

# AN INDIAN IN WESTERN EUROPE

(Second, Revised and Enlarged Edition)

BY

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How Little I know of this mighty world !  
Myriad deeds of men, cities and countries,  
Rivers, mountains, seas and desert wastes,  
So many unknown forms and trees,  
Have remained beyond my scope of awareness.  
Great is life in this wide Earth  
And small the corner where my mind dwells.  
Deprived thus, I read of travels.

(RABINDRANATH TAGORE.)

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

PERHAPS, there was never a time when man did not travel ; certainly, there never was a time when he did not recount the experiences of his travels. The God-given conveyance, the homely foot, was at first the only means of transport though, soon, with the advance of civilization, there came, in succession, the palanquin carried on human shoulders, the horse and the donkey, the dug-out and the boat, the cart drawn by bullocks, buffaloes, horses, donkeys and mules, and the luxurious chariot drawn by two or four horses. Long afterwards came the railway, the steamship, the motor car, the tram and the aeroplane. Travel, no doubt, has increased tremendously in volume with the improvement in the means of communication, but it was, even in the earliest times, far from uncommon. The traveller's account of his travels was listened to with rapt attention by the villagers ; not unoften, he was sent for by the neighbouring lord or king and made to relate in detail his experiences. Humanity has always evinced a keen interest in hearing about strange countries. In good old days, when recreations were few, the travellers supplied a much-needed source of entertainment. Sometimes, they related their experiences with another object also, namely, to enable other travellers to travel with less trouble. Merchants, pilgrims and soldiers were among the earliest travellers. Of these, the merchants and soldiers were interested in hiding their routes. Trade routes were in ancient days as jealously guarded as military routes. But the pilgrims had no motive to conceal their routes, and some of the most charming accounts of travel are by pilgrims. Indians

will at once think of Fa Hien, Yuan Chwang, Itsing and others. The pilgrims, however, were prepossessed with things spiritual, and rarely condescended to chronicle purely mundane things in which the ordinary mortal perhaps takes greater interest. Later centuries saw the rise of professional explorers and globe-trotters, who set forth their experiences in books in great detail. Latterly, another object has been kept in view in writing such books, namely, the promotion of good relations between countries by better knowledge of one another.

MANY Englishmen have written about their experiences in India. Few Indians have given an account of their stay in England. This book has been written at the earnest request of several friends who wanted to know the actual experiences of an orthodox Hindu in the distant lands of the West. I have set down the facts as they occurred, to the best of my remembrance. Where I have entered the realm of discussions and comparisons, I have tried my best to arrive at impartial conclusions based on the facts I observed.

THE world is getting smaller and smaller every day owing to the amazing improvement in communications. The aeroplane has made London only a two days' journey from Karachi. As the West gets near the East, the necessity to know it closer becomes imperative. An unintelligent respect for everything western is as bad as a stupid contempt for all things occidental. Purely good and purely bad countries are as rare as purely good men and purely bad men. In the world, we have a mixture of the good and the bad, and have to adjudge a nation good if the good predominates. A proper knowledge of the West will save us from unduly praising or blaming it. I trust that this book will, in some way, contribute to giving Indians a knowledge of the West.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE enthusiastic reception given by the public and the press to the first edition has emboldened me to comply with the requests of innumerable friends to bring out this second edition with ten new chapters added about my two subsequent visits to Western Europe. The revolution in communications has proceeded apace, and, now, the remotest countries cannot escape contact with the rest of the world. Gone are the days of isolation. The days of "Total World War" or "Total World reconstruction" have come, for good or for bad, and the old insular outlook will only make a race unfit for the race of civilization. All the more is it incumbent now for Indians to learn about other countries and peoples. I hope that this book will help them in this essential work, and that my readers will find the new chapters as interesting as the old ones.

A. S. P. AYYAR.



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# AN INDIAN IN WESTERN EUROPE



## CHAPTER I

### THE UNEXPECTED LETTER AND ITS SEQUEL

ON the 6th of September 1919, the postman came to our lodge at Mambalam and gave me a letter from my eldest brother at Aiyalam, my native village in Malabar. When I opened it, I found another letter enclosed within it. My brother wrote that the enclosure was from the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, who had therein offered me a student-ship to proceed to England. My heart thumped within me as I opened the letter from the Secretary and read with my own eyes the welcome offer. Soon, my lodge-mates crowded round me, and, in a moment, both the letters had become public property, being rapidly circulated among them. All my lodge-mates congratulated me sincerely on the unexpected good fortune. For, none of us had expected the letter then.

