as man, and to apply the necessary correctives to tendencies towards exclusiveness, which have grown in us with the growth of ages. They must see that our thoughts, our speech, our actions are inspired by a deep love of humanity, and that our conduct and our worship are freed where necessary from the bondage of custom and made to conform as far as possible to the surer standard of our conscience. We must at the same time be careful that this class of teachers does not form a new order of monks. Much good, I am free to admit, has been done in the past and is being done in these days, in this as well as other countries by those who take the vow of long celibacy and who consecrate their lives to the service of man and the greater glory of our Maker. But it may be doubted how far such men are able to realize life in all its fulness and in all its

varied relations, and I think our best examples in this respect are furnished by Agastya with his wife Lopamudra, Atri with his wife Anasuya, and Vasishtha with his wife Arundhati among the ancient Rishis, and in our own times by men like Dr. Bhandarkar on our side, Diwan Bahadur Raghunatha Row in Madras, the late Keshab Chander Sen and Babu Pratap Chandra Mozumdar and Pandit Shivanath Shastri in Bengal, and Lala Hans Raj and Lala Munshi Ram in your own province. A race that can ensure a continuance of such teachers can, in my opinion, never fail, and with the teachings of such men to guide and instruct and inspire us, I, for one, am confident that the time will be hastened when we may be vouchsafed a sight of the Promised Land."

Ever since I gave Ranade a definite place among my heroes, my heart's adoration has gone to him in fuller measure every day. Which one among his qualities grips me most? His elevation and detachment. Wordsworth's immortal line occurs to me whenever I think of him. "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart." True he mingled in men's affairs and strove with all his matchless strength to improve them. His life was one long and unbroken sacrifice. In a pre-eminent sense he was

Type of the wise who soar but never roam,

True to the kindred points of heaven and home. Nevertheless, after his duties to the world were fully done, there remained a part of him above attachment and clear of taint. There his *bhakti* reigned alone and he kept converse with his God in his triple nature as *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*. Where the

air is serene and rare, gross beings cannot follow him. The simple but noble words of Goldsmith are the aptest I know.

As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the
storm.

Though round its breast the rolling clouds are
spread,

Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA

It was a sound instinct that led Sir Pherozeshah Mehta to reject official preferment when it came to him. He would no doubt have been a most successful and distinguished servant of the crown and benefited his country to the greatest extent that was possible to an Indian official. But his conspicuous talents and extraordinary personality were peculiarly fitted for eminence in non-official life, and there can be no doubt that they could not have yielded to India half the benefit they have actually done if their possessor had chosen to be a Judge of the High Court or even a Member of the Executive Council. There is a certain sort of talent which, though of high quality, requires for its fullest display a pre-existing organization, opportunities and channels of exercise ready made, the discipline of established things which provides work for every hour and constant scope for the beneficent use of authority. Office is the most appropriate destiny for a person endowed with it. The gifts of Sir Pherozeshah were of a different stamp. They could in a sense make their own environment. Thrown on the trackless sea of public life without chart or compass, he was able in storm and in sunshine to steer clear of rocks and shoals, and though he never reached the Happy Isles which are beyond human ken, he must be reckoned amongst the great pioneers who made the voyage comparatively safe for the adventurous people to whom the quest has irresistible attractions.

No one in official bondage could have given to

the City of Bombay fifty years of uninterrupted and disinterested service or have fought repeated battles for civic freedom and wrought such an intimate connection between the fortunes of that great city and his own name as to compel an Anglo-Indian paper to write of him: "The Bombay Corporation is Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta is the Bombay Corporation." No one in official bondage could have kept the western presidency within the limits of moderation and loyalty to the British Throne in the troubled times that followed the Ilbert Bill or the Bengal Partition. The political school represented by the Indian National Congress has been moulded into its present shape by firm-minded and far-seeing patriots, amongst whom from the beginning Sir Pherozeshah was one of the most influential and in later years almost the most influential. When it was threatened with dissolution some years ago, anxious Congressmen all over India looked to him almost instinctively, as children in a house might to their father when the wind howled outside and the rain beat on the roof. It is a great pity that he has been taken away at this critical hour in the fortunes of India when her final place in the British Empire is under serious consideration.

His unrivalled power over his countrymen and his unique position in the non-official world of India rendered his goodwill and co-operation so useful to the highest authorities that it is no wonder Lord Curzon and Lord Sydenham regretted to have been deprived of them for a time. Of strength of will and courage of conviction he had more by far than

the common share. These qualities preserved for him the respect and homage of his compatriots even during the periods when he had apparently lost his popularity. It used to be said even of his ablest personal foes that, whatever they spoke and wrote of him ordinarily, their address when face to face with him was couched in accents of deference. Few could resist the persuasiveness and versatility of his conversation or the charm and finished courtesy of his manners. Once at a meeting of the Subjects Committee of the Congress in Bombay, answering a charge that used to be brought against him during successive years of autocratically preventing the framing of a constitution for the great National Assembly, he asked a Punjab veteran: "Why did you not call me to account there and then?" The old man answered amidst laughter that he had been cowed by Sir Pherozeshah's personality. "My personality!" answered he, looking smilingly round, "how can I help it, gentlemen?" The wrath of his assailants was turned away and nothing more was said on the subject at that sitting.

Another picture of him that dwells in the memory relates to the famous Calcutta Congress of 1906, when the passions of a certain section of Bengalis had been worked up to a high pitch and chose the great Bombay autocrat as one of the victims of their fury. When the Subjects Committee assembled, his forceful figure was seen on the dais in proximity to that of the President. Young Bengal thought that the Grand Old Man was in the shadow of a malignant planet, and cried out repeatedly: "Down with Sir Pherozeshah!" But there he sat, calm and

unmoved, with the unconcern of a lion until the execrations died down. He exhibited the same composure and self-command in the still more exciting scenes at Surat. His personality, imposing as it was, could not account entirely for his vast influence. People met in him a person of matchless debating power, mastery of details which the ablest officials might envy, and that overpowering interest which earnest advocacy commands when it is for unselfish causes. I have watched him more than once in the Legislative Council, always keen and on the alert for points of order and procedure, not slow to signify his approval or disapproval as speaker after speaker turned, as if by fascination, to where he sat to find out what impression he was producing. Even the President of the Council was not altogether exempt from his interruptions.

On one occasion, when the Land Revenue Administration of Bombay had been severely criticised by the Hon'ble Mr. Gokuldas Parekh, an official member, who had been stung to the quick, forgot himself so far as to say that the ryots were becoming more and more contumacious because their friends and supporters in the Council and outside were inculcating habits of dishonesty. When Sir Pherozeshah's turn came to speak, the scene in Council was worth seeing. He was obviously agitated, and while the house listened with tense feelings, went into the history of Bombay assessments and remissions, showed how the Government of India had to intervene to rescue the ryot from the oppressiveness of the Bombay revenue official, and wound up finally by raising his voice and exclaiming with a

minatory gesture: "As for inculcating habits of dishonesty, I cast the accusation back in the teeth of him who made it." When I related the story to Mr. Gokhale, he clapped his hands in admiration and said: "Only Mehta could have done it; he never fails to rise to the occasion." It was this manly outspokenness of utterance and the tone of equality with the highest in the land that came naturally to him, which had sounded so unfamiliar and so unseemly in the ears of an earlier generation of officials when first Sir Pherozeshah's voice was heard in the Imperial Legislative Council in the last years of Lord Elgin and the first years of Lord Curzon; General Sir Henry Brackenbury gave the member from Bombay lofty and patronizing advice in the approved official style, and Sir James Westland complained of the "new spirit", that had been introduced into the Council. The expression was seized by the Bengal public who were delighted to find an Indian that could stand up to exalted officials and tell them unpleasing truths as man to man. A public reception was given to him in Calcutta and an address was presented in which the phrase "the new spirit" figured prominently. This demonstration, remarkable as coming from the inhabitants of Calcutta, was mainly due to the exertions of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjea, most generous of friends and stout-hearted patriots. Twice afterwards in Bombay Sir Pherozeshah was the recipient of addresses voted by the public in appreciation of his eminent services. Such striking recognition has fallen to the lot of few public workers in India.

A long career of fifty years lived in the full

glory of the public eye could not but bring Sir Pherozeshah now and then into collision with those that wield the destinies of the country. On such occasions Sir Pherozeshah did not flinch in his determination to withstand the policy and measure of officials. The opposition which he led to the notorious Bombay Land Revenue Bill of 1901 attracted a great deal of attention at the time because, after the failure of a heroic effort to get the consideration of the Bill adjourned, he and some of his followers, including Mr. Gokhale, left the Council meeting as a sort of demonstration, declaring that they would not, even by their presence, participate in the enactment of so harmful and so unpopular a measure. In one of those fits of wrong-headedness which at happily rare intervals possess the officials, he was excluded from the place of precedence that was due on the occasion of the visit of Their Imperial Majesties as Prince and Princess of Wales, although he had been elected President of the Bombay Corporation for the year expressly for the purpose of welcoming Their Royal Highnesses as the foremost citizen of the foremost city in India. Popular feeling was roused in an unusual degree, and the Bombay Government saw the wisdom of retracing their false step before it was too late. Another time certain high officials openly joined a caucus which tried to keep Sir Pherozeshah out of the Bombay Corporation, where, it was alleged, he exercised an overpowering and unwholesome dominance. Once more a wave of popular indignation swept off Sir Pherozeshah's assailants, and he stood vindicated as the father and champion of the Corporation. It was

about this time that the centralising tendency of Lord Curzon imposed a standard time on all India. But the cities of Calcutta and Bombay in indiscriminating opposition to everything that emanated from him, would have none of it. Sir Pherozeshah stood out for Bombay time and it is owing to his uncompromising attitude on the occasion that the visitor to Bombay still sees the municipal clock over the Crawford Market show a time much behind that which he observed at Victoria Terminus. Notwithstanding these episodes, however, the European community of Bombay, both official and non-official, true to their sportsmanlike qualities have always been generous in recognizing Sir Pherozeshah's great qualities and eminent services, and given due meed of gratitude and praise for his unswerving loyalty to the British connection and his powerful advocacy of the virtues of the British Empire in critical times. Not the least remarkable feature of his remarkable ascendancy over the Bombay Corporation was its complete immunity from imputations of jobbery or personal aggrandizement of any sort—an example of shining purity for all aspirants to distinction in the sphere of local self-government. It is one of my vivid and inspiring memories, the evident pride with which, in one of his confiding moods, he told a small party at his own tea-table that Thursdays were consecrated to "my Corporation". No fee, he said, could tempt him from Municipal business. He had been often compared by English friends to Chamberlain and Gladstone. One hesitates to assert where personal knowledge fails. But there can be no doubt Sir Pherozeshah was one of the strongest and wisest

men of his time, exercising a powerful influence to noble and unselfish ends. India has recently suffered great losses—Ganga Prasad Varma, Satish Chandra Banerjee, Gokhale, Sir Henry Cotton and now Sir Pherozechah Mehta. Who next? (We cannot stay the hand of Death. All we can do is to treasure the memories of the great dead, to recall their virtues and, so far as we may, benefit by their example.)

MAHATMA GANDHI

[An address delivered at the Hindu High School, Madras, on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 61st birthday.]

The term Mahatma means a great soul. So, the phrase 'Mahatma Gandhi' means Gandhi, the great soul. At first he repudiated the title and begged his friends not to call him so. Sometimes, in the midst of severe disappointments, when people called him by that exalted title he said emphatically, "I do not wish that you should give me that honour any more. I am the opposite of Mahatma: I am Alpatma." But by this very act, he proved his title to be regarded as a Mahatma. For, really, he has become great by reason of the way in which he has ordered his life. A man is to be judged by his conduct and character, and not merely by the opinion he holds or even the doctrine to which he devotes his life, and the title of Mahatma rests on the greatness which he has won by his lofty character.

HIS SELF-EXAMINATION

Of all the people that I have known, he is the one that constantly subjects himself to rigorous self-examination. He asks himself often during the day, "Have I said or done or thought anything which is unworthy?" and if in the course of that examination he discovers some failing, some lapse on his part, he prays most humbly to the Almighty that he should be saved in future from similar failings and lapses. By such a course of self-examination, he has overcome one failing after another, so that now he

may be regarded as an almost perfect man. But, being very modest, living constantly in the presence of God and seeking to live according to His most exacting standards, he calls himself a sinner. Knowing, as we do, his perfect purity, his transparent honesty and his evident sincerity, we cannot conceive how we can ever allow him to call himself a sinner. But he does it, because he tests himself most severely. It is not outward lapse which he condemns (that everybody does and no wonder), he condemns even lapse of thought. Stray tendencies, fleeting temptations such as pass through our mind very often indeed, in his opinion amount to grievous sin; for he wants that his character should be absolutely white, such as God will approve. It is difficult indeed for human nature to reach that standard of excellence. Now, we judge ourselves by a totally different standard. If you study the lives of the great ones of the earth, those whom we call saints and seers, you will find that they all pass through this course of self-examination. In their writings you will also notice every now and then this voice of self-condemnation. "Have I been true to myself?", "What a wicked idea I had last night?", "This morning I seemed to think ill of my neighbour, and a shadow of suspicion of his character passed across my mind; I have sinned." And so, such people punish themselves; but we, who are made of coarser elements, regard them as children of God, whom we may look upon as our ideals. It is in that light that most of us who know about Gandhi regard him. We look up to his conduct and character as that towards which we should constantly strive.

What then are the features of his character which we should strive ceaselessly to emulate? I will tell you just two or three of them. I am not going to dwell upon his doctrines or activities, which speak mostly for themselves, but on the inward core of his character, which we may profitably study and contemplate.

HIS UTTER SELFLESSNESS

In the first place, he is absolutely without self. Usually a man is called unselfish if he devotes some hours of his time to the welfare of the community; if he gives a part of his wealth to some objects of public charity or utility.

Gandhi would not be content with that sort of unselfishness. From his point of view, no one is really unselfish unless he always puts aside his self, and in every matter and at every moment of his life lives only for others, thinks only for others, and exerts himself only for others. So you find now he has stripped himself of all his wealth. He owns nothing in this world except the pair of very coarse khaddar which he wears on his body. He has not even a store of these things at home. All the property amounting to several lakhs which he acquired, he has given away. Not an anna now belongs to him. He is a regular *sanyasi* going about only in the clothing that is on him. Now, we know of some people who are *sanyasis*, who go about without anything to themselves. But their unselfishness is not nearly so complete as the Mahatma's. For though they own nothing, they still ask for fame or power or influence or at least

they sit down and think of their own salvation. "How shall I reach God, how shall He admit me into His innermost Court?" This is what most of these *sanyasis* do. In that way they are selfish, though they own absolutely no property. Mr. Gandhi is distinguished from them in this regard that he does not care for himself but gives all his time for the saving of the souls of other people. That is to say, such happiness as he still wants, such joy, such satisfaction as he still needs in life, he wants only through promoting the joy and the happiness of others about him. If through that exertion happiness comes to him, let it come. This then is the real secret of happiness: if you seek to get it directly, it will elude all your attempts; but if you seek to get it indirectly through devoting yourself to getting happiness for others, then you also become happy. That is the peak, as it were, of all ethical philosophy; and Gandhi has reached that peak. You go to him at any time you like, you catch him unawares, you surprise him at the weakest moment of his life, still he would only be thinking of how to advance the welfare of those around him. That is the true doctrine of unselfishness.

HIS FORGIVENESS

Another strongly marked virtue in him is the quality of forgiveness which our ancients used to describe by the word '*Kshama*,' i.e., tolerance, charitable dealing, and charitable thought towards others, so that when you contemplate their sins or their failings or even their treacherous behaviour to you, you think only of how to forget and forgive. Some

of us occasionally practise it. Sometimes once in ten years or once in a whole lifetime, some of us are able to reach that height and forget the misdeeds of others towards us, but this in Gandhi, like the virtue of unselfishness, has been pushed to an extreme, because he says, "What is the good of forgiving those whom you love?" Suppose your son misbehaves towards you, or your father one day in his anger is unduly severe to you, it is no great virtue to forgive them. Suppose a brother of yours does you some harm, and you say, "Never mind, you are my brother, I let you go," there is no great virtue in that. The difficulty is when you have to forget the sins of your enemies. If your *dayadi* who has always hated you, does you some fresh injury and you forgive that, it is a real act of forgiveness. It is that which the Mahatma preaches. He says, "Forgive thine enemies," which is one of the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is a mistake to think Christianity alone preaches this virtue. Other religions teach it also. Now Gandhi is pre-eminently a Hindu, and he says he is living the best part of Hinduism when he himself forgives the sins of his enemies, and asks people to love them as their friends. "Love thine enemies, forgive thine enemies" is the doctrine of forgiveness taken to its last point of development. It is very easy to say so, but I may tell you from long experience that it is one of the most difficult lessons to learn—this lesson that you should love your enemies. Not even one in a million succeeds in practising it, as it comes only to very rare beings; and of them Gandhi is the very rarest.

HIS COURAGE

Another remarkable quality in him is courage. You all know what courage is. Perhaps some of you think that you possess it in abundant measure. A courageous man is not he who calls his brother to a fight, a courageous man is not necessarily he who against two or three antagonists on the football field carries the ball through into the goal. That is courage of a certain kind. It is physical courage manifested in a small humble sphere. Even physical courage has other forms, very difficult to practise. But I am not thinking of physical courage merely. I am thinking of the courage of the soul, the courage which helps you to defend your opinion in the face of overwhelming odds. He would say for instance, "If I stood alone in defence of truth, and the whole world were banded against me and against truth, I would still fight them all, no matter if they tore me limb from limb". This is real courage—courage of the soul rather than mere physical courage. Several times in his life he has faced the greatest danger, all unarmed and undefended. He would go into the ranks of those who hated him. More than once, he has been assaulted with blows by people who wanted to take his life. But he has spoken so gently at such times as to disarm hatred itself.

HIS PIETY

There is one other quality of his to which I will draw your attention to-day, and that is the quality of piety. I will mention that as the very crown of his character, because he often puts it first. A pious

man is not he who merely puts on all the twelve namams and renews them three times a day. A pious man is not he who merely goes to the temple and gives away a large part of his wealth in charity. There is a piety above and beyond these doctrines and rituals—a piety that dwells in the innermost recesses of our hearts. It does not want any outward expression. It is all in our inner being. This exalted piety Gandhi has in an abundant measure. Often when he has troubles and difficulties and anxious questions are presented to his mind, and he does not know which way to turn, he has been known to retreat to a quiet room, seek perhaps the solitude of midnight, then sit up and in the solemn silence of the moment, address God in the most earnest tones. No man can do that unless he had the fullest and the strongest faith in the living presence of God and had always enjoyed His intimate companionship. He has told me more than once—for I have known him pretty intimately, and that is one of my great blessings in life—he sat up for hours at midnight and called God within himself and asked for His guidance, and the guidance came. The next morning when he got up, his mind was clear. He had made his resolutions, and having had such a clear vision of the right thing, he would allow nothing to stand between him and God. No amount of persuasion, no entreaty, no threat, would make him swerve a hair's breadth from his course.

CONCLUSION

It is a man of that kind whom you are asked now and then to think of, in order to raise the cha-

racter of your own lives. It is difficult for you even to understand the full meaning of what I have been saying, but it is good now and then for you, to have heard of his great name, to have heard praise of his high qualities, to have heard some description, however faint and indistinct, of the sublime qualities that make him universally regarded as a great soul; for it is not only in India we call him a great soul, but also in Germany and England, even in far-away America, his name has penetrated, and his greatness has been appreciated both by ordinary people, and by devoted missionaries of Christianity. He has been described as one of the world's greatest men alive. Are we not lucky to be his countrymen? How wretched we should be if we did not know of him and revere him, and even in a remote fashion, try to be like him!

SIR P. S. SIVASWAMI AIYAR

Chance drew me first to the virile and magnetic personality of V. Krishnaswami Aiyar, and for several years I was one of the satellites that circled round and took warmth from that radiant luminary. When envious death quenched his fire, I was thrown, as by an instinct of nature, into a neighbouring system, of which the central sun was Mr. Sivaswami Aiyar. Here perhaps I am less like a planet with a well-ascertained orbit than like a comet with an erratic path. The early intimacy and parallel growth of the pair I had not known well till I read Venkatarama Sastri's account.* What a revealing touch it is that, while one of the twins plodded with a dictionary, the other took the correct English accent from his lips without an effort! When I began to visit the "Asram," a barrier of reserve had risen between them which it would not be too much to describe as rivalry. One often heard unfriendly remarks passing from each to the other. There were marked differences of nature and temperament. Krishnaswami Aiyar was eager, quick, bubbling, brilliant; Sivaswami Aiyar was phlegmatic, slow, difficult to move, without sparkle. Krishnaswami made friends and enemies with equal ease; Sivaswami seemed frigid, but seldom hurt your pride or overbore you. The one was ever in the public eye; the other, reserved and cautious, had to be dragged out. The one was eloquent and occasionally impetuous; the other was hesitant, unemphatic and

*In the Satabishekam Souvenir Volume, Mr. Sastri's essay appeared in the same volume.

unable to grip his audience. Both gave and were discriminate in giving; but while Krishnaswami had greater readiness and more lively sympathy with the causes that he helped, Sivaswami enquired more minutely, showed less alacrity and earned tepid praise. Krishnaswami cared little for forms and conventions and was often rude and harsh; Sivaswami was fastidious to a degree in dress and speech and cultivated a refinement of manners and conversation far above the common. Perhaps the contrast was not so sharp as it appears when one puts it into words. No doubt the tittle-tattle of the groups around the two widened the gulf between them; but it could not obliterate their mutual solicitude and love, which now and again burst forth in refreshing and beautiful form. I am not conscious of any malice now, and only recall a social picture of an earlier day. Much interest and profit are derived from a study of two personalities of like origin and age and apparently brought up on the same mental fare, diverging under the stress of life and standing in what looked like opposition to each other. No doubt each obeyed the law of his own being. But what a substratum of similarity there always was! It was not the antithesis of good and evil, but of good and good, of one order of excellences and another order of excellences. Coruscations of light on the one side and steady illumination on the other; restlessness over against solidity; emotionalism juxtaposed with dependability. You may not capture Sivaswami Aiyar's heart, nor he yours; but you recognize and appreciate his purity of motive, and feel that you can carry your troubles to him.

and obtain both advice and relief. What if he beats around the bush somewhat and tells you a story not remembering that he has told it before? It gives you time to recover your breath, look about and adjust your tie; for he has a horror of haste and no solecism of language, apparel or deportment escapes his eye. You must go to him only when you have plenty of time on hand. There is a leisureliness about him which is engaging, but apt to discompose you when you have business awaiting you. Gokhale once told me of the impatience of the members of the Madras Government and his own profound concern when, at a conference with the members of the Public Services Commission of 1912, Sir Sivaswami conducted them step by step through the entire length of the controversy from beginning to end, taking nothing for granted and oblivious of the diminishing attention of his audience. "Krishnaswami," he added sorrowfully, "would have plucked the heart out of the subject and made his points in fifteen minutes." But Gokhale and Krishnaswami were cast in similar moulds and their souls always sprang to each other in joyful recognition. Sivaswami Aiyar might have lost his labour at the moment; but there comes a time when documents are read with care in the closet and exert their full influence on the minds of responsible men. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and other officials of consequence who had subsequent access to his office notes have borne ungrudging witness to their thoroughness, grasp and clarity of expression. Sivaswami Aiyar's talents, like his virtues, are not calculated to achieve ebullient success. Their sub-

dued display obscures their power. Venkatarama Sastri complains that virtue is often accounted a weakness and blatant self-advertisement is necessary for success in this world. His words sound like an echo of Sri Rama's outburst of indignation when he found that the ocean-god was not to be moved by fast and prayer. I quote from the Yudda Kanda, Sarga 21:

"Equanimity, forbearance, straightforwardness, sweet speech,—these virtues, displayed towards bad persons, result in proving one's impotence. But the world honours him who brags, does wrong, is perverse, takes to crooked courses, and lays about him without discrimination."

Few, they are, alas, who are held back by the thought: "This man trusts me, I must not betray him." Sivaswami Aiyar must have frequently observed that in this imperfect world the man of gentle and unoffending spirit is taken advantage of by the unscrupulous. I can testify how unwilling he is to pass final judgements on people if they are unfavourable. Teachers who had proved unworthy of their calling he would tolerate in his school just because some link was wanting in the chain of evidence against them; his conscience is so exacting. He once sent me on an errand of investigation to Tirukkattuppalli, and when I reported decisively against the teacher concerned, went over the whole ground again and again before taking the irrevocable step.

Sivaswami Aiyar is every inch a scholar. He hails from those spacious days when no man had a claim to culture unless he knew something of every-

thing and everything of something. This description would be as true of him as of any person of my acquaintance. His distress was unaffected when he could make nothing of that book on Cosmic Rays which Venkatarama Sastri mentions. He is a belletrist, as distinguished as enthusiastic. Once he invited Venkataraman and me to his study and read to us a long passage from an American author, whose name my failing memory is unable to recall. The passage was of high quality and loaded to saturation point and beyond with allusions to contemporary as well as classical literature. Not all of these were known to us. But Sivaswami Aiyar's reading showed appreciation and enjoyment to such a degree that we caught them from him and by sheer sympathy became temporary admirers of a style which, without his inspiring guidance, might have repelled us by its ostentatious parade of recondite minutiae. Of books he is a great buyer as well as a great lover. He knows all about the art of preserving them from the ravages of insects. Most of them are as fresh on his shelves to-day as when they first came there. For such a large collection as he has, I fancy the losses by theft and unreturned loan are not many. You must see his delicate handling of books and the frequent wiping of the open page with his palm as he reads, on the alert against specks of dust unseen by the eye, but not to be allowed to soil the dwelling-spots of learning. I have seldom seen him hold a book with one irreverent hand or unfeelingly open it wider than necessary. If anyone doubled a book in his presence he would writhe as though a baby was being strangled. The library is the one orphan

he will leave behind, and its fate after him is a perennial topic of speculation to the gossips of the locality, whom the affairs of other people vex as much as their own.

It is a common mistake to suppose that men sob and shed tears only when they read sacred literature. I am glad Sivaswami Aiyar's great pupil testifies to the power of English writings to dim his eyes and choke his throat. Some people's lachrymal glands are agitated more easily than those of others, and age appears to weaken them rapidly. I remember my father's reading of *Ramayana* being impeded by this infirmity and my imagining that my robust heart would never melt. A second-rate English novel can now overpower me with its pathos; and about this time last year I held myself together with the greatest difficulty as I was reading to an audience the tender tribute of a friend to Gokhale.

The essential integrity of Sivaswami Aiyar's mind is seen in its continued receptivity. New knowledge and new experience can still shift him from his moorings. His political views are not cast in an iron mould. If a chart could be made showing their trend fifty years ago and their trend at the present day, the progress would be little short of a revolution. Time in its onward march has dragged the liberals along with others. "The extremist is only the moderate in a hurry" is meant as a sarcasm, but it has a core of truth. We are patriots all and serve the common mother. What profound kinship it signifies! We forget it in the wrangles of the moment.

No philosopher can analyse into elements the

complex of tradition, heredity, culture and environment that accounts for our attitude towards religion. Being a clear thinker and not deceived by words, Sivaswami Aiyar admits in a letter to me that he believes because he wishes to believe, not because he is convinced by scientific proof. Perhaps he will agree that the wish to believe, though a part of human nature, is not a satisfactory substitute for proof. On the other hand reason confesses inability to solve many riddles of nature which vex the mind of man. Few have the intrepidity to abandon the one guide that has come down from ancient times, and that seems to invest life with a meaning and a purpose. Sivaswami Aiyar's religion, one is glad to see, does not narrow his sympathies or cramp his humanity in the least degree. A man of wide culture, amiable disposition and innate courtesy, with an inflexible love of justice and a keen sense of honour, having large and enlightened benefactions to his credit, able to look back on many years devoted to the pursuit of high aims and the doing of things that are clean and of good repute, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar is a man to admire, cherish and present to the young as a shining example.

THE BALANCED MIND* (1925)

Thirty-seven years ago, I left my *alma mater*, as most of you would presently leave yours, not without distinction. And although I cannot boast of having made fame or amassed a fortune or acquired a wide command over men, my life has enabled me to see some men and some things out of the ordinary; and it may be that, if you are attentive as well as silent for an hour or thereabouts, I shall impart some words of needed counsel and warning.

The most natural starting-point is the position in which we find ourselves at this present moment, I as the chosen guest, and—may I add without vanity?—the spokesman of the University, and you as the finished products upon whom the ceremonial just concluded has set its authentic seal. By the regulated life that you have lived here, by the careful discipline to which your minds and bodies alike have been subjected, you are fitted, as we trust, for the trials and duties of the world, for the proper use and enjoyment of the greater measure of freedom that awaits you. For always pupilage is the necessary prelude to the liberty of the adult, and no one can ever command who has not previously learned to obey. Honour and cherish the University then as you would the mother that nursed and brought you up. Some of you will become its officers; some in time may wield great influence in shaping its future growth; others may be in a position to

* From the address delivered at the convocation of the University of Mysore on September 14, 1925.

endow it or help in other ways; but all, high or low, distant or near, must watch its interests with anxiety and aid in the formation of that widespread public sympathy and public support on which alone a popular and successful university can thrive. You will be perplexed and distracted by conflicting views as to the proper aim of a university. Ability to earn a living, preparation for life and for citizenship, acquisition of knowledge and the power to add to it, formation of a good and virtuous character—all these, separately or in combination, have struck theorists as the fundamental purposes of education. If you do not care to be profound or philosophical, but will be content with a common and intelligible idea, you may regard a university as a place where personality plays on personality by the establishment of an intimate human relationship between teacher and taught. This way of looking at it has the great merit of drawing attention to the supreme importance of the teacher as a factor in university life. Well-planned curricula, fully equipped laboratories, large libraries, noble halls, and imposing recreation grounds, these are good and useful things in their way. Let nobody despise them. But an able and zealous professoriate is the very life and soul of a place of learning. And in selecting its members the utmost care and circumspection are necessary. Unfortunately it is just in this part of the organization of a university that irrelevant and unworthy considerations of race, religion or sect come into play and impair efficiency and reputation at once. A word of caution may be appropriate here. Learning knows no narrow frontiers, and a

really good professor is not always to be found within a circumscribed area. Jealousy of the outsider in this sphere is even more disastrous than in other spheres, and however it may gratify the popular whim for the moment, it will surely involve the sacrifice of large and permanent interests.

One platitude leads to another. Having got your staff together, the next thing is to give them what is called "academic freedom." Of this the professor is frantically jealous, and the layman who takes an intelligent interest in university affairs is often startled at the thunder and lightning which a casual and innocent remark may produce in the blue sky of the Senate. Usually academic freedom is in danger from the grasping hand of bureaucracy. A great writer on educational subjects has recently said, "Standardization, government-made uniformity and bureaucratic regulation are not the allies of education but its mortal enemies." Tyrannical, deadening, soul-killing are the mild epithets in the vocabulary of the irate pedagogue when he wishes to characterise the control of the authority which bears a great part, sometimes, as here, much the greater part, of the burden of university finance. The maxim "he who pays the piper will call the tune" is summarily ruled out here. Government is to be like the postal peon, who delivers a money order, but cannot stay to see where the money is kept or how it is disposed of. The encroachment of the State, however, is encroachment by cultivated people and, therefore, mitigable by reasoning and negotiation. But in these days of expanding democracy the sanctity of the temple of learning is subject

to a greater danger from sudden inroads of popular clamour and prejudice, miscalled public opinion. That variety of politician whom we call by the disrespectful name of demagogue at times attains a tremendous influence which sweeps aside professor and professorial regulation. People uprisen have no use for the expert. Standards may be lowered, the medium of instruction changed, and discipline undermined, the teacher hiding his diminished head the while. To you, who have felt and can never cease to appreciate the tender and delicate relation of *guru* and *sishya*, and who know how an atmosphere of prejudice and passion is inimical to the scientific pursuit of knowledge, to you, I say, graduates of the University, scattered far and near, and able by your numbers and influence to control these turbulent squalls before they attain their fury, the authorities of the University have the right to look with confidence for energetic and timely interposition. In such moments of peril, do not, I pray you, stand looking on or mumbling excuses for the insurgents, but come round your *alma mater* and guard her like valiant and faithful sons.

An important task rests on you as educated men and women to keep up the intellectual curiosity awakened in you by your varied studies and add fresh knowledge to the store here accumulated. Nothing distinguishes true culture from false so surely as this inquisitive spirit, the desire to keep abreast with the best thought of the world, to know things as far as possible in their essence and thoroughly. Unfortunately many of us have heavy cares and duties, our posts are often in out-of-the-

way places, where books are rare and congenial friends still rarer. We get little time for the exercise of our higher minds, so completely are we engulfed in the petty details and routine of daily duty. For persons in such desperate case may we not prescribe a well-thumbed classic or two as constant companions? Each has his favourites and perhaps changes them every few years. But to them he may return again and again and slake his thirst as at an ever-living spiritual fountain. The greater part of us, however, will live in more favoured spots, where our minds need not starve except through our own neglect. Alas, such neglect and starvation are too common. It would be ungracious to enlarge on this topic but let any one mention half a dozen large towns where of a Sunday afternoon one might go to the local club or reading room with the hope of listening to an elevated conversation on the topics of the day, or to a public debate in which a subject was discussed so as to stimulate the mind, suggest fresh points or create a zest for further enquiry. Somehow after we leave college, a sort of mental exhaustion seems to set in from which only a few recover. Do you remember that famous story of Dr. Johnson? Once while he was recovering from an illness, some one proposed to send for Burke. "Don't!" cried the Doctor, "if that fellow were to appear now, it would kill me at once. He calls forth all my mental powers." Without having the excuse of physical debility, we seem to be in mortal dread of having to listen to a lively debate on a rousing topic, let alone taking part in them. In a certain measure this undesirable phenomenon occurs elsewhere as

well. I was surprised, while reading a book by Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of the Columbia University, to come upon the following passage:

“Speaking not long ago in the city of New York, Israel Zangwill paid us the compliment of saying that we Americans are the best half-educated people in the world. My impression is that he put the fraction rather high. If we measure our education by the splendour of the school buildings which of late have been erected in a thousand communities scattered throughout the land and by the excellence of their equipment, then assuredly the impression is most flattering. If we measure our education by the expenditure of moneys, public and private, upon schools of every type and sort, then plainly these amounts are enormous. If we measure our education by the number of pupils under formal instruction for some part of each year, the numbers are certainly agreeably large. If, on the other hand, we seek for those surer evidences of education which are marked by correctness and precision in the use of the mother tongue, fixed habits of thought and action, by the power and habit of reflection and the use of scientific method in the approach to new problems of public and personal import, or by the power of intellectual and moral growth, then it may well be doubted whether the results are quite so flattering.”

Some may feel a little comforted after reading this passage, but I fear it applies to the facts of India with much greater force than to those of America.