From my early student days it had been my ambition to go to England. The rosy pictures in the Nelson Readers, and the enchanting stories and illustrations in the Highroads of British History, combined with the fact that all the Head Assistant Collectors of Palghat came from that country, made me dream of going to that wonderful land where all people were white and everything beautiful. These nebulous aspirations

began to gather force when I passed high in all my examinations and joined the Arts College. After I took my B.A. degree, with a double first class, in 1918, I determined to make all possible efforts to go to England to pursue my higher studies. This determination was strengthened by the fact of two of my friends having gone there with their own money. My financial circumstances were such that I could not proceed to England at my own cost. I had to depend on some studentship or similar free or loan scholarship. I applied for the Government of India scholarship along with countless others; but that was, very properly, given to a research scholar, instead of to I.C.S. aspirants like me and several of the other applicants. My only remaining hope was the Tata Education Scheme which, I learnt from one of my professors, was in the habit of giving two loan scholarships to distinguished Indian graduates to proceed to England in order to study for the I.C.S. or other courses. In the middle of 1918, I had sent an application to the Secretary of this Scheme, but had been given an endorsement that no students were being sent to England owing to the war and the consequent insecurity. All hopes of getting a scholarship or studentship disappeared with this, and I joined the Law College. I passed my F.L. examination and joined the B.L. class. I had then no higher ambition than to take a first class in the B.L., as I had done in the F.L., and practise in some "country place" in Malabar where the lawyer population was below ten a square mile.

So hopeless was I of going to England that in May 1919 I followed the time-honoured custom of the Brahmins of South India and married at the early age of 20. My parents-in-law also shared my view as regards the utter impossibility of my going to England; else, they would never have given their daughter in marriage to me. For, Malabar was still very orthodox, much more so than now. I was the first

Brahmin from my village, and indeed my part of the Taluk, to leave the ancestral shores for a foreign land in the far-off west. All orthodox Brahmins dreaded the black waters.<sup>1</sup> Any man who crossed them was, for them, a man to be avoided. Certainly, very few would in 1919 have given their daughters in marriage to those who intended to cross the black waters.

But in 1919 the black waters did not mean quite the same as in 1899. In the latter year, a man who went to Burma or the Straits Settlements would have been regarded as an outcaste, for his having crossed the black waters. But Malabar was not economically capable of giving all its children a good living. The factories and rubber plantations in Burma, Penang, Singapore, Kedak and the Sunda islands wanted clerks, and were willing to pay salaries tempting to the half-starved but adventurous Malabar youths. Many Brahmins and others left for those countries and returned after some years with heavy purses. The caste scruples were allayed by the perfectly true historical answer that they had gone only where their glorious ancestors had gone and colonized centuries ago, that Burma was but the ancient Suvarnabhumi, with the sacred river Irrawady, that Sumatra and Java were pure Sanskrit words meaning "good motherland" and "barely," and that Singapore was but Simhapura. By these ingenious explanations and by a judicious observance of orthodox rites, combined with liberal gifts to priests, Malabar orthodoxy was made to exclude the Bay of Bengal and part of the Indian Ocean from the category of black waters by the year 1910.

Then, during the great war, several Malabar youths went to Mesopotamia and returned. These met with some social ostracism, for having crossed the black waters, till somebody discovered suddenly that Mesopotamia was but Babylon, and

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1. Kalapani (Black Waters), the late Hindu Sastraic name for the ocean.

what was Babylon except Baveru mentioned in the Jataka<sup>2</sup> stories and the Puranas<sup>3</sup> as the city to which many orthodox Hindus had gone in the days when Hinduism was still in its pristine purity, uncontaminated by any alien ideas? This discovery excluded the Arabian Sea also from the list of unregenerate "Black Waters."

Some indiscreet young men wanted to get South Africa and Kenya also included among the permitted lands. So they explained that the ancient Hindus went and colonised these places too; that it was only the Indian Ocean which separated them from Malabar, and that the Indian Ocean could never be a *black* water, as anybody could see on the Malabar sea-coast. Orthodoxy was tired of making concessions. It wanted to stem the tide of revolution. It emphatically affirmed that the ancient Hindus had never gone to South Africa or Kenya, as their very names would show, and that the Indian ocean, except the parts already excluded, was most indubitably a black water. The sea-coast argument was torn to shreds by a clever orthodox geographer who declared that the waters became black only 200 miles from the Indian coast, this latter concession being intended to cover journeys to the Laccadives and the Maldives and along the Indian coast. The advocates of Kenya and South Africa had to bow their heads in meek obedience. Henceforward, all journeys to Kenya and South Africa by high caste Hindus of Malabar were officially described as journeys to Basra, and the orthodox people, for their part, never scrutinised these statements too closely.

Still, a journey to England stood on a different plane. It could not be hidden as the obscure journeys of coolies and clerks to Kenya and South Africa. Nor could the wildest

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2. Stories of the previous births of Buddha.