It is the privilege of Convocation orators to formulate counsels of perfection to their bored audiences, and if I appear to tread in their path at this point, I can only plead in defence that I do not consider my suggestion a counsel of perfection. Outside the requirements of our profession, newspapers form the pabulum of our reading. But oftentimes an important topic comes up in which the interest is maintained for several weeks, and each man misses something or other necessary for full comprehension. Hardly a month passes without two or three such topics emerging. Suppose a fair-sized town in which twenty people joined together and procured access to a few magazines and newspapers. Let us imagine them to meet one specified day every month, at which it was the duty of one member or of two, as the case may be, to give a connected account of two selected matters from his reading. You could on such an occasion hear all about fundamentalism, the trial at Dayton and some of the arguments used on both sides, at least the Biblical passages relied on by Bryan. The discussion that followed might ramify in several interesting issues. The theory of evolution would naturally come in, and a member of wider reading than ordinary would perhaps outline the modifications that had been made since Darwin's day. Another would draw a picture of the personality of Bryan, so simple and yet of such vivid interest. You might hear of Bryan's visit to India and the violent antipathy evoked in Anglo-Indian society by the book in which he recorded his experiences. A member with a turn for practical speculation—pardon the paradoxical expression—might invite his

audience to consider what would happen in some of our provinces in the extremely probable contingency of a majority passing obscurantist laws of the kind under which Mr. Scopes was convicted and enforcing them. The coal crisis in England, the Security pact, the Indian disability in Tanganyika with special reference to the British mandate, the questions involved in the reference to the Skeen Committee,—these are only some of the numerous illustrations that might be brought forward for proving the great intellectual benefit that such a league or association would confer on the locality. By spending an hour at one of these monthly meetings you could learn a lot of interesting and useful matter which it would take much time and energy to find for yourself. This might seem child's diet to grave and reverend professors hankering after philosophical speculations and recent scientific advances. But the busy professional man whom I am thinking of would do well, at least in the beginning to avoid strong meat. Whenever you hold such a meeting, go not, I warn you, too near the chessboard or the bridge table, lest by heedless chatter you distract minds intent on vital and intricate problems. Nor should you allow any but a poor man's tea to refresh you; rich hosts have a captivating way of giving precedence to the body over the mind, and the discussion would shift its object almost entirely. One more caution, if you please, before I pass on. If the principal speaker appointed for the day happen to be a lawyer in good practice, do not forget to provide yourself with a handy substitute; for some witless client may remove him at the last moment to a more profitable

debate, and not even allow him to give you due notice.

Even more than this mental alertness and elasticity, another attribute is distinctive of university culture—the balanced mind. Sad to think, it is also the rarer. I once had to speak to an association of graduates in Australia, and posed the query, "Do modern universities aim at a balanced mind?" From the tenor of the ensuing conversation I could see that other minds had been agitated over the problem. Once upon a time the true mark of a completed course of education was the habit of proving all things before coming to a judgement, the disposition to look at a matter from all points of view, the habit even under exciting circumstances of bringing full and unclouded reason to bear on the subject at issue. Modern life with its hurry and whirl seems to have banished leisure, poise, serenity of outlook. The countless little details claiming our attention from moment to moment scarcely allow of the formation of a whole and harmonious picture with every feature in true perspective. The newspaper press, shouting and screaming the whole day long, keeps pouring into our minds a chaos of unrelated thoughts. Of any particular object or idea we seem only to catch a fleeting phase, an aspect of an aspect. And yet we have to make up our minds, to choose our sides, and to cast our votes. We could not hold our judgements in suspense if we would, and, for a wonder, most of us would not if we could. We do not seem even to care for justice, harmony, co-ordination. In the legislature we hear only partisan views of things, and, if we wish to

count for something, we must give partisan votes. How the laws in such a dispensation can be just and suitable is no concern of ours. In the courts, clients, witnesses, advocates, are all naturally for their own side of the case and make no attempt to disguise the fact. The result, as we all know, is that the judge is often hindered from discovering the truth, not helped to do so. So in the public discussion of questions between conservatives and reformers, capital and labour, and so forth, the active spirits throw themselves heart and soul into one side or other of the dispute. Newspapers, instead of endeavouring to create a sober and healthy public opinion, are avowedly partisan and, while presenting their side in attractive colours, consider it no part of their duty to be equally generous to the other side, and in many cases misrepresent, suppress and run it down. So far has this evil grown that young and inexperienced readers, taught only by one set of papers, ascribe innate "cussedness" and moral perversity to the other school of thought and its advocates. Among us the situation is further complicated by the upsurging of the communal spirit, the various sects and factions demanding each its share and more than its share, and leaving the State altogether in the lurch. The modern machinery for striking the balance, commissions, and committees and assessors, are but imperfect and untrustworthy approximations. The personnel of these bodies, on which hang vital issues of equity and justice, is itself made a subject of acrimonious contention. Where all are tainted, few can be expected to hold the scales even. Do our universi-

ties—let me put the question though I do not expect an answer—with their ever increasing specialization of studies produce of set purpose the type of mind necessary for discovering the golden mean, the safe middle course between opposing tendencies? Is there no use, even in these tranquil places dedicated to truth and wisdom, for the man who hesitates, who weighs arguments with care, who resists the sway of passion? A recent Governor of one of our provinces, who had been a radical in English politics, turned out to be unprogressive here. He once explained the phenomenon to me. He sought advice from every quarter on a disputed issue, he read all the papers dealing with it. The rights and wrongs seemed to him so equally balanced that the case for change was never wholly made out. So, he said, he let the old arrangement continue, it had answered so far. He was a typical conservative, a perfect Hamlet of politics. But surely deliberation is not indecision. It will lead to action quite as often as to inaction. And the action to which it leads will be safe and suited to all the attendant circumstances. I freely admit that the conscientious politician is not popular. His counsel of patience and moderation is irritating to eager and enthusiastic natures. Yudhishtira was called many ugly names by Bhima and Droupadi. But he did not allow himself to be hustled. "Unagitated like the sea, immovable like the mountain" he waited till the time arrived and then struck and struck home. The cross bencher is not beloved of his tribe, but the cross-bench mind is an ever-present and an ever growing need. Believe me, it is no disease, no

infirmity. On the other hand, it is the crown and summit of liberal education. It would be an evil day when it became extinct, and the high function of universities is to foster it with tender and unremitting care.

CAN A POLITICIAN BE A GENTLEMAN?*

(1935)

Mr. President, Vice-Chancellor and Members of the University Union, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

I am delighted more than I can tell to have received an address at your hands this afternoon. You have done me a great honour by this function and, believe me, I welcome it as a sign that such work as I have been able to accomplish has met with the approbation of the young as well as a section of the old. I wish, besides thanking you, to express in return for your affection and tenderness similar affection and tenderness on my part towards you and furthermore, to wish that your Union should be the means of widening your minds and widening your outlook, so that you may, within these walls, receive in the fullest measure the education and the improvement which your University is designed to impart.

You have said many things in the address upon which my mind inclines me to dwell, but there is one remark which it will not be proper on my part to overlook. Permit me, within the time that I am going to take, not to be formal in my reply, nor as it were categorical, but rather to enjoy for a moment the privilege that age may take, and that is, to muse rather than to discourse. It is unlikely, that the musing of a man who has seen life and who has travelled over a great part of the earth's surface, will go altogether without profit or instruction.

You have said that in my political career I have

An address delivered to the Nagpur University Union.

tried to see the other man's point of view. It is sometimes accounted to me for a weakness, but I believe on the whole that to understand the case of your adversary, to concede his points where they are proper, to give him credit even as you take it to yourself, to be moderate in the presentment of your own side and not over-enthusiastic like an advocate, trying to demolish your opponent and make him appear a ridiculous fool,—I believe on the whole that, to take that attitude in public life, is certainly not to disable or handicap yourself. Such, however, is the opinion of many a colleague of mine. To show tenderness or chivalry to the opponent is but another name for weakness, for tepidity of conviction on your part, for failure to serve your party as a partisan should serve it. That may be to some extent the truth. But there is far more truth in the other proposition that, where sharp differences divide parties, the impartial man will deliver his verdict only after hearing both sides. Yes, it is not given to many persons to see the truth wholly. It is not everybody whose passions and feelings are engaged in hot and living issues of the moment that can view all sides of a question temperately and dispassionately and with a single desire to arrive at the truth. Nevertheless, that is the supreme virtue in controversy which it is the business of a University and its professors to cultivate and encourage in you by example as well as by precept. The man who makes himself the mere mouthpiece of one side of a complicated case, believing either that there is no other side or if there is one, that there is no virtue in it, does no service either to the abstract cause of

truth or to the individuals whom he is trying to bring up in the ways of justice and impartiality.

Then you go in another part of the address to make a remark to which I must draw some attention, because it embodies a truth and at the same time a fatal fallacy. And I must try and, if I can, make that point clear to those on whose behalf that sentiment has been spoken. You have said that I have shown in my life that it is possible to be a politician and a gentleman at the same time. I must thank you for the compliment. I hope it is genuine. But believe me in saying that you have impliedly passed a condemnation upon the rest of my tribe. In fairness to them it behoves me, if I can, to apply the corrective. It is a cynical remark that it is hard for a politician to attain the impartiality, the courtesy and the honourable standards of a gentleman. Alas, there is a good deal of truth in it too. Really speaking, before I pass on to consider the matter in itself, may I clear up what might be a misconception on the part of many of you? Politics, whether in this country or in another, is not a profession in the sense in which we ordinarily use the word "profession". A profession is that calling or occupation which we pursue for the sake of profit or as a life interest. Amongst very few people indeed is politics pursued in that sense of the word. There are hardly any salaries, any emoluments worth mentioning, attached to the profession at large. There are, of course, a few prizes, both in the official and in the non-official world, but they are for the very few. The bar is a profession, medicine is a profession, engineering is a profession,

pedagogy is a profession, but not, thank Heaven, politics yet, unless we attach to the membership of the legislatures a substantial salary and allowances and travelling concessions such as are usual in the United States of America. We have not yet come to that. If, for instance, there is attached to a membership of the Assembly or of the various legislatures in his country a considerable salary,—there is a proposal to that effect, and I should think, sooner or later we may arrive at that state of things, if, then there are a great many people—and I am afraid in this country of unemployment and general poverty that number will be the majority,—for whom politics will become a profession.

But let us dwell upon the state of things that prevails today. Politics is not a lucrative profession anywhere. I will not deny that there are some who handle public affairs with a view to the indirect and the illegitimate gains thereof; there are others who look forward to the distinctions that await the successful ones amongst the toilers in public life. But leave them aside for the moment. Generally speaking, politics is still the occupation of people who have no direct eye either to profit or to some equivalent attraction.

Well then, why is it not possible in many cases to be at the same time a gentleman and a politician? It is a very interesting topic to discuss, and I hope, while still you are not politicians, you will allow me to engage your attention upon this topic for a few minutes, for it is a speculation involving some amount of real instruction.

Now, I have sometimes wondered whether poli-

tics is such an absorbing interest in life, for instance, as agriculture or literature, or for another instance, as the pursuit of family happiness, or the maintenance and preservation of property. Is it as absorbing an interest as any one of these? The answer is interesting. The answer, it seems to me, is that it is and that it is not. By the intrinsic nature of the case it does not seem to me to be so absorbing a pursuit; but by the results, the conduct of those engaged in politics and by the appearances of the case, it seems to surpass in intensity almost any one of these other interests.

Well, politics can be an ideal, politics can also be degraded in practice. As an ideal, I see no harm in it at all. As an ideal, politics requires you to prepare yourself carefully by study and by observation; it requires you to put yourself always in the position of a servant of the community, one who seeks its welfare and has trained himself systematically to put that interest above his own or that of any section of the public; it requires that you should pay unremitting attention to public business as it comes along; it requires also that in your conduct towards others engaged in a similar occupation you must show chivalry and respect, the same as you would ask for yourself; it demands further that in the final decision of any one of these questions you should carefully weigh all the pros and cons of a case, that you should try and in the calmness of your private judgement assign to each one of these its due weight and consideration, and on the top of it all, that you should cast your vote in a spirit of pure public service, whether it be a vote for a candidate

at an election, or for the decision of a question in parliament. Whichever way the vote is cast, it should be cast as a matter of conscience entirely for the welfare and benefit of the community and not for your own. Often indeed it may be against your own interest, it may indeed be against the interests of your family or of your private connections, smaller than that of the public to whose service you have committed yourself. But then that is the point of view from which you should prepare yourselves for the work of the ordinary citizen. That is politics in the ideal.

But how far is it from that ideal in the actual practice around you? Well, I should take you too far into the dust and dirt of politics were I to mention the various forms in which corruption sets in, in which men deteriorate, in which they forget the standards of public life, in which they put aside this great interest, namely, the welfare of the community; in which indeed all forms of casuistical argument come in and a man, not voting as the public welfare requires him, is still enabled to make his conscience go to sleep because, forsooth, although he has not voted upon the highest grounds, he has still voted upon unselfish grounds, because he has voted as his leader desired, or as his party prescribed, or as his neighbours would have him decide the issue. Yes, that is the way Satan comes in always for guiding and manipulating those of us who are willing to listen to him. He says, "After all you are not going to make any private profits; no, you are not seeking your individual welfare by voting as I suggest. You are only voting for this

interest or for that other interest which is larger than the private interest." In other words, if you are not in the top of the ladder but somewhere in the intermediate rungs you seem, by some sudden effort of conscience, to absolve yourselves from blame. Many an honest and good man who has fought for his cause against the nation says, "Still I have done well; my hands are clean; I only fought for my cause." Another man who fights for his village or for his district or his province as against the interests of the general nation or this vast country of India also sometimes lulls his conscience by saying:—"Don't worry me; I am not the richer for this vote; on the other hand I am making several enemies and bringing much inconvenience upon myself, but what can I do? My party requires me to vote thus. Last night after 11 o'clock, after the most mature deliberation it was decided by a majority of one that our votes should be cast in this and not in that way." All that, however subtle, however seductive in its presentation, is certainly a degradation of public life, an obscuration of a man's responsibility by considerations of casuistry, which are far indeed from the considerations of justice or of righteousness.

But there are, my young friends, very few public men who can always call themselves immune from these considerations. Most of us are approached upon one side or another of our altruistic nature. We are all ourselves in different ways and in different measures accessible to these considerations. Nevertheless, they are a fall from the true standard of public duty, and it is only they who allow

themselves always to live in contact with the highest requirement that can be said to be the true servants of the public.

Moreover, when I talk to you I should fail in my duty as a lifelong teacher unless I brought before you a certain consideration in which you are far more involved than people of my age and standing. Will you let me, for the remaining few minutes during which you will perhaps be patient, will you allow me to dwell a little on that supreme point? For to you nothing can be more important, while you are in college, supple of mind, plastic in heart and open to the nobler emotions and appeals than that I should bring before you a certain point apt to be lost in the heat of public controversy, and, I am afraid, too often forgotten even in the lecture hall. It is, believe me, this—going back to a point which I dwelt upon a minute ago—it is this, that there is no question of importance in public life, nay no question of any consequence whatever to you upon which it is not possible for honest men, for patriotic men, for well-meaning and highly cultured citizens, to differ, to take their stations in opposite camps. It is usual in public debates, not merely to criticize the opinions of your adversary, but to hold them up to a certain amount of legitimate ridicule. But I am afraid, the common trick to which most people are tempted to descend is to try to hold the man and not merely the measure, to ridicule. We are not content, whenever the subject is of some importance, with saying that the other fellow is a fool, has not considered the question properly, has not read up all previous literature upon the subject, has not

taken a large and statesmanlike view, which is the peculiar privilege and monopoly of the speaker. Some people think that in addition to saying these things they must go and question even his general character. They will say, "This fellow is always like this; he has never behaved better and to my knowledge I have always detected him taking this low and partial view." Then they attack subtly his character, his motives. They say, "Why does he take this view when the transparently clear view is mine? There can be no other view on the subject. And still if he takes the opposite view,—he is an educated man the same as I am, he has got intelligence, he has got judgement—if he takes the opposite view there must be some motive which does not appear on the surface." And then the speaker proceeds, for the benefit of the public that he is addressing, to ransack the man's past and discover the hidden causes of his otherwise inexplicable conduct.

Yes, my young friends, most newspapers which you read so freely every morning and every evening, contain nothing but abuse of the other side. If, for instance, you read some extremist organs, there is nothing but abuse of the other fellows. They are all people that are accustomed to wait in the ante-chambers of big officials, people that make private applications for titles and honours, or ask for consideration in a sympathetic and favourable spirit of the applications that their nephews and sons-in-law are sending up. It would appear the accusers are above all such considerations. None of these sub-lunary matters appeals to them. It is all angels

on one side and devils on the other; swans and crows, upon the one side all unworthy citizens, upon the other all saints. It may not be like that; and, well, I want you still, while your hearts are virgin and uncommitted to these partisan views, to remember that it is your misfortune to be reading only one side of a case all the time. If you cannot read a paper upon the other side or listen to a public address by an exponent thereof, I want you to exercise your imagination and your power of constructing a case for yourself and making a deliberate habit of considering both sides, for believe me, there is a good deal to be said upon both sides and not all of it is said by the speakers upon one side or upon the other side. That is a training which can only be given here. But I am exceedingly sorry to think that very little is done in that direction, that you are allowed to pursue your own unguided way through the politics of the land, that you pick up this side or that side of the case as the accident of a certain newspaper being easily available may determine it. Either your father or your uncle is engaged deeply upon one side and you cannot imagine that your father's or uncle's lifelong adversary can be an honest man. Moreover, not merely do you allow your views to take colour like this, you go and act also on those views. For instance, at public meetings you hoot and denounce and you exclaim very bad things about a person whose politics you do not like, but about whose private character you know either nothing or something favourable. You cannot, in your mind at that time, victim as you are of partial views, allow that the person before you

can be a gentleman, can be a patriot, can have the welfare of the country in his deepest heart and can at the same time pursue a course which your monitors are constantly denouncing as anti-patriotic. No, if you take partial views, learn at least to respect the character and the judgement of those opposite to you, and learn this habit of attacking measures not men, of not stooping under the strongest temptation to discover hidden motives. Or even if a plausible motive suggests itself to you, put it aside, for it is gentlemanly, it is noble, believe me, it is human in the best sense of the word to believe well of a person as long as you possibly can. I am reminded of a certain lady in England belonging to the aristocratic rank who was always in the habit of going to a certain health resort in Wales. One year she refused to go to the usual place and the reason she gave was: I can't go to a country which gave birth to Lloyd George. And what had Lloyd George done? After all the years of agitation he had brought in the Unemployment Insurance Fund to help the poor labourer. Maybe it was an ill-planned and ill-directed measure, Heaven knows, you and I are not concerned with it. A person who could have conceived and got through Parliament a measure of that kind, thought the lady, must be so bad that his badness must have communicated itself to the soil that bore and engendered him.

I can tell you another instance of gratuitous ill-feeling in politics. How it happens, I cannot imagine at all. People become friends, people become intimately related, people grow up in the same environment, study in the same school, appear for

the same examinations, do the same job, nevertheless because they disbelieve each other's politics, they allow a deep and permanent barrier to form between them, and they attack each other from behind the wall. Why should this be the case? I cannot believe that a Congressman must be depraved in character. Why should a Congressman think me, just because I am not one like him in politics, to be wanting in the qualities either of the politician or of the ordinary citizen? I suppose it is inherent in these party divisions, and it is to that extent,—believe me, young friends, I speak from my heart to you, and I wish you to reciprocate my feelings,—an evil feeling that you must resolutely resist. How is a person, I should like to ask, who all his life reads the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and educates himself upon its columns, how is that person bound to consider that he who reads the *Hindu*, for instance, in Madras must necessarily be a bad man?

Whenever controversy assumes a more bitter tone than usual, people watch each other as if they were spies one upon another and they say: "This fellow is constantly talking to the other man, he meets him at nights, he travels with him in the same compartment, they exchange books, and last year they married their son and daughter! How can he be a true liberal if he allows these social relations to continue?" The moment you take sides definitely, that moment, some people think, you must cut off human relations and establish only these political evolutions! Ah! I never have seen in my life a perversion of political fidelity so base, so ridiculous, so inhuman as this—that you should

deny to a man, merely because he is on the opposite side of politics, a consideration, a courtesy, a social amenity that you will allow to another who is not half so good as he, but who has no concern with politics at all. You have no quarrel with that person, you have no quarrel with the indifferent merchant who says: "I have no politics." You continue your social relations with him. But if another person takes interest in public affairs, gives all his time and energy and money to the pursuit of the same subject that interests you and, if it happens that he takes a view different from yours—just for that reason you say: "I shall have nothing to do with that man." I will tell you an example that tore my heart. Some years ago, a great friend of mine, who was a devoted Congressman but for that reason had not forfeited my confidence or my regard or in any way my respect, was once asked to a dinner at which I was to be the chief guest. At that time Congress politics and Liberal politics had become sharply divided one from the other. He said, "Now as you and I differ in politics"—he wrote me a letter, he would not see me—he wrote me a letter seriously—"Now I should give up my right arm rather than be absent from this dinner, but I have now become a Congress worker in a select committee and cannot come to your dinner until the headquarters in Madras permit me to do so." What had the headquarters in Madras to do with me? He telegraphed for instructions and, would you believe it?, the instruction came, "He may be your friend but we advise you not to go to the dinner." He did not come. He met me under the cover of night when no Congressman could

witness this extraordinary meeting together of friends who had known each other for many years.

Now I ask, is that politics? If that be politics, God keep you and me away from it altogether. Still that is the extent to which political passion carries people. And I am just trying with you for a minute to examine why that should be the case. All our ethics, the teaching of all our moral books from the beginning of time is to the effect that you must forgive your enemy, that you must have infinite tolerance: that even if a man has injured you in the most vital matter, even if he has deprived you of your property, or defamed your character, even if he has hurt you in the tenderest part of your being, you must forgive him, you must extend your friendship and kindness to him and thereby conquer him and make him once more your friend and confederate. Yes, you are asked to excuse all these sins; are you at the same time to pursue the most rancorous animosity towards the man who holds different views from you in politics? Does politics, I want to ask, go to the root of life, to the root of your being in a far deeper sense than these other interests? After all, just think, my young friends, politics touches the surface of life. It is on the very top, and concerned with the externals and the superficialities. And, as I told you, the essence of politics is that we should take different sides in order that by effective advocacy of both sides, the mean may be arrived at, truth may be served and the ends of justice be preserved; it is your duty to be on one side, it is the duty of the other man to be on the other side. If he takes that view, he only does that for the good

of the public. Why should you consider him to be such an enemy that he must be cut off from social relations? And yet what opposition in politics can be more definite, can be more sharp, can be more obstinate than the Opposition between the Prime Minister of a democratically governed State and the Leader of the Opposition? Nevertheless do you know that when the opposition weakens, when the leader of the Opposition is not careful, does not come well prepared and shows some feebleness in the presentment of the opposite case, the man who would regret the degeneracy most is the properly equipped Prime Minister, for he is a man who sees only one side of the case strongly. All his mind and all his thought is concentrated only upon a certain side, and, if he were of the right type, he would thank the man who showed him the other side, which was naturally and habitually closed to him. Therefore, it is that in Canada, the Leader of the Opposition is paid a salary nearly as good as the salary of the Prime Minister. It has been recognized by the public that the Leader of the Opposition is nearly as good a servant of the public as the man at the helm of affairs. People say nowadays, I do not know with what truth, not having been myself a close student of Canadian politics, that the difference in the salary of the two people is so small that the Leader of the Opposition does not want to become the Prime Minister, for he gets a good enough salary without all that bother of sleepless work and responsibility. That is the way politics ought to be looked at. The man upon the other side does you a real service. If you are an anxious servant

of a cause, determined to find out the good and not merely your side of it, you must welcome criticism from the opposite side; and when that criticism weakens or shows signs of degeneracy, a conscientious Government feels that there is something wrong.

What is the view that we should take of our political opponents? I should like you to ponder over this subject while still you are young. Do not consider them as your enemies, consider them as those who supply a deficiency in your education or in your political outlook; regard them as people who are supplementary, who are designed by the economy of human relationships just to give you that which by your upbringing, by your partial leanings and prejudices, you are for the moment without. That is the point of view which a really good citizen, seeking the welfare of the public and not merely the temporary triumph of his cause, should take; that is the point of view from which political opposition should be considered and made a part of our care. To take another view, to bring the bitterness of enmity and lifelong animosity and the habits of uncritical depreciation, constant abuse and vilification, and ascription of unworthy motives to people on the other side is not merely to do wrong to the other persons but, it is to yourselves a disservice of the worst possible character. It must affect your nature, it must poison the springs of your character at the very source. It must keep you to the superficialities of life, it must make you an imperfect instrument of God's will. I use strong language because I am addressing the young particularly, and I hope

that when I present the ugly and the black aspect of our public life I do not speak from a heart surcharged with enmity or hatred of any person. It seems to me that by the practice of politics we are degrading what ought to be an instrument of public welfare into an instrument of public degradation. When you come of age and take your hand in politics and assume prominent positions upon one side or upon the other, whether office rewards you at the end or titles and decorations adorn your breast, whatever your future may be, learn how to welcome as allies opponents who open more sides of a question than you can yourself see, give you as it were four eyes where God has given you only two. You and your political opponents may be pulling the string opposite ways, and, for that reason you may pull strongly, you may pull vigorously, you may make cries like the American boy-buglers just to call out your strength in full, but it is only for the purpose, believe me, of achieving the common object. At bottom all of us are friends and should recognize that we are friends.

DEMOCRACY AND TRUTH*

We live under democratic institutions of the British type, which are now discredited in various parts of the civilized world. Even among us, who belong to the British Commonwealth, large sections of the people, perhaps growing steadily in number, are of the opinion that democracy is played out, and that in clinging to it we run the risk of being left behind in the international race. This may or may not be true. I am inclined to think that the day of democracy is not yet done, and that, if its champions would only take pains to remove its weaknesses and reinforce its strong points, it might still maintain its ground as the most beneficent form of human government yet evolved. Unfortunately, democracy's friends do not stop to discriminate; they take always the easy path to success and forget that, in certain high aspects of political action, the means are as important as the ends. It thus happens that in this country, with every widening of the franchise and of the sphere of popular control, the corruptions of western democracy obtain a foothold sooner than its virtues. Criticism of the methods adopted by our leaders is not necessarily to be suspected as proceeding from a believer in autocracy, but ought rather to be welcomed as the attempt of a patriot who cherishes with affection the political institutions of his country and would fain see them cleansed of imperfections and brought to a higher pitch of purity and public serviceableness. In this spirit and not in that

*From the address delivered at the Annamalai University Convocation on December 4, 1937.

of cavil on the one hand or of fervid other-worldliness on the other, I propose to point out one of the dangers which threaten to strangle our public life.

The malady I shall deal with is the hypertrophy of the party system. It is established beyond question that parliamentary government postulates the existence of well-organized and coherent parties. The conditions for their proper functioning must be secured beyond all hazard. Politicians who wish to do their bit for the community must submit to a certain amount of control and restriction of the free exercise of their judgement. This being premised, I am concerned here to dwell at some length on the other side of the picture. There are great evils attendant on the system; some of them apparent, but others insidious in their nature and demanding the utmost vigilance on the part of leaders lest they should choke the atmosphere of purity and regard for the welfare of the whole which is so essential to the success of popular institutions. Writers on political subjects usually point out that the great antinomy is between the freedom of the individual and the exaltation of the State, whether the individual exists only as an instrument of the welfare of the State, or the State is in the last resort to be judged by the degree in which it secures the freedom and the welfare of the individual. It is by no means easy to decide between these alternatives, but as one who is always on the quest of the golden mean, I should like to believe that except in very rare situations it is possible for the State and the individual to sustain and subserve each other. The actual antinomy, however, that faces us is, the party or the

individual citizen? One can understand the nation demanding the entire surrender of the citizen, his prospect, his freedom and his life. Can a party push its claims against its members quite so far? Perhaps the claim is not made in set formulae or stated nakedly in any treatise on public institutions; but in actual practice, the tendency of party executives is to aggrandize themselves and make continual inroads on the freedom of action and of speech of their members. As in other cases, the evil example of one party spreads among all. The reins of party discipline tend to be held with increasing rigour, and men and women are told that non-compliance with the fiat of party leaders will be noted in black ink in their records. In the hurry of life we do not remember that by merely joining a party we give up a considerable slice of liberty. With the vast range of activity now assumed by Government and semi-governmental organizations, there is little in the normal life of a citizen which may not at one time or another become the subject of regulation; and a political party therefore, in the search for means of extending its power and prestige, is almost omnivorous. It soon acquires a body of crystallized views upon all subjects under the sun, and a member may be called upon at any time to support them by advocacy and by vote. It is inconceivable that the party views on all or most of these subjects could be his own personal views. Such genuine conformity is not possible in more than a few subjects. The theoretical distinction between fundamentals and details, between principles and their particular applications, is apt to be lost sight of; and in the fer-

vour of propaganda and the excitement of combat the word of the party leader must be obeyed, and the tyranny of military discipline tends to be established. In a system of ins and outs the whole power and authority of Government are the stake for which the parties contend with one another, and the prospect of such a prize magnifies all trifling details in the campaign and makes the maintenance of discipline in all ranks a paramount consideration. The Opposition, whose business ought to be to expose the flaws of Government measures, but, when that task is done, to examine the measures on their merits and support them where they are worthy of support, opposes for the sake of opposition and gets into the habit of seeing nothing right in the operations of Government and never saying a good word of its adversaries. This may be good "strategy", but it affords no exercise in the art of political judgement, which after all consists in the ability to sift public issues, separate the good and bad in them and advance the one while checking the other. How can a tyro in political science educate himself by a study of the speeches and actions of those who have hopelessly narrowed their vision and made up their minds to view all matters only as they affect themselves? Speaking to the alumni of a University, I may not forget the needs of beginners and the duty of elders so to conduct themselves in the political sphere as well as in other spheres that their thought, speech and deed may accord with one another and teach the lesson that all life is one and must be lived in close conformity with one's nature and inmost convictions. It is impossible to be a bondsman

in politics and a free man in other departments of life.

It is amazing how the men who sit at the headquarters of political organizations claim the right to control and guide our private friendships and social relations. The barriers that divide parties one from another are held inviolable as though they were ordained of heaven and could only be crossed under penalty of excommunication. You are admonished which socials you may attend with impunity and which you must avoid. Deep differences of views on public affairs and the habit of meeting on different platforms naturally part people into groups, and each person may be trusted to avoid contacts which may expose him to misunderstanding or impair his reputation for fidelity. Why need we add to these natural restraints special prohibitions directed against individuals or classes? It is no good reminding us that, in periods of abnormal excitement like that which saw the Irish Home Rule Bills of Gladstone, social intercourse between members of the opposed parties is apt to be a minimum and even friendships may suffer suspension as during a civil war. This is an aberration not to be cited as a precedent for normal times. I have never been able to perceive sufficient justification in India for the boycott of social functions at which officials are present, whether as hosts or as guests. It arises from morbid political animosity, to which I have ever been a stranger. One would think, on the contrary, that men and women were meant to mix easily and naturally with one another and that, where differing political tendencies might keep them apart,

special occasions of social intercourse should be created for the purpose of bringing them together and thus bearing witness to their common nature.

How true it is that the appetite for power grows by what it feeds on! Put a man at a table with some stationery and call him the secretary of a bureau. He will start by making enquiries which will soon become inquisitions, by making suggestions which will rapidly assume the character of orders, and by formulating principles which will steadily harden into a creed. He sends out whips on all occasions and sundry, and you have to make a speech or hold your tongue, to attend or stay away, and to walk to the right or to the left as you may be bidden. One may readily grant that members of a party must submit to certain regulations in order that concerted action may be calculable. What is objectionable and must be resisted is the ceaseless encroachment of the executive upon the freedom of the individual until he becomes a mere unit in a well-drilled regiment. Not long ago official members in a legislative house nominated to represent departments or provincial governments were the object of derision amongst non-officials as automata whose votes could as well be taken into the reckoning without requiring their bodily presence,—thus saving them many hours of ennui and Government some sorely needed rupees. If it be contended that, while the outward freedom to speak and to vote is reduced within narrow limits, the truest form of freedom, namely, the freedom of the mind, is not curtailed, even this proposition is only partially true, for thought can flourish and produce its full

effect only when it can find an outlet in speech and action. Long disuse of the latter cannot but lead to enfeeblement and paralysis of the former. Professor Graham Wallas quotes in one of his books from a speech made in the House of Commons in 1911, when the question of women's franchise was under discussion. It was agreed that the party whips should be called off and members could speak and vote in accordance with their personal views. One member complained that, as he and his colleagues had not enjoyed such freedom for many years, they found their mental faculties benumbed and did not know how to form an opinion. An exaggerated statement without doubt; but it contains a certain measure of truth; it is against human nature to exercise independent thought *in vacuo*. We are grown callous; otherwise we should feel the mockery of a system which draws scores of members from various committee rooms at the sound of the division bell and compels them to ask "Which lobby is mine?" The unreality of proceedings in which men and women do not care to form their own opinions or, when they have them, do not care to express them, is so great that one hesitates to accept the decisions arrived at in such conditions as expressions of the national will entitled to respect and obedience. T. H. Huxley was once asked why he did not care to enter the House of Commons: his answer was that he had dedicated his life to the discovery and elucidation of truth and not to its obscuration, and therefore he avoided the pursuit of politics. I do not think that Huxley overstated his case. Party politics, which forbids independent

judgement and compels one to speak and vote at another's bidding, is systematized violence done to truth. This confession must sound strange, coming from one who a few moments ago granted the proposition that the party system and therefore party discipline are essential to the success of democratic institutions, and who is himself a lifelong practitioner of the game. Knowing how commonly one is misunderstood, let me at this point repeat my faith in democracy. However bad a legislative chamber may be, as Cavour said, it can never be so bad as the antechamber of an autocrat or, one may add, of a modern dictator. But does it follow that I should join in the apotheosis of party and kneel down before a caucus which regards its slogans as mantras at a ritual and shouts hosannas at every paltry success as though the hosts of heaven had routed the hordes of hell?

It has been pointed out that the function of political parties is akin to that of lawyers who argue a case before the jury from opposite sides, the general public being the final deciding authority. Avowedly then a party is only one of two or more similar agencies meant to check and complement one another for the discovery of the line of best advantage to the community. For any one of these to claim the monopoly of power or influence and to demand the entire allegiance of the people is in the nature of an usurpation. It ought to be clearly understood that in a legislature, for instance, the party in power will only then be doing its duty when it pays due regard to the views of the other elements that compose the House, appropriates the best

thoughts and suggestions put forward by them and enacts into law the combined wisdom of the people's representatives. If it were possible to rid our minds of the competitive aspect of the labours of the various parties, they would seem to be co-ordinate and co-operating agencies employed on the common task of ascertaining and promoting the good of the whole community. A party is subordinate to the nation, must be ready to sacrifice its interests for those of the nation, and ought not to claim of the citizen that complete abnegation that only the nation can claim in sore need. On this view how grievously at fault we are in carrying on a ceaseless mutual warfare, on the look-out for ambushes, feints and fights to the finish! If the great religions are to practise the virtues of charity, tolerance and even appreciation towards one another, if races and nations are bidden, in the name of mankind, to pull down all tariff and political barriers, how paltry and childlike seem the squabbles and truceless hostilities of our parties, often with no intelligible distinction and revolving round personalities!