3. Hindu mythological and historical sacred books.

enthusiast suggest that the ancient Hindus had colonised or even visited England. The orthodox people paid no heed to certain alleged journeys of ancient Hindus to Roma or Athens. All those voyagers were either Buddhists or atheists, and, as such, their voyages only showed that such voyages should never be undertaken. The absence of Sanskrit names or Hindu temples in Europe was proof positive to the orthodox Brahmins of Malabar that if any Hindus did really visit these places they were only atheists and heretics. The Brahmins who had gone to England from Malabar before 1919 had, almost all of them, to face awkward social persecution when they returned.

It was thus, when I least expected it, that the offer of the Tatas came. I had not the slightest hesitation as to what I should do. Here was the long-dreamt-for opportunity to go to England and pursue my higher studies. I resolved to accept it at once, despite the certain opposition of my numerous orthodox relations. I went to the nearest telegraph office and wired to the Secretary of the Tata Education Scheme accepting his offer and intimating that I would be taking that night's train for Bombay.

At that moment there were very few Indians who, having studied up to the B.L. Class, were more Indian in their habits, and less anglicized, than myself. Born in an orthodox Brahmin family, in an exclusively Brahmin village, I had been taught to regard egg-eating as a sin, smoking as a vice, wearing a tie and collar as dandyism, and hair-cutting and daily shave as un-Brahminical. A foot-wear of any kind I had never worn. Bread I had always eschewed religiously, owing to the orthodox suspicion that toddy was used in its preparation. I was a staunch adherent of the joint family and the laws of Manu. Early marriage and enforced widowhood counted me among their supporters, though I did not abhor post-puberty marriages or widow remarriages arising out of the widows' own free will,

and not due to the misguided activities of parents or widow-remarriage associations. The only respects in which I differed from the Brahmins of my village were in my unbelief in untouchability, and my belief in enforced widowerhood, unless the widowers consented to marry only widows, and in interdining with all persons. From my father I had learnt to regard untouchability as a hideous sin, and had even incurred the severe displeasure of my villagers by bringing untouchables into the village against the social laws then prevailing. Interdining with all persons of whatever caste or creed was rather believed by me in theory than put into practice often. Only twice before going to England had I actually interdined with persons of other castes, and, even then, the articles partaken in common were but sweetmeats and coffee, not very serious according to orthodox people.

So, when I finally decided to go to England, I was chaffed by some of my lodge-mates, staunch believers in the daily shave and full crop and loaf-eating, about my impending *volte-face*. We were somewhat perplexed at the persistent opinions, then current in Madras, that anybody who went to England must be prepared to eat meat, drink liquor, and smoke, opinions which were, and are, thoroughly wrong, and which perhaps deter many vegetarians, teetotallers and non-smokers from going to England. Though, on the day on which I took my fateful decision, I had no definite authority to quote for my belief that anybody could live in England without meat or liquor or smoke, yet, my belief in this was unshakable, and, curiously enough, all my lodge-mates shared in it too.

After I had sent the telegram, I had only a bare six hours for getting ready to go to Bombay. I bought some very necessary articles and looked forward to the journey. For people who have gone to Bombay often, the journey from Madras to

that place is tedious; and very rightly too. They regard the journey very much as some Indian philosophers regard life, as a thing whose end is not at all to be deplored. But, for a person going to Bombay, like me, for the first time, the journey appeared to be of absorbing interest, with endless possibilities of discovery and exploration.

Nor was I very much disappointed. When I crossed the Tungabhadra and Krishna, I felt an exaltation. The sacred rivers fully answered my expectations, and the giant boulders heaped up on either side of the railroad in the Raichur doab impressed me much and added to the interest which this battle-ground of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms had for me. At Wadi, I had an idea of the vastness, and comparative barrenness, of the Nizam's Dominions. I saw a mirage for the first time there. All the passengers eagerly watched this strange phenomenon with wonder and incredulity, for the thing was so real-looking. At Kurdwadi the Mahrattas began to come into the train, and I had a glimpse of this warlike race for which I have always had a great admiration. It was specially gratifying to see how Mahratta ladies were able to board trains without any help from their men-folk unlike their southern sisters. Poona roused in me a hundred historical associations, but the prosaic train stopped at Poona only as long as at the other junctions. It was a real disappointment to me not to be able to see Poona City. I was also somewhat disappointed at not having seen any of those numerous Mahratta hill forts which I would have seen had I taken the other route to Bombay. But all this disappointment disappeared when I saw the exquisite scenery between Lonavla and Kalyan. The Sahyadris, so closely associated with Sivaji, made an abiding impression on me. When I reached Bombay, I was not at all tired. I had enough energy left in me to go to the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, that very day, and settle the preliminaries.