I am under command to exhort you, the graduates of the year, to conduct yourselves suitably unto the position to which, by the degrees conferred upon you to-day, you have attained. Your position is that of those who are entering on the rights and duties of citizenship. I advise you to be faithful to party, but always to put the nation above it. I advise you, when you become leaders, to circumscribe within well-defined limits the jurisdiction of your party, to demand of your followers due respect for this jurisdiction, but scrupulously to allow them

full discretion outside that jurisdiction. I advise you not to look upon members of other parties as enemies to be avoided, denounced and injured, but as fellow travellers choosing different routes to reach the same goal, viz., the common good. I advise you, above all, to cherish your personal freedom as a birthright and guard it jealously except in a limited sphere, so that in your public activities you may be true to yourselves. The ideal to be aimed at is the one enunciated in our ancient saying:

मनस्येकं वचस्येकं कर्मण्येकं महात्मनाम् ॥

“One and the same in thought, word and act.” To propagate others’ opinions as your own, to make speeches against your convictions and to vote habitually at the bidding of a whip, is to do violence to truth. In this land men have been bidden from ancient days to speak the truth and to perform the *dharma*. सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । Truth has been declared to be the foundation and the support of all things सत्ये सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् In an immortal legend Harischandra sold his wife and son to slavery and himself watched corpses burning on Ganga’s bank, to avoid framing a falsehood between his lips. To keep the plighted word of his father Rama gave up a kingdom and dwelt in the forest for many years with his wife. The empire of Truth has no limits and knows no relaxations. Modern life, however, has made numerous and extensive inroads upon it. In the dealings of nations, whether in war or peace of ordinary diplomatic intercourse; in the flattery that pervades palaces; in the large sphere allotted to propaganda and advertisement; in the region of sex; in commerce and business; in testimonials; in postprandial

utterances; in obituary orations and epitaphs; in dealings with invalids and children; in the promises made by lovers and by candidates at election time; in the writings of the partisan press; in the one-sided pleadings before judges; in the chronicles of courts and kings and queens; in the defence of superstition and error as a necessary basis for ethical conduct; in these and several other departments we recognize and allow for a large measure of concealment and distortion of the truth. Shall we knowingly and deliberately add the enormous domain of politics to this formidable list?

Happily we are not left without some shining examples for our guidance. One that will be universally admitted is Mahatma Gandhi. It is not for nothing that he observes silence on one day of each week, for all speech involves a certain impairment of the truth. He employs the fewest words and the simplest to express his thoughts, for does not the poet say that those must be frugal in their words who wish to be truthful? I know of none who is so preternaturally careful to avoid situations that might compromise or weaken his adherence to the truth. With a will that no bribe can buy and no threat can bend, he upholds the supremacy of his conscience. Dedicated body and soul to the service of mankind, he will seek no good, however great or glittering, except by methods wholly consonant with his own conception of right or truth. *Daridranarayana*, as he proclaims himself, four annas is not beyond his means; if still he stands outside the Congress organization, it is because its atmosphere irks his extremely sensitive and truthful soul. He pro-

tests against people following him blindly and accepting his decisions without endeavouring to make them their own. Yet, so weak is human nature that in the wide circle of his influence people too readily surrender their individual freedom and so palter with truth. If one of the phases of truth be non-violence, another is the integrity of the human soul. The Mahatma's supreme merit is his unflinching devotion to the goddess of Truth in her various phases. Let us be his co-worshippers, not his worshippers.

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP *

I must begin with an experience which was equally joyful and revealing. One day thirteen years ago I was far away in Natal, opening a school-house which our poor countrymen had built for themselves with no aid from the Government of the country. An old man welcomed me in a Tamil speech. He then recited, crudely no doubt and incorrectly, but so as to thrill the audience, who listened with reverent awe, I no less than they:

विद्या नाम नरस्य रूमधिकं प्रच्छन्नगुप्तं धनं
विद्या भोगकरी यशः सुखकरी विद्या गुरुणां गुरुः ।
विद्या बन्धुजनो विदेशगमने विद्या परा देवता
विद्या राजसु पूजिता न तु धनं विद्याविहीनः पशुः ॥

The sloka is by a master and has a master's ease and lucidity. Still in these days when Samskrit is not honoured in its own home as it should be, it will not be amiss to give a translation:

Learning adds to the brightness of one's countenance.

Learning is wealth secured beyond all risk.

Learning is the key to prosperity, renown and bliss.

Learning is a teacher above all teachers.

When one goes abroad, learning is an un-failing companion.

Learning is a divinity without a peer. It is

to learning that kings love to do honour,

not to mere pelf. Why, a person devoid of

learning is no better than a beast.

* A talk broadcast by the A.I.R., Madras on Nov. 3, 1940.

You see, friends, the poet prizes knowledge, not for the material gains it may bring but because it ennobles and elevates the soul above the grossness of the earth. And I have no doubt that the Indians in South Africa, though they have gone there for the bare means of subsistence which their motherland denied them, perceive vividly the high purpose of learning and cherish it with pious longing. To think that in this land where scholarship and scholars have always been objects of veneration, we should now hear liberal education derided and denounced! And forsooth because many well-qualified men are without employment. Is the only or main purpose of learning the attainment of a living? Is it suggested that unemployment would be more endurable when associated with nescience than when associated with enlightenment? One actually hears the asseveration from persons apparently sane that high education unfits one for the world's work. And some who wield authority hold that the poorer classes are wronged by the spending of public revenues on colleges and similar centres of learning. That I regard as one of the sinister portents of the time. The liberal professions, the public services, social and economic uplift, unofficial life that keeps government straight by criticism and direction and discharges the many functions that government cannot touch, all these require brains that have received the best training that academies can give. Start high-grade technical and vocational institutions by all means. But start them well and with guarantees of efficiency secured by adequate finance. We have always demanded such

institutions. But let us not delude ourselves with the hope that they will cure unemployment. Not improbably their graduates too will have to encounter enforced idleness, and in their case the evil will be more lamentable, not less, because of the fewer remedies that are open. Unemployment is a most acute and distressing malady, and we are bound to devise measures to relieve it. But the measures must be calculated to achieve the end. Let us not in our vexation shut up colleges and schools. The undeveloped faculties, idle brains, and undirected energies of the young will become a danger to the community, a hundred times more difficult than the present unemployment. Not until industries and manufactures have been established on a large scale, and economic prosperity assured to coming generations, shall we be within sight of a sufficiency of jobs for our sons and daughters.

The prevailing distemper of the young assumes strange forms, some alarming ones too. One of these is the powerful fascination exercised on their imagination by the triumphant career of the dictators who sway over a great part of the civilized earth. That they abhor and destroy all forms of popular government, that they hold freedom in utter contempt, that they ruthlessly suppress even the semblance of opposition and dissent, that they are bent on the re-establishment of the tyranny of tribe and race and colour which mankind has, after infinite travail, nearly outgrown—these and similar indictments do not weigh much in the scales of immature judgement against the glamour of their material success. Have they not raised their people

from the slough of despond? Have they not restored, maybe by force of arms, a sense of self-respect to their nation? Have they not enhanced the efficiency of their subjects, found them work and food, and in a word made their lives worth living? These achievements, howsoever won, never fail to secure homage. Man has ever bowed the knee to power, and it does not take him long—alas, contemporary events make it too plain,—to forget the dignity of the human soul, to pull down the images of liberty and mercy, and to instal in their places the hideous symbols of despotism and cruelty. We all want great things done for us in India, don't we? Only we want them done in proper ways, justly not harshly, slowly if need be but surely. What is done in a hurry is undone in a hurry too. Wait and see how long Hitler's conquests last after him. True we want the throne of independence; but shall we wade through slaughter to a throne? Shall India, like Germany, shut the gates of mercy on mankind?

Your democracy and your freedom, say these young sages, are fleeting and they change continually, they aren't worth the labour of pursuit and the care of custody. But change or progress is their merit and their attraction. Justice enlarges its bounds. Freedom extends its joys to new groups of men and women. Education lends grace to countless lives in every generation. Citizenship was a tiny and precarious bundle of rights a century ago; it is now a precious cargo, which has cost many tears, many years of manly struggle, many exemplary and heroic lives. But what a heritage! It has inspired the noblest and most stirring orations, the

finest, grandest poems are in its praise. Even here in India, bedraggled as she is, her visage drawn and her vestments torn, she retains the majesty of her mien and is truly worshipable. I am not without hope that, not long hence, if the sky clears and the stars shine again, even the apostate may recant and be welcomed again into the holy shrine like the returned prodigal, with festive and sumptuous rejoicings.

At this point I would like to ferret and drive out of the temple of freedom some of the foul heresies which infest it. But it is an odious task and would take too long a time. One, however, I must belabour now and slay, if I can. That the heretics are our own people and that the heresiarch is among the Cardinals are no grounds for quarter. The belief is general that civic rights are in danger only under alien rule, and that the champion of the liberties of the citizen may go to sleep while the reins of administration are in the hands of our kindred. All history testifies to the contrary; in fact in some respects fraternal enmity is capable of more callous crimes than the enmity of remote cousins. English law reports tell on every page of the brave stand made by judges against the tyranny of the King's officers and their encroachments on the private citizen's rights. Sharply in the laws of Britain and America, less sharply in those of France, the powers of the Executive are demarcated from those of the Judiciary. "Good government is no substitute for self-government" was said at first of a national Government. Even in Ramarajya a loyal subject might ask for the elementary rights of citizen-

ship. The union in the same officers of judicial and executive functions, repugnant to modern ideas, was recently defended on the ground that the ministers were members of a legislature elected by the constituencies and could be trusted to be better guardians of popular rights than the judiciary. Self-righteousness is a besetting sin of popular government all the world over, the more dangerous when it rests on a large majority. From the dawn of society power over men and things has been a notoriously corrupting influence; human ingenuity has been taxed to the limit of its resources to devise checks on its exercise; sages and philosophers have exhausted their wisdom in composing texts and homilies to the same end; and the story goes on still and will go on for ever. Power of any kind, moral or material, twists human nature out of its shape, and the most conscientious rulers, besides severely watching themselves, learn to submit patiently and cheerfully to outside criticism and audit, which it is likewise their endeavour to make as independent as possible. Out of an inexhaustible anthology on the topic, a comparatively recent saying from our own classical literature is perhaps allowable:

राज्यविष विकारोन्मादकारिणी खलु राज्यलक्ष्मी ।

न शीलं पश्यति न धर्मं मनु रूढ्यति न सत्यं पालयति ।

“Kingly grandeur produces an intoxication due to the malignant poison of power. It disregards decency, it violates the sacred law, it maintains not the truth.”

It is the distilled wisdom of ages of bitter experience that is enshrined in the saying “Eternal

vigilance is the price of liberty." Eternal vigilance? Yes; but it must be also enlightened vigilance. In a totalitarian regime the code of conduct is simple—obedience, submission, surrender. Hard to practise, it is true but easy to understand. Mere subjecthood, scarcely distinguishable from slavery, needs no education. In the early days of man's liberation from political servitude, you had to have a certain stake in the country, you had to be of a certain age, and perhaps too you had to be literate before you could acquire the vote and other attributes of citizenship. Not onerous qualifications to be sure, but they greatly restricted the franchise. Nowadays the only real qualification required is a certain age. That of residence is so easy as to be nominal. To get the vote, however, is not the same thing as to use it properly, and it is with this problem we are here concerned. Most people imagine that citizenship is a grand name for a trifle, that it is nothing more than casting a vote once in five years for an unknown candidate as one may be cajoled, bullied or bribed into doing. Many don't care to be bothered even so far. Some persons of high quality, not an inconsiderable number even in advanced democracies, refuse to have anything to do with the periodical elections, being in a moral sense nauseated with the intrigues and cabals, the falsehoods and deceptions, the peculations and malversations, the feuds and vendettas which degrade public life and poison the very springs of human character. Here is reform work for generations of preachers and apostles, for organizations of resolute and fearless champions of public morals. If citizenship is not to

be a delusion and a snare, a modern invention of Satan for the corruption of our souls, we have to understand it in its bearing on our lives and on our society, and exercise it in a spirit of dutifulness and awe of the consequences. The range of knowledge that we have to traverse is formidable, including everything which is not strictly scientific, mathematical or antiquarian. The full citizen of to-day has in theory the responsibility, shared no doubt with thousands of others, for the happiness and welfare of the community. In this sense he is a king in miniature, for he can make and unmake governments and take a hand, though he hardly remembers it, in moulding their character and conduct. Just think roughly of the enormous sweep and consequence of the curriculum that should have to be framed if we projected a seminary for instruction in citizenship. Don't be frightened. I shan't drag you through any such agony. Nor is it my intention to make a bogey of citizenship. Life is one large whole, and no part of it can be studied or pursued in rigid isolation from the rest. To each man according to his capacity and inclination, I served a hard and long apprenticeship for the duties of citizenship and don't consider myself half enough equipped, but I was a 'professional' politician, not, I hope, in the sinister sense in which it was often applied to me. But I don't regard my energy misdirected this evening if I impress it on my hearers that civics is neither a light nor a mean study, that it is not an occupation for the amateur or the mere dilettante, but that it has the stuff which ennobles our lives and at the same time raises the moral stature of mankind. Do not enter

here because you want some vacant hours filled up, because you want volume for your puny figure, because you want to have your neighbour by the throat, because you want your broken fortune repaired.

Some of you who hear me may think I am somewhat mixed up in my ideas. It may appear that, in exalting citizenship as I do, I ignore the distinction between its grades; that, for instance, the profound knowledge of affairs which is requisite for a Cabinet Minister is a luxury for a mere voter who has no higher ambition. It is true the text books say so, more or less bluntly. The rural labourer in England who has received no more than the modicum of compulsory education knows little of the constitution and the laws but is told only of two or three names among which he has to make a choice. Once in a way the question of a new duty or the abolition of the Lords may emerge. On these issues, extremely simplified for his benefit, his thinking is apt to be muddled, and he votes in large measure in ignorance of the weighty policies that he may be helping to settle, in however small a degree. It is even worse in India. The ignorance and superstition of the average voter place him at the mercy of the unscrupulous wire-puller, and the colour of the ticket and the totem printed on it are only additional hindrances between his intelligence and the mighty State problems that he is supposed to pronounce upon. This is the primary fact of all election politics; other factors like intimidation, colossal misrepresentation and bribery add themselves to the welter in such wise as to upset all calculations and

make what are dignified with the name of appeals to the electorate gigantic gambles in which all connection between the merits of the issues at stake and the actual vote is completely obliterated. Now judge what absurdly tenuous justification can be pleaded for the adoption of particular policies or measures. If this is the case in lands where modern democracy takes its rise, we seem in India to carry the fiction to greater lengths. I should be trespassing if I touched controversial politics. But it is common ground that popular elections have degenerated into Augean stables. We may not expect a Hercules any more. Is it possible—there is no harm in stretching one's fancy—that the wit of man may invent some method of ascertaining the general will more trustworthy and less liable to abuse than a general election? And is it allowable to hope that that invention may be made in India for the purification of our democratic processes?

In totalitarian countries, as one may expect, care is taken to mould young minds to the required pattern, which is akin to that of the slave. Education therefore is a close monopoly of government and has one and only one set of clear aims. Britain is at the other extreme and has encouraged, perhaps to the point of danger, a great variety of private effort. On one point, however, even British educational thought has recently come to a definite agreement, viz., that all secondary education must have for one of its aims the development of a high ideal of citizenship. Some authors have laid down definite curricula for the purpose, and an exceedingly large number of good books are avail-

able, covering the whole ground. In a radio broadcast I am not expected to do more than bring the subject to the notice of my audience and may stimulate a little thought, not give it point or direction. In India colleges have to do much of the higher work done in secondary schools in Britain. My observations therefore have necessarily to apply to both grades of institutions.

All the world over, it is now settled policy, though not rigorously practised in India, that the great professions of law, engineering, medicine, teaching, accountancy and so on—should be practised only by those who are examined and certified by duly appointed authorities to be competent to practise them. I have endeavoured to show that the kind and degree of knowledge required for the duties of citizenship or what may be called unofficial public life are comparable to those required for the regular professions. Ignorance, charlatanry, hollow pretensions, can do as much harm to society in the field of politics as in the other spheres. In fact, since great institutions and national affairs are concerned in this case, the evils will be on a larger scale and less susceptible to remedy.

Another comparison, very relevant in this context, must be borne in mind. The other professions are confined to the few that choose them. The service of the public is open to all, in fact in a sense obligatory on all. While therefore what is called professional education comes *after* general education, preparation for public life must take place along with general education and as part of it. Several questions of organization arise, which have

not been sufficiently thrashed out. I would respectfully invite to them the attention of the education department and professional bodies. For instance, are the citizenship courses to be part of the obligatory or optional studies? Are students to be examined in them and required to score a certain minimum of marks? Are diplomas to be given?

One suggestion of practical value may be ventured, though it may be considered far too premature by conservative-minded persons. Why not make a certificate or diploma of citizenship a necessary qualification for those that stand as candidates for municipal councils or houses of legislature? It is desirable to exclude dolts and nincompoops from these responsible positions.

VALUES IN LIFE *

I—FROM THE FALSE TO THE TRUE

My audience today consists of the teachers and scholars in Universities. One could not wish for more enlightened listeners. Nor could one have listeners more difficult to please. It is best to begin by delimiting the topic. The title is taken from a famous scriptural text. The actual words are "*Asato ma sadgamaya.*" Guide me from what is not to what is. The function of universities is exactly that—the journey with expert leaders from nescience to knowledge. The journey's end, if there be an end, can never be attained; the journey itself yields all the profit and the pleasure and pain as well. Of universities, therefore, and similar bodies the need is perpetual. Neither the inculcation of knowledge nor its increase admits of stoppage or intermission. In vain is the cry of despair; no more books for mercy's sake, no more sitting at the feet of masters who often pretend to know and violently contradict one another. Isn't there a shortcut to salvation, some hypnotism or soul's opiate or talisman that will transport us straight? None. The flash of inspiration, the mystic vision is for the very, very few, if any. We must tread the hard and weary road, undergo the terrifying tests and weary con-ning for them. But at every stage and all the way there are compensations, the pleasures of intellectual

* These were three Radio Talks delivered to University Teachers and Scholars on 3rd and 24th May and 19th June 1942. They are published here with the kind permission of the All India Radio, Madras.

conquest; the joys of discovery—ample reward for any toil and any tribulation. Go forward, then, and mind not the croakers.

From the false to the true. The saying is to be understood anagogically, on different levels. First, in the ethical sphere, where motive and merit or demerit in the ordinary sense are the measure. Then comes the historical and scientific sphere, where truth is or ought to be objective and disinterested. Thirdly, follows the philosophical or metaphysical level at which appearance and reality, phenomenon and noumenon engage our attention. Lastly, the Supreme and our relation thereto, with which theologians are for ever engrossed and by which they are for ever baffled. In this talk let us concern ourselves with the earliest of these stages,—truth and falsehood in social affairs and with their moral consequences.

Truthfulness has two aspects in practical life, not indeed logically separable, but sufficiently distinct to deserve separate treatment. It may mean the observance of a vow, undertaking or promise. Or it may mean the utterance by speech, writing or signs of that which is, so that others learn the situation and respond with knowledge. A promise creates expectations and influences the conduct of others, so that failure is attended with inconvenience or dislocation in social relationships. Mutual trust is imperilled, and action based on calculation becomes difficult. The binding character of an undertaking, therefore, needs no emphasis. The habit of looking round carefully before incurring an obligation may, on occasions, seem unlovely and

suspicious; but properly considered, it is a proof that fulfilment is intended. The man, on the contrary, who lightly takes a vow, is apt, when the consequences come into view, to repent and look round for excuses to get out of it. Those that manage clubs and societies are driven to tears when a considerable number of members fall into arrears and several swear at the bill collector. My experience in realising donations is particularly unfortunate. Friendships come under serious risks, and faith in human nature, even in educated human nature, is undermined. Some ceremonies include vows, which may escape notice at the time. Every attempt must be made to rouse the consciousness of the parties and their careful attention. Marriage vows and convocation vows are common examples. Purohits and parents will do well to apprise the parties of the new obligations, though they may seem trite. The bridegroom and the bride mumble the endless mantras in an unknown tongue and too often do not even mumble them. When graduates take degrees the Chancellor demands promises of deep and solemn import, but the unheeding candidates stand silent, and I have recently known occasions when a single 'I do promise' was not audible. Some remedy needs to be devised by which the impressiveness of a solemn moment may be utilised for giving a good turn to young lives. *Sanyasa* at an early age is by some authorities discountenanced on the ground that the nature and scope of the renunciations are beyond the comprehension of the neophyte. Other orders too prescribe vows of a stringent nature which the subsequent trials of life prove to be too burden-

some. Many that enter with confidence become callous, but the finer spirits suffer anguish all their days because retreat is impossible. It was deep insight which prompted our ancient sages to test aspirants for long years and with severity before initiating them. I took the vows of the Servants of India Society when I had been teacher for twenty years. Still I constantly feel I fall short of their fulfilment in spirit. When young men fail, I commiserate more than I censure. Money debts were at one time more sacred than they are. Nations have begun to repudiate them, and the law provides various means of escape to individuals and corporations. What is originally meant to relieve the honest but unfortunate man becomes available to the unscrupulous and fraudulent debtor. Even among the peasantry of our land, the debts of one's parents were once honoured as a pious duty, but modern notions have grown dangerously lax, and repudiation of family obligations is a common incident in our courts. In respectable society collusion between father and son sometimes cheats the creditor of his just dues. The late C. R. Das made himself illustrious by paying his father's debts during many years of his own earning life. How one wishes that there were thousands and thousands more like him to revive an ancient code of honour which modern law has rendered obsolete! Even in the Ramayana it is worthy of note that Dasaratha's vows to his young wife were generally regarded as having been wrung from him by fraud and therefore not obligatory. His younger sons to the end maintained this belief; though they submitted to Sri Rama's iron will in

this matter, they remained unconvinced. Sumitra and Sita recognized the high idealism of the hero.

We have still to treat of truth-speaking as distinguished from keeping faith. Myriad are the ways in which one may fall from rectitude and still escape detection. Often, also, one does not suspect one's own lapse. A conscientious self-observer will convict himself many times a day of saying more or less than he meant, of misleading where he least intended harm, of suggesting thought or action to another that he should not have suggested. In some degree, slight it may be, we are all liars. And yet, if the name is applied to us, we feel insulted and are angry. This is the homage that we pay to this sovereign virtue. Unceasing vigilance must be exercised over one's self, one's slightest words and signs, lest a false suggestion be conveyed. But to our everlasting shame, human practice has consigned whole departments and categories of speech and writing to untruth. Testimonials and chits proclaim talents and virtues that do not exist. Commercial morality is hardly distinguishable from that of advertisements and propaganda. Income tax returns are only an extreme instance of the general inaccuracy and unreliability of a whole class of information. The ages recorded by officials at the time of employment are false in eighty out of a hundred cases. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan of Travancore, in ordering that the correct figures should be given in twelve months, has shown characteristic courage and enterprise. The language of courtesy, hospitality and formal social intercourse is debased in value by much that is not meant to be believed and that is not

believed. As agents and spokesmen of Government or of political parties, men and women will make themselves responsible for ambiguities and evasions which they will scorn in private or personal life. In courts, which are temples of justice and truth, it takes the acutest and wisest men to discover them. Life is hard, life's demands are inexorable; temptations, pitfalls, snares, incitements to sin abound on all sides. Apostles of truth, like Mill and Morley, and other great teachers and law-givers, have found it necessary to provide exceptions, however few and guarded, to the rule of truthfulness. Even Rama could not do without white lies. Some simple-minded and straight-forward commentators absolve Rama on the ground of merrymaking or other such motive. But other commentators torture Valmiki's text and produce fantastic meanings in order to save his character from imputation of the slightest peccadillo. This is a true case of hypertrophy of pietism. The empire of truth, however, is totalitarian, it tolerates no reservations, it cannot allow exceptions. The experience of judges and legislators has found it necessary to demand of the most ignorant as well as of the most subtle witness the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Anything less opens the door wide to corruption. In a highly evolved society no person should ask "How am I bound in these circumstances to tell the truth? If a lie will avert so much evil, why may I not tell it?"

II—FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

From Darkness to Light is one of the most trite

but one of the most pregnant metaphors in language. Places of learning are devoted to the dispelling of darkness and the spreading of light. It is their high function ceaselessly to increase our knowledge and make it more and more certain. Universities make the world more familiar everyday and therefore more friendly to man. We fear nature less and less. "*Vidwan na bibheti kadaca na*", the enlightened man has no fear from any quarter. But he must be fully enlightened. He must be master of human experience—religion, history, science. Imperfection in knowledge, error, superstition, from these he must be emancipated. Alchemy, astrology, magic, miracle-mongering must not tempt him from the royal road to knowledge. The human mind is subject to two opposite tendencies, which require to be rigidly controlled, if they are not to paralyse and wreck each other. The balance between them is at all times difficult to attain and often impracticable. They are the instincts to believe and to question. Credulity and scepticism, faith and reason are perpetually opposed to each other, but fated to operate on the same brain. No man is wholly devoid of either faculty, though some have a strong dose of the one and some of the other. Their relative influence too varies from time to time in the same man, and not merely from time to time, but from department of knowledge to department of knowledge. I have known lawyers, accustomed to weigh the evidence of witnesses and documents in the most rigid of scales, but ready to swallow the most extravagant stories of seances, communications from the dead and spiritualistic phenomena. On the contrary, some

people who subject these phenomena to exacting proofs fall easy victims to cheats, impostors and company promoters. The man is rare, one in a million, who strikes the just medium, both in human affairs and natural phenomena between caution on the one hand and receptivity on the other. To be reckoned among good-natured and lovable men, one must have a certain amount of trustfulness in dealings with others, a fixed disposition to believe good of others, till they are proved unworthy and to give them further chances even after that limit. The right question to ask when your help or sympathy is sought in that sphere is, 'why not?'. To ask, 'why should I?' would be to betray undue harshness of judgement, if not heartlessness. In matters of scientific interest, on the contrary, where not generosity or charity is concerned, but truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, where, for instance, a so-called miracle or marvel is put forward for acceptance, it is right to insist on the evidence being produced, sifted and analysed without reference to the personalities concerned. If a trustworthy friend attests the phenomenon and is prepared to pledge his honour for its accuracy, it may incline you to make investigation, but cannot justify any relaxation in the standard of demonstration required to establish a natural phenomenon. 'Why' represents the correct attitude of mind, not 'why not'? That the phenomenon did in point of fact occur as it is alleged to have occurred must be proved. You must not undertake to prove that it could not have occurred as it is alleged to have occurred. And yet many highly educated persons yield their credence to

miracles just because it is not possible there and then to prove a negative.

The opposition between these attitudes of mind, viewed in a general way, may be described as the opposition between faith and reason, faith being the attitude belauded by religion and reason the attitude championed by science. That reason is not an unfailing guide, that it is in certain circumstances impotent to discover truth must be acknowledged. Many facts have yet to be explained by reason. Nevertheless, reason has faith in itself to this extent that, as science advances, such facts will receive satisfactory explanation from natural laws. No one who surveys the state of human knowledge from time to time, beginning from our primitive days, can hold that the triumphs of reason are over, or that in the centuries in front of us many phenomena which now perplex the scientist will not yield up their secret. Our Vedic philosophers long ago laid down that faith begins where reason ends. It follows that the province of faith is subject to unceasing encroachment by science. Faith claims that it can remove mountains. If this means that in the sphere of human endeavour deeds at first regarded as impossible have actually been accomplished, it is a tribute to the power of hope and persistence which reason need not grudge. But when a certain Hindu prince of the last century caused Ganges water to be sprinkled all round his fort by pious Brahmins and trusted the infidel army to be stayed outside the hallowed line, or when in my own recent experience a holy ascetic fasted and kept vigil and intoned the Gayatri for weeks together in

the confident hope that the Viceroy would not give his assent to the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, they gave proof of magnificent but unavailing faith. Faith of that type governed human conduct much more in the old days, but we shall see it contracting its operation rapidly in future.

Science and scientists are accused today of abusing their knowledge and the power of their knowledge. They seem likely to destroy the very civilization that nurtured them. The wealthy classes, the trading classes, the manufacturing classes, the publicising classes, the governing classes all have bent their energies to the work of destruction. Why scientists should be singled out for execration has always puzzled me. Do not historians falsify contemporary records before our eyes? Do not literary men write flagrantly one-sided books for propaganda purposes? Do not eloquent men stir up anti-social passions? Will the State allow the men of science alone the freedom to choose how and how far they will help its projects? What would the British House of Commons say if the laboratories in the Universities had been shut up and the services of inventors and ingenious craftsmen had been denied to war-work? If war is inhuman and a crime against our kind, we are all alike to blame, for we all join in it, we all give our best to its successful prosecution. It is unreasonable to expect the votaries of science to cultivate an exalted morality of their own, cut off from the other professions which are tributaries to the welfare of society.

A word or two about the spirit of scientific and historical research and teaching. The essential

condition is to shake off the bondage of prejudice and prepossession and to follow where the light leads. Violence may have to be done to pet theories, to social and communal traditions, to national pride, and to the practices and beliefs of consecrated churches and holy orders. On the altar of truth all these possessions, material and immaterial, must be sacrificed, if need be. It will cost us much anguish of the soul. But the cause is worth it and more. For as the years roll on and other generations come up, a new and better world order will arise, a higher polity will evolve, and what we sacrifice with grief to-day will be replaced by institutions and practices and beliefs more in consonance with truth and more serviceable to the requirements of that time.

III—FROM THE FRAGMENTS TO THE WHOLE

The title this time is *From the Fragments to the Whole*, and our business is to put the highest possible meaning upon it. To make our task easy, we shall begin by an illustration on the ordinary level. Take a Hindu joint family. At a given moment it consists of a certain set of members. But these members change from time to time, some dropping out, others coming in. The family in its compound character continues with property, rights and obligations in law of its own, and a certain place of its own in society. For many important purposes it is an entity by itself and may be considered to have a significance, independent of its components. This is not to be taken as meaning that the joint family is immortal or that, if all its members were dead, it would still live and function in society as an organism. Nevertheless, there is a sense, limited no

doubt but real, in which it has existence apart from, and independent of, the existence of the individuals composing it. The question may conceivably be asked: Is the joint family only the sum total of its constituents or is there an element in it over and above the aggregate? Most persons would answer this question in the negative. But take the State as distinguished from its citizens or subjects. A similar question in that case is not so easily answered. Some authorities maintain that the State is a reality for all purposes transcending its citizens or subjects, while others cannot see anything left in it, if the property, territory, rights and obligations of its separate citizens or corporations of its citizens were subtracted or extinguished. These different views lead to startlingly different results in the practical demarcation of the authority of the State over those whom it controls. Going farther in the same direction, we encounter the problem of man. Is he just his limbs, blood, brain, feelings, tendencies, qualities compounded together, or is there anything of him that will remain over after all these component parts, material and immaterial, are abstracted away in thought? A school of scientists, not so numerous as it may seem, asserts that, when an individual is buried or cremated, nothing of him or her is left except his or her memory and influence. The immense majority of mankind, however, have believed and will continue to believe in an individual soul, surviving after the body has perished, and, in some manner not clearly known to us, experiencing the consequences of its earthly life. This existence and experience after death is in most

religions described as the real life of the soul in comparison with which the life on earth is a brief episode. Though this after-life is hidden and wholly unascertainable, it is easy to see how, if it exists in reality, we are not employing a mere figures of speech calling it the future life. Hinduism elaborates a theory of rebirth, according to which the soul of man or indeed of any form of life returns a countless number of times to function on earth, being indeed caught in the ever-revolving wheel of *samsara*, from which release is possible only to the purified and blessed.

What is this world or *prapanca*, this objective universe or nature, in which our lot is cast during life? Growth and decay are its characteristics. It is under an inexorable law of change. Not only what we see and handle, not only what we don't see, as the air, but feel, but abstract things like desires, qualities and thoughts, institutions like law, caste, dharma, justice, religion—all are subject to change. Now the ever changing, the unstable, the fleeting is not to be depended on. We ought not to fix our affections on what may betray us, we ought not to seek that which ever eludes grasp, and, if grasped, soon ceases to be attractive. In other words, these have no *value* and are unsubstantial, shadowy, unreal. Nor is this an exaggeration. Unreality besets all nature. What do we know of an orange, so delectable to the taste and, as the doctors say, so wholesome to the body? Colour, weight, taste, assimilability, cheapness, these are attributes all liable to change and deterioration to the extent of converting the orange into a piece of useless and

even noxious matter. Supposing, however, these attributes remained permanent and immutable to you, are you sure they are precisely the same to me? I may be colour-blind, I may have fever and it may taste differently to me, my nerves may be tired and it may seem disgusting to me, and its chemical and physiological reactions on my system may be very dissimilar to those on yours. In the case of a non-human, an orange may prove highly injurious. You and I and the non-human know of the orange only through our senses and as it affects those senses. Of its real nature we are wholly ignorant. Of the orange as it is in itself, we cannot know anything. What we affirm of the orange is its appearance or behaviour, not its reality. That is, our knowledge of the orange and indeed of the world is phenomenal, not noumenal. The noumenon or reality is shrouded from us. What is seen and felt and thought about is unreal. The real cannot be seen, felt or thought about. That is a strange result of this speculation.

Let us pass on to the next stage. Is there a reality behind all this appearance or not? Some say *no*, but many say *yes*. Even these latter can just affirm the existence of this reality and do no more. They are not agreed whether this reality is diverse as the appearance is diverse, or single. Now the human mind cannot rest in contentment at any point. It will not cease to worry and speculate because certain knowledge is impossible. When reason fails, it falls back on faith or intuition. Scientific proof, so runs the argument, is not the only guarantee of truth. Why is the faculty of faith given to us? If

you say faith fluctuates and witnesses to unintelligible and contradictory things, you are bidden to be patient and modest. Look at the vast body of genuine evidence recorded by the holy and virtuous men and women that have gone before us. Then there is scripture, Revelation, the word. What may not be understood may be worshipped and prayed to. This *prapanca* is not merely the sum of its fragments, though these are the only objects of our finite faculties. There is a Whole which comprehends its bewildering variety and is the Universal Soul giving it coherence and significance. This Universal Soul, Scripture declares, not only contains the universe but extends beyond it. It is not merely the aggregate of its parts, but an entity in and by itself, surviving the destruction or *pralaya* of the fragments. In fact, it is the only Reality—eternal, changeless, indestructible. The individual soul, when it is about to be liberated, can attain to knowledge of the Universal Soul or Brahman. But let not the word 'knowledge' deceive you. It does not mean ordinary cognition by the brain. It is called in Sanskrit *Sakshatkara*—translated into English, it would be integrated experience. That is the final liberation from the bondage of *samsara*,—no more birth and death. When *samsara* began or how, it is impossible to say. Nor has it an end to the ordinary individual soul. That fortune is reached only by the one in a million who receives the grace of the supreme. From the fragments to the whole, then, is a journey, long, arduous, and labyrinthine but seldom successful.

THE JOYS OF FREEDOM*

I am keenly sensible of the great honour I have just received at the hands of the Corporation of London. I accept the freedom of the City of London not as a personal distinction, but in all sincerity and hopefulness as a symbol and prelude to the conferment on India of the Freedom of the British Empire. On the highest authority the British Empire has been declared to be without distinction of any kind. Neither race nor colour nor religion are to divide man from man so long as they are subjects of this Empire. As in the great temple of Jagannath in my country, where the Brahman and the out-caste, the priest and the pariah, alike join in a common devotion and worship, so in this British Empire, which, by your leave, I will call the greatest Temple of Freedom on this planet—he blasphemes and violates her freedom who raises barriers of one kind or another, or says to his fellow worshippers—“there shalt thou abide, come not near me.”

The joys of freedom are indeed difficult to describe; they can only be fully appreciated by those who have had the misfortune to lose them for a time. With grief and sorrow I occasionally notice that here and there are people who speak of freedom as though it were a mechanical invention, or a quack specific for which they have taken a patent. “Our ancestors”, say they, “have fought, have struggled, have sacrificed and have suffered for

* In accepting the Freedom of the City conferred by the Corporation of London on July 29, 1921, Mr. Sastri delivered this speech.

freedom. It is ours exclusively. We will not share it with those who have not shared our antecedent troubles, trials and misfortunes to attain it. Come, take it if you can, but give it we will not." I take it that that is not an exalted view of freedom. Humanity would be but a poor witness to the wisdom of the All-Wise, if an experience were to yield benefit only to those who had gone through it. History would be a dead thing, all our trials and misfortunes would be in vain, if we compelled posterity in its turn to go through similar ordeals. What a man has fought for and won he must without reserve or qualification shares with his fellowmen. Sanitarians preach that you can never enjoy the best health in your house till your surroundings are also well developed in the matter of hygiene. Philosophers tell us that you can best seek your own happiness only by serving for the happiness of others. So I believe no man will enjoy to the fullest measure the blessings of freedom unless he shares them to the full with his fellowmen.

Like culture, like knowledge, like virtue, and like spiritual merit, freedom is such that, the more it is given, the more it grows; and the more it taxes the vigilance and energy of a people, the more beauty, grace and richness it adds to their life. He who would circumscribe freedom to particular areas and to certain peoples knows not what he is doing, for he is taking away from humanity a possible contribution to its richness and glory, a contribution which I take it to be the will of Providence that every race, every people should make in its own good time.

So, ladies and gentlemen, if you have come into this great heritage of freedom, representative institutions, Parliamentary Government and every form of human equality which civilizations have evolved, be not like the miser who keepeth his goods to himself but gets no benefit from them, only evoking the envy and hatred of the neighbourhood, and, alas, even of his own family. Rather let it be said of you that you kept not the best for yourselves and your children and grand-children unto remote generations; rather let this be said of your country in regard to India: "England took charge of a people divided from her by colour, by race and by culture. She fitted them for the tasks of empire, and when the time was ripe she gladly admitted them to be full and equal partners in the glory of empire and the service of humanity."

WHO WILL GUARD THE WORLD'S PEACE?*

For the last two weeks we have been reading of interviews and statements of one kind or another regarding post-war arrangements by front-rank statesmen on both sides of the Atlantic. We may infer, and gratify ourselves with the inference, that the ultimate victory seems to them more than a possibility. The conduct of war is still their main pre-occupation, and they will not tolerate minute inquiries tending to distract their attention. But at intervals when they pause to take breath, problems of the future in bewildering variety obtrude their faces and seem to ask "What about us?" Indeed many men and women, in their very anxiety for victory, feel that the efforts of the United Nations may derive fresh vigour from contemplation of the brave new world that is taking shape. Harrowing fears, too, haunt a great many of us that, if our leaders were suddenly confronted with peace problems, they might be compelled by the pressure of circumstances to take ill-considered and immature decisions which carried the seeds of unhappiness and war. So far the most valuable and coherent ideas on the reconstruction of the world have been contributed by thinkers and philosophers somewhat removed from the immediate contact of the ever-changing and ever-clamant phases of the titanic struggle. It is scarcely to be expected that these thinkers and philosophers will be accorded more

* Read at the Rotary International, Madras on 23rd March 1943.

than a tiny fraction of the seats of authority round the peace table. They and we, who have read their writings with avidity and formed visions of a new heaven and a new earth, must be content with such influence as we may be able to exert indirectly on the governments that have borne the brunt of the war. Statesmen who saved the world will not surrender it into the hands of philosophers and say: "Our job is done; begin yours". Such complete dichotomy of functions is not in human nature.

President Roosevelt, one of the two men to whose faintest whisper the world listens with anxious attention, has promised our race four freedoms: freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom from fear and freedom from want. Interpreted liberally, these boons would seem to comprise all that an individual can desire.

If a man can think what he pleases and express his thoughts without taking into consideration the dangers, say of the Defence of India Act, if he can live his life without dreading violence or exploitation from his neighbour or tyranny from a totalitarian State, if he can be sure of suitable employment and a minimum standard of living, he must be an ingrate beyond redemption to grumble even then. It is no small thing to promise so much to every man and woman everywhere on earth. To fulfil this promise not only should international relations come under the control of an overwhelmingly powerful Super-State, but the internal polity of each individual State should likewise pass under that control. Would this be consistent with the self-determination promised to each government or

political community? A condition so innocent-looking and in fact so indispensable to human welfare threatens on closer examination to become unattainable. The poor people of the world, having had the hope at last of a millennium held out to them, would suffer the bitterest disappointment if they still had to face destitution and hunger during part of their lives.

Let us take the Atlantic Charter announced to the world in August 1941. This is a document affirming certain purposes and principles of far-reaching scope as to the future of the world and bearing the signatures of the heads of the two mightiest governments of today. It has since been endorsed by the governments of twenty-four other countries in alliance with the United States of America and Great Britain. The hopes of improved conditions embodied in this momentous declaration do not touch the individual human being, but are held out to the nations of the world. These include the restoration of sovereignty and self-government to the peoples who have been forcibly deprived of them; access to trade and to raw materials to all peoples great or small, victor or vanquished; co-operation in the economic field to all alike so as to secure improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security; the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries with freedom to all from fear and want; freedom to all to traverse the high seas and oceans; the abandonment of the use of force and the lightening of the burden of armaments. This Charter, according to the Prime Minister of Great Britain, is not applicable to India,

which must look for salvation to pledges of an earlier date and of similar scope. Complaints against this exclusion made by the leaders of Indian political parties have elicited no response of any kind from the other signatory. That India is one among the twenty-four additional signatories cannot be construed as raising her status. Precedent is against it. India signed the Treaty of Versailles and was one of the foundations-members of the League of Nations. Still her rights of initiative in that body were subject to serious restrictions, as she is not a Dominion like Canada or Australia. The obligations of membership, however, would press on her with full force. I shall have something more to say on this subject a little later.

The phraseology in which the eighth principle is couched deserves careful study. It runs thus: "Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments". This sounds ominously like what happened after Versailles and was one of the causes of the present war. The distinction between peace-loving and peace-disturbing nations is unreal and cannot be a safe foundation for the construction of the world's future. Italy and Japan were once on the side of the Angels, but have now gone over to

the wrong side. Russia has recently changed her character in the contrary direction. And poor fallen France—where can we place her? In the matter of disarmament the most virtuous nation must agree to abide by the common rule. Self-righteousness is wrong in nations as in individuals.

In the enormous array of suggestions made for the New Deal, there are a few which command either universal or almost universal assent. I shall endeavour to bring them together in this place. Nations ought no longer to be allowed to make war on one another. They should all be disarmed. An International Authority should be created with well-defined powers over all and having at its disposal land, sea and air forces sufficient to overcome any State or any combination of States that may threaten to break the peace. It may be necessary to locate these forces at three or four strategic points in the two hemispheres. Dispute between nations, if not settled among themselves, should be decided in a court like the Hague Tribunal or submitted to arbitration. Arbitral awards must in the last resort be enforceable by the Supreme International Authority. The constitution and functions of this Authority should be more precise and capable of being mobilised than those of the League of Nations were, and its procedure must admit of greater dispatch of business. It may, if necessary, hold its sittings in two or three different places by turns. Member-States must submit to such taxation as may be imposed by the Authority, which should have power to collect its dues when necessary by force. Territories of which the inhabitants are unable to look

after themselves must be administered by the International Authority. If the agency of Member-States be used for the purpose, it must be subject to the supervision of the International Authority, which may require facilities for inspection and periodical reports.

In the last regime, the mandates, graded differently and named A, B and C, did not work properly. Certain Powers frankly regarded the trust as little short of annexation. A Dominion Prime Minister made the avowal cynically. In some cases the people under tutelage rose against their masters' unsympathetic treatment, but were put down with barbarous cruelty. When the Mandates Commissioners bestirred themselves and made inquiries, their intervention was resented and the errant Powers even refused information. The League was unable to redress the wrongs of the oppressed. If the mandates system be found unavoidable, care must be taken that the ultimate power is in the hands of the International Authority and can be invoked for the benefit of the backward communities. Also a period must be fixed in each case for the conclusion of the mandate, and the conferment on the people concerned of the full dignity and status of nationhood. Where the process of uplift has not reached its consummation, the International Authority must have the right to renew the probation for a further period. The Powers that possess Colonies seem to be agreed that such possession must be subject to the claim of other Powers to a share of the Colonial products to the extent necessary for their economic life. This recognition, when regulated

by the International Authority, will remove one of the prolific causes of jealousy among the nations.

Unanimity is not perceptible on certain other important suggestions. They seem desirable in themselves, but cannot be forced on unwilling Powers. The notion of sovereignty is held with the tenacity of deep-rooted pride, so that encroachments are perilous if pushed beyond the point of necessity, proved and admitted. We have experience of the feeling in India where, after the substance has been taken away, the mere name is clung to with a degree of pathetic fervour that reminds us of our common human frailty.

Strong arguments, for example, are adduced for the abolition of political boundaries in order to ensure absolute freedom of movement on this planet and remove all boundary and nationality disputes, which have in the past led to acrimonious and prolonged quarrels and even to wars. With greater cogency pleas have been urged for the elimination of economic barriers, so that commerce and manufacture may have no impediments of any kind, and vexatious delays and harassments in travel may cease. A uniform monetary currency has also been proposed as a desideratum; but the difficulties in the way of its introduction seem insuperable. If it were feasible at all, that other millennial feature of the New Deal would come into practical politics,—a uniform minimum standard of living. Less utopian without doubt and far more necessary in the interests of the world peace is the internationalization of all Colonial possessions for the equal benefit of the nations of the earth. But nationalism and the

narrow patriotism that goes with it are passions still too strong in the human breast. The British Prime Minister has choked off even discussion of this momentous subject by declaring with the finality of conviction that his great office precludes him from entertaining proposals to weaken or diminish the magnitude of the British Empire. India has been alarmed by the emphasis and unqualified nature of this enunciation of policy. It is certain to be challenged by more than one people now comprised within the Empire, who pray for the triumph of the doctrine that the sway of one people over another is against the law of nature. The wise are many who hold that no new order in the world's affairs is good for anything which does not terminate imperialism root and branch. The passion for complete independence is now so strong among the politically-minded classes in this country that those who deliver a frontal attack on it will before long have a rude awakening. The Indian equivalent of the Atlantic Charter dangled before our eyes is the Indian Constitution of 1935, modified by the proposals which bear the name of Sir Stafford Cripps and have the official imprimatur of the British Cabinet. These last are withdrawn in form, but have been reaffirmed by front-rank statesmen as Britain's bond of honour, one which there can be no going back. The sands of the hour-glass have nearly run down. Why don't the Government promulgate an irrevocable decree, making India a Dominion alongside Great Britain and the rest of the members of the Commonwealth, and binding themselves to implement the decree within a named period after the war

with the co-operation of those practical-minded elements of the population who realise that the status now attained by South Africa and Eire, together with the express acknowledgment of the right of secession, is as good as independence?

One dreaded enemy of peace, one potent cause of war, remains still to be considered. It is colour prejudice. Of its malignant possibilities the world has still no clear perception. Let us hope these possibilities will be understood betimes and prevented from ever taking shape or form. There is no calculating the harm it has done in the past. Shall mankind rise above it? There are white communities who sincerely believe that the coloured races were created to serve them. Hindus with their caste-system consigning people by their birth to lowly occupations will understand the disabilities of colour, which admits of no remedy. The fate of the Harijan community must give us pause in condemning the harsh treatment accorded to coloured races where white people dominate. There is, however, one circumstance in India which redeems the situation in part. The law of this country is against caste discrimination, and it is administered in a liberal spirit. Enlightened public opinion too is decidedly unfavourable to caste tyranny and caste pride. In South Africa, on the contrary, both the law and its working are hostile to coloured people, and public opinion is even more so. The Dominions have closed the door against coloured immigration, though enormous spaces are unpeopled. At the present moment the white inhabitants of Durban, predominantly British by origin, are conducting one of their perio-

dical agitations against their Indian fellow-citizens without a sense of responsibility. The Negro of the Southern States of America is far yet from enjoying the rights of citizenship given him by the law, though cases of lynching are less common than formerly, and it is some time since one read of the weird and lawless activities of the Ku Klux Klan. When the last great peace was fashioned at Versailles in 1920, the delegation of Japan demanded that the principle of equality between coloured and colourless peoples should be formally recognised. But it was turned down. When the issue is raised this time, as it will be, by the united eastern nations, let us hope that it will be accepted without a demur and with grace. Repetition of the blunder will be high treason against posterity, besides being an ignoble betrayal of the ideals that seers and saints have taught in the past. There is no need, however, to catalogue the manifestations of colour prejudice. Suffice it to say that its magnitude may well alarm those that are interested in the future of humanity. If unchecked, it may lead to bloody wars. Once they begin, they will set the East against the West and fill all the continents with ruin and carnage. On the white peoples of the earth and on every man and woman among them there rests a heavy responsibility,—that of learning to look upon coloured persons as equal and entitled to the good things of the world in equal measure with themselves. The required change of heart is of slow growth and must be carefully fostered in the schools, while yet the children's minds are plastic. It is needless to add that the coloured races for their part must change their

attitude towards their white brethren in a spirit of friendly response, shed their fear and inferiority complex and show a measure of confidence and trustfulness.

We are now prepared to consider the type of persons who should be entrusted with the duty of guarding and maintaining the world's peace in future. What qualities should we look for in them besides ability, tact, character, refinement and so on that we expect in men and women holding responsible positions? In one word, the international mind. The crass nationalism, known by the dignified name of patriotism, they must shed. In spirit they must belong to the world, not merely to a country or nation. It is not easy, this emancipation. On the contrary, it is a difficult discipline, in which backsliding accords with one's habits and ways of thought and feeling, and progress depends on the vivid perception of larger viewpoints than one is used to and the firm grasp of wider notions of justice and more comprehensive ideas of human welfare. Of old, when the schoolmen talked of the citizenship of the world, it was perhaps a term of derision. Spread over an area scarcely known to its full extent, stretched to peoples mostly unknown and unheard-of, and never exercised in concrete tasks of benevolent service of which the results could be seen day by day, the citizenship of the world could not acquire even in a life-time any degree of warmth or compelling stimulus to action. No wonder the cynic said that such a person loved every country but his own, and bestowed his unavailing brotherliness, not on men, but on man. But in the higher administrative ranks

of the Secretariat of the International Authority, in the military services, in the judicial tribunal, and in the various special commissions appointed by the Authority, an officer comes into daily contact with persons belonging to many lands and many races, handles their affairs and appreciates their special attitudes to life, their contentions and their ambitions. His knowledge of the world and his labours for its various peoples will be real and purposeful, so that his citizenship of the world will be an active and lively emotion. He may have to take decisions against his government; he may have to conduct military operations against his nation; he may have to deliver adverse verdicts against the authorities of his country. On such occasions he must learn to assume the necessary detachment without a qualm or special effort. Ideas of great reach like the oneness of humanity, the parliament of man and the federation of the world must become familiar ground on which his mind moves with habitual ease. His sympathies must attain catholicity; his unreasoned prejudices must wither and drop away; mode and object of worship, style of dress, food, colour of skin, —towards these in their wide variety his toleration and sympathy must flow with the readiness of nature. It may be advisable, in appointing to offices under the International Authority, to require of the candidates that they will, to the extent of their capacity, cultivate the international mind, look upon all States and all nations with absolute impartiality and serve all with equal zeal and equal fidelity.

A costly blunder of the past should be avoided at the birth of the Supreme International Authority.

When at Versailles in 1920 the League of Nations was created, its limbs were crippled by the jealousy of the great Powers. They assigned great functions to the baby, but gave it no chance to grow to the necessary stature. The scramble for the main posts of influence was pitiful, and, not to mince matters, the victors divided the spoils among themselves without compunction. The League thus became an instrument for the camouflaged execution of the policies of the great Powers and could not check their high-handedness or bullying at the incipient stage or bring the stipulated sanctions into effective use at the right moment. A more democratic basis must be provided this time for the Supreme Authority; power must be more equitably distributed; the smaller States must be placed in a position to invoke and mobilise the resources of the Authority at need. Expressions like "Anglo-Saxon races" and "English-speaking communities" are already audible. Formidable cliques may be formed overnight, and the weak peoples of the world, instead of leaning on the International Authority as their bulwark, may find it a broken reed and be cheated of the new heaven and new earth that were promised to them. Let it be realised to the full that the saviours of the world must undergo sacrifices all the way and all the time. Of the noble, noble deeds are demanded. Those that win the war for the world's freedom must win the peace too for the world's freedom. Else all the suffering would be thrown away, and all the glory forfeited.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

[In the editorial columns of "The Natal Mercury" of December 24, 1927, Mr. Sastri wrote: *]

To a Hindu, brought up in the philosophy of the Vedanta, toleration of other faiths and other modes of worship comes easy. Toleration deepens into sympathy and understanding when one has a working faith in the brotherhood of man and allows idealism to shape one's course in life instead of regarding it as a sign of a softening brain or an old-world morality. Every form of earnest piety, every time-honoured religious observance is to him a way of approach to God, not his own, it is true, but not necessarily less suitable or less sure. I own to a feeling of profound reverence when I behold a service in a church and am hushed into the silence of communion at the sight of a Mohammedan kneeling in prayer. The rejoicings of Christmas, consecrated to childhood and its innocence and glory, and summoning men and women to the duties of forgiveness and reconciliation, make an intimate appeal to one whose every prayer includes a thrice-

*The Natal Mercury in a prefatory note said:—"Tomorrow the Christian world celebrates anew a Birthday which changed the currents of human history. On the eve of that Anniversary the Natal Mercury submits itself as never before to the spirit of Christmas. It makes full surrender of its editorial authority for this one day of the year and, with humility, sits at the feet of others. . . . Mr. Sastri writes as a philosopher statesman from the East, which cradled civilizations far earlier than our present European civilization.' In a private letter the editor thanked Mr. Sastri for the article 'which is not only a lofty philosophical disquisition but also a rare gem of literature'.

repeated invocation for the blessing of peace—that perfect peace of the heart which follows when all passion has been subdued, all desire has been conquered and all regret has been left behind. At the opening of a sacred book or the beginning of a devotional exercise a pious Hindu joins his hands in supplication for the good of every fellow creature: 'May every one cross the difficult places of life, may everyone behold happiness, may everyone attain true wisdom, may everyone rejoice everywhere.' To forget wrong and admit the wrongdoer to one's love is the sublime teaching of all the great religions of the world.

On one holy day of the year all differences are laid aside, the mind dwells on our common origin and our common destiny, and we all return, if we can, to the ways of simplicity and guileless mirth. But can we? Blessed is he who can cast off the folds of sophistication that overlay his soul. By constant use the words come easily to the lips; but how hard is the reality! The true sages of our race are few. The learning of books, the performance of rituals, the mortifications of the flesh—these lead nowhere. God's grace, according to Hindu teachings, has most often descended on the crude children of toil, on the unlettered denizens of the forest. What rebuke to pride and pomp and power! By a supreme effort we suspend on a given day the outward manifestations of vanity and animosity, but the real chastening of the heart is not there; and the brawls and contending ambitions break out afresh on the morrow. Let us pray that the spirit of the Christmas season animate us at all times.

When a man dies his worst critics remember only his good points and overlook his foibles. How much happier both he and they would have been if they had practised a little of this magnanimity while he was alive!* This world would be a different place and Heaven would be all around us if but the lesson of these rare moments could be carried into the rest of our lives. A sudden shock should not be necessary to awaken us to the realities of life . . . The realities of life! In daily language we apply this expression to the phantoms and shadows which we pursue, and we dismiss as dreams and trances the revealing flashes of wisdom which come to us when striking events happen. Well was it said of old: "The sage is awake when the world sleeps; he sleeps when the world is awake."

Another snare from which the spirit of the Christmas season should save us is to suppose that one rule governs human conduct as between individuals and another rule as between communities, nations, or States. Is life one whole or a series of unconnected fragments? Could it be that God meant the law of love and compassion only for individuals and not for organized groups? Many things, forbidden in ordinary social intercourse, are supposed not only to be allowed but to be enjoined

*"Death closes all accounts. It is much to be wished that the sense of awe and irrevocableness which prompts us to ignore the unpleasing and dwell lovingly on the pleasing in the contemplation of a life which has just closed, should shed its beneficent influence even during life, so making public burdens somewhat less heavy and public duties somewhat more attractive." (From Mr. Sastri's 'The Late Mr. Kasturi Ranga Aiyengar', 1923.)

in war and in diplomacy. International and inter-communal ethic falls far short of ordinary ethic. It is seriously contended by some authorities that the precepts of Christ were intended for the simple relations of private life and must not be extended to the larger sphere of inter-State relations. As if an evil multiplied thousandfold could by some subtle alchemy be transformed into good; as if virtue was but vice on a large scale! Surely this is a disastrous blunder of thought. Christ's commands, like the commands of other great teachers and exemplars, are universal in their range; they know no limit of race or colour, no more geographical or political boundary. They would discipline us into one brotherhood; they would constrain us by the gentle bond of love and mutual helpfulness into one family. We believe in the essential dignity of every soul in God's creation. That is the essence of every religion which is called a world-religion. You cannot please God by benefiting one set of His creatures at the expense of another set of His creatures. The fact that you regard yourself as belonging to the one set and not to the other is of no consequence. Injury to a part of humanity is injury to humanity, and a violation of the purpose of God, Who is all goodness and all love.

BOOKS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED ME

I am not a man of one book or of a few select books. That is to say, there are no favourite books to which I recur again and again for inspiration or pleasure. Even the Ramayana I do not read daily. I have read quite a lot in my time, though my taste is not so comprehensive or indiscriminate as that of many whom I know. For instance, my old friend Professor K. B. Ramanathan, who found the day too short for his reading, was omnivorous. From him I took many tips. One of them it is interesting to recall. Of railway novels and detective fiction he was no lover. Whatever the original noise a book made, he would say, "Let us wait for a year and see if it maintains its vogue." I have known many persons to whom the reading of these books is like smoking or chewing, a habit that gains a hold on them and must be indulged without pause. Like our *nitya karma* its interruption brings unhappiness, while its performance ceases to be a lively enjoyment. Never fond of them, I have now come to look upon them as a tempting sin and grudge them even an hour of my time. From boyhood, books have been to me more than a learned interest or purveyors of useful knowledge. When they are of some real merit, I have consciously let them govern my conduct and clarify my notions of right and wrong. In a sense it is true every book makes you wiser and imperceptibly affects your sense of life's values. But I often took a good book more seriously. I would close it while in the act of reading and attempt to digest its lessons and send the new

thoughts coursing round my mental frame and assimilate them to be part of my inner being. In my boyish immaturity, I remember Edgeworth's *Moral Tales* and *Popular Tales* helped my growth in this way. From Smiles's books *Self-Help* and *Character* I somehow turned away by instinct. Though I could not formulate the grounds of my repugnance, I fancy their tautology and pompous preaching repelled me. At a certain age even a child wishes to eat with its own fingers and not out of the maternal spoon.

A book's influence takes many shapes. In some cases it dazzles you by sheer skill of presentation. Your admiration is roused and your fancy tickled, but no lasting benefits seem to accrue. Take De Quincey for example. His pages are a lure, but I cannot testify that they add real profit to the mind or enhance one's power of expression. At the other end are treasures of literature which affect you profoundly, but whose influence on your attitude to life or your conduct it is difficult to trace precisely. I would place in this category the great plays of Shakespeare and moving orations like those of Burke. Who can escape the instruction of Scott's novels or the edification of George Eliot's? Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning go deeper down in your nature and shape it to finer issues. I have felt the spell of these and other writers and should be much the poorer if by any chance I lost what they have given me. But I understand my business today is to mention the books that, above all others, have made me what I am, furnished my mind with its best material, directed my habits and modes of

thought, and informed my spirit with its characteristic aims and ideals. Such sources of mental and moral inspiration can be but few, and I should find it no easy task to define exactly or evaluate what they have done for me. I trust my readers would bring their own particular experience from its intimate recesses to understand and judge mine. Their charity and their indulgence to a fellow-traveller in the jungle of life I take for granted.

A word of qualification is necessary before I begin an account of the sources from which flow the main elements of my build. Guidance to others is foreign to my purpose. I do not venture to suggest that you should drink from the fountains where I slaked my thirst. My *amrita* may be your poison. Like theories and modes, books change from age to age, and for the nutriment of the mind it is idle to expect our children to resort to the same foods that we ate. I have often expressed wonder that the school books now in fashion differ so vastly from the ones on which we were brought up. The curricula of Universities are modified so slightly from year to year that we hardly notice the change, but within a generation they accumulate formidably and make a revolution. Both in substance and in manner the education of today differs from mine to such an extent that I marvel at the continuity that seems to bind in one whole the process by which the generations link themselves together. Is it a fact that the seminal books of the world are but a few and that in one form or in another they alone have been the firm rock on which in differing periods of history differing philosophies, differing moralities, and differ-

ing sciences have been erected? Sometimes I think Yes and sometimes No. Books for a time and books for all time—are there really two such classes? The *Iliad* and the *Ramayana* can never die, so say our idealists. The *Vedas*, we swear, had no beginning and will have no end. Grand conceptions these, which it were vandalism to examine historically or appraise scientifically. To how few of the world's population of nearly two thousand million do they mean anything? In our own homes they have long ceased to be a direct means of enlightenment, and where they are, exist only in translations, in unconnected fragments which hide more than they reveal. If then I name a few authors who have taught me the essence of what I know and believe, I do not pretend even for a moment that you cannot find other or better guides to the world's wisdom.

Knowledge of scientific truths, though it shifts from time to time, is foundational. All other knowledge rests on it and is fortified by it. The most authoritarian of our Vedic preceptors put observation and experience above the word. Every one of us who has been to school will recall the wonders which dawned upon him in the science classes, destroying right and left many fondly cherished superstitions. When I was first introduced to science books, I grasped, with a sureness which now astonishes me as I recall it, the scientific spirit, that is the spirit of scientific inquiry which doubts and questions and shrinks from generalizing beyond the ascertained facts. Tyndall's *Lectures* opened my eyes first to the true methods of science. Another book of those early days which gave a permanent

turn to my thought was a collection of T. H. Huxley's writings and speeches containing a marvellous exposition of Man's Place in Nature. Harder food followed in a few years from the same source. Few people will remember now that the English Men of Letters series includes a volume on Hume from the pen of Huxley. Hume's life is dismissed in a brief chapter and the rest of the book is a gripping exposition of his philosophy. It was a pity I had not learned at college the elements of metaphysics, and I would go so far as to say that liberal education is defective without an analysis of the workings of the human mind. As I applied my untutored mind to the doctrines under examination, I remember the slowness of my progress, and the despair that often crushed me. But I had intellectual pride and a firm belief that perseverance can conquer mountains. So I used to take the volume, repair to a corner free from disturbance, con the sentences again and again, read before and after, and to my good luck experience those thrills of joy which attend mental conquests, and which, whether at the moment or in retrospect, transcend all other human pleasure. My progress was necessarily interrupted and uncertain. In the end, however, by dint of hard reflection and meditation, I mastered the book, and the gain to my knowledge and power of consecutive thought was incalculable. Several years later Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* added a concluding chapter to this aspect of my education. Written in his most mature and attractive style, it seems to supply a corrective to his original teachings but, properly studied, it is only a supplement thereto. From the purely liter-

ary point of view, it is a master-piece which I would commend to my younger readers.

To this category belong Herbert Spencer's *Sociology*, and John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women, On Liberty*, and *Three Essays on Natural Religion*. I have not freshened up my memory for the occasion. The impressions now recorded are those left on my mind when I last read them. It would obviously be inappropriate to ascribe past preferences to present feelings. Spencer overwhelmed me by the wealth of material on any point gathered from all departments of human interest, and the touch of emotion that here and there warmed the treatment of his subject. Mill struck me as more economical and selective in the use of words and perhaps not so copious of illustration. Reference to contemporaries and their modes of thought was dispassionate and absolutely fair. The aim, one could see, was a genuine quest for the truth and not the establishment of favoured or partisan views. It was a rare adventure to me—of exploration and discovery in a fascinating sphere of speculation, all aglow with the excitement of a novice without a trace of prepossession. Recapture of my wonderment is not possible. All I can now recall is that I was journeying in a region of captivating ideas, at the same time subtle and precise, imponderable and well-defined. To the extent that I am exact in thought and lucid in its presentation, and that my management of a topic is just, comprehensive and helpful to the reader, I owe the virtues to the influence of these mighty teachers.

The foundations of my moral and spiritual

nature were laid by a large number of books, of which I will select three for the depth and pervasiveness of their teaching. The *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* stirred me deeply by their utter sincerity and high-souled philanthropy. Curious as it may seem, Tolstoy took me captive by his *The Kingdom of God is within You*. I remember how the revelation came on me with a rush. Much that I have read since in English and Sanskrit is fully on a level with it, but the way it carried the citadel of my heart is an abiding memory, which I would not lose for the world. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* gave a vision, as bright as it was clear, of a problem that had long been vexing me, and for the first time in my experience, set the position of women in correct perspective. Hardy, I have no doubt, meant to startle a convention-ridden and heartless world to a consciousness of the essence of chastity by his subtitle "*The Story of a Pure Woman*". It is audacious, but he makes it out to be just and proper. The taint is inflicted on Tess while she is hardly aware of what is happening and, the sinister consequence following, she has to pay the severest penalty that is exacted of her sex. Society is no doubt heartless in such cases, but Hardy makes society almost fiendish in its persecution of poor Tess. The victim of a cruel wrong, her subsequent life of high purpose and good deeds does not avail her, and at the end disaster, black and utter disaster, overtakes her until it seems to the reader that Tragedy herself must be horrified. Our Ahalya, who is in a way suggested to our thoughts by the story of Tess, escapes lightly in comparison; though her sin was committed cons-

almost without a rival in the world's literature. Whether we judge by the grandeur of the theme, by the variety of characters portrayed, by the tone of its idealism, or by the appeal that it makes to the devout heart, it ranks amongst the noblest monuments of the poetic genius. To those who cannot read it in the original, I would unhesitatingly recommend resort to translations. Even through media the narrative shines with rich brilliance. The wise say that if you cannot scale the Himalayas you would do well to go to the foot and take in the infinite variety of nature that meets the eye. All parts of the book reward the reverent reader. But we may not expect homogeneity of treatment in a composition of its size. The pious pupil has therefore by long tradition selected certain *kandas* and *sargas* for repeated study and ascribed to each selection specific forms of mystic or worldly efficacy. I open the book at all times and with no particular expectation of improved health or auspicious prognostication. It never fails me. The distilled experience of ages is given in stanzas of exquisite sententious grace. Hermitages, described with wealth of household and sacrificial detail, invite you as to the intimacy of home. Forests and mountains and rivers, in pristine untamed grandeur, lose their terror in Valmiki's pages, for while he mentions with particularity the paths and thorny lanes, the river-fords and the giant shelter-giving trees, he makes only occasional and unexciting allusions to the bloody fights and devastations of beasts of prey, the bites and stings of poisonous insects, and the diseases and deformities caused by them, the movements, from

untenable to promising spots, of hamlets harassed by flood and fire and famine. A seeming exception is mentioned towards the end of Ayodhya kanda. A colony of rishis migrate, to escape the cannibal Khara and his followers. They invite Rama and party to join, but these decline. Ah, how I should love to learn and teach in those sanctuaries, guru and sishya bathing in safe pools together, chanting the Vedas aloud till the hills threw the sacred sounds back and the sylvan gods sat up and listened, our mutual companionship unperturbed by fear of lightning strikes or menacing processions or shootings by the king's police!

Of the countless benefits—one may even call them blessings—that the *Ramayana* can confer the highest is the training of the emotions and of the spirit. Of the lessons it teaches, the highest seems to me to be the exaltation of *dharma*. On its altar everything must be sacrificed, reverently and cheerfully. To fulfil his father's promises and save his honour, Rama twice renounced the kingdom of Kosala, once in Ayodhya when his father offered it, and later in Chitrakuta when Bharata laid it at his feet. The passages in which this self-denial is narrated are among the noblest in the poem. The debate between the brothers is a gem without price. We are told that the gods came down to listen, for even amongst them such high arguments were seldom heard. Bharata was tired out and, though neither confounded nor struck dumb, gave in. But it is remarkable that at heart he seems to have been unconvinced. Nor was Lakshmana converted to the stern view to the end. Next only to Sri Rama in

sublimity of character, why did they not catch his perception of duty? Vasishtha too seems to have fallen short of the theme. I dare not dogmatize, but shall ask leave to suggest timidly that the poet meant them as foils so that his hero may stand on an unapproachable pedestal.

If Rama was prepared for dire penalties in paying his father's debts, what would he not suffer to pay his own? When Sita remonstrated with him for taking other people's quarrels on his own head and inviting unnecessary risks, he proclaimed the sanctity of his word once given and swore he would abandon her, Lakshmana and life itself before abandoning a promise. These high protestations were put to the test ere long. Not indeed in an attempt to maintain his fidelity to a solemn undertaking. For dharma, inexorable dharma came to him in diverse forms. His personal honour and the purity of the Ikshvaku race were inextricably mixed and no sacrifice was too great to preserve it. Twice when his queen's name was called in question, he threw her to the wolves. Then Lakshmana's life lay forfeit when he left his post of duty under the cruel compulsion of circumstances. Vasishtha had to intercede to get the penalty commuted into banishment. The immolations ordered by Rama were at first loudly protested against; but as the iron strength of his will became known, people submitted as to the decrees of blind fate. This is eloquent testimony not only to the sempiternal validity of the ideals that he enforced, but to the mighty ascendancy that he established over the hearts of those that came under his influence. The author who conceived and deli-

neated the character of Rama in such convincing detail as we have in the *Ramayana* is a supreme genius, Poet, prophet or seer has seldom presented to the mind of man so noble an apotheosis of duty.