Bombay struck me as pre-eminently a commercial and cosmopolitan city unlike Madras which has an oriental air of leisure about it. The congestion there was in marked contrast to the conditions in Madras. Madras derives its main importance from the fact of its being the capital of a presidency of 42 million inhabitants. The Harbour is much less known than the High Court. In Bombay, the Harbour overshadows everything, and the High Court buildings are nothing comparable to those in Madras. Bombay has got representatives of almost all the races of mankind. Prominent among them are however the ubiquitous Parsis with their peculiar caps, the ever-successful Gujaratis and the manly Mahrattas. By the number of Parsis one sees in Bombay one is apt to put their number in that city at a far higher figure than the census statistics would warrant. Quite the same thing is the case with the Brahmins in Madras or any other southern city.

Sight-seeing at Bombay had unique charms for me. In Madras one never fully realizes the size and population of the city, owing to its dispersed character, but Bombay is one vast assemblage of houses and human beings. Besides the races in Bombay were quite distinct from the races in Madras. But what struck me most in Bombay was the hideous contrast between the palatial residences of the merchant princes and the horrible slums of their employees. These slums are called "Chawls," and there are a good many of them. From the outside these chawls present an appearance of grandeur; but just one peep into them will disillusion anybody. Every chawl is inhabited by scores of families each of which has generally only a single room. Here, in this room, the householder and his family have to huddle themselves without any internal or external privacy. Cooking, eating, sleeping, entertaining,—all have to be done in this single room. The partitions between the rooms are flimsy. Even low whispers

can be heard by one's neighbours. One lives always in public. The water difficulty is also great. The insanitary conditions of the lower grade of Bombay chawl can only be realized by a personal visit. It is my deliberate conviction that there is no slum in the East End of London, and I have seen some of it at close quarters, which will surpass in dirt and squalor some of the chawls of Bombay. In the country parts of India I was not accustomed to such vast differences. Even the poorest man had his own hut and legitimate share of God's air and light. Industrialism at its worst is seen in the lower grade of chawls at Bombay inhabited by the mill hands. Drink is the great enemy of these poor people, and there is no lack of toddy shops near these chawls. Doping children with opium is quite common among the women employed in the mills. They are not to blame, poor things; they have to earn their living, and many mills will not allow children inside. It is an alternative between starving and doping the children, and the latter prevails. It has always surprised me that while all civilized countries punish a man for an attempt at instant physical suicide many of them allow him to commit a mental and moral, and, in the long run, a physical, suicide by taking to drink and drugs.

At Bombay I received strong letters from my father-in-law protesting against my idea of going to England. Even my girl-wife was made to send, contrary to orthodox usage, a letter to me imploring me not to go across the black waters. Half my time in Bombay was spent in penning long closely-reasoned letters justifying my action. For, though I had made up my mind to go to England, despite all opposition, still I was desirous of convincing my relations of the correctness of my procedure, and, if possible, of winning their approval or at least their consent.

The interviews with the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme,

were short and to the point. The Secretary wanted me to submit myself to a medical examination by a doctor named by him. This doctor, who was an Indian, demanded what he called his usual fee of Rs. 30 before examining me. To my protest at the enormity of the sum demanded, his reply was "You are going to become an I.C.S., you ought to pay." This was the first time that I paid Rs. 30 for a single visit to a doctor, but, unfortunately, not the last time. The medical examination was very thorough, and the doctor said that he would send the report direct to the Secretary. He did not even so much as tell me the result of the examination. To my question, his reply was "You ought to know about your own health." I asked him whether a man could not continue to be a strict vegetarian in England. His answer was an emphatic "no" to my consternation, because he was a doctor and had been to England himself. Still my faith remained unshaken that where there was a will there would be a way.

I had to insure my life with the Sun Life Assurance Co. The Company's medical examination was more or less a repetition of the one I had already undergone. There was, however, one funny incident in connection with this. I had declared that my date of birth was the 26th of January 1899, and that my mother died about 50 days after my birth. What was my horror when I found some days later that the date of my mother's death had been put as 1898! The Company's doctor had calculated *backwards*, instead of forwards! And, though the rules said that no alterations would be made, under any circumstances, the doctor quietly made the necessary alteration, remarking that it was a question of physical impossibility being set right.

After these preliminaries were over, I went to Malabar to get my passport, identity certificate and naturalization certificate. The passport caused no trouble at all, but not

so the naturalization certificate. This required the correct date of birth. Armed with an extract from the birth register. I went and saw the Collector of Malabar in his office at Calicut. He asked me what proof of age I had got. I showed him the extract from the birth register and also the identity certificate given to me by the principal of the Law College wherein my date of birth was given as the 26th of January 1899. He pointed out that the name was not given in the birth-extract to which I replied that Hindus were not named as soon as they were born. "How am I to know that you are the child born on 26-1-1899? For aught I know, it may be your elder or younger brother," said he. I was indignant and said, "Do you think that I would utter a lie?" "I think nothing" was the calm reply "but I want evidence." "There is the principal's certificate" I said. "That won't do" said he "Then, what is this impossible evidence you want?" I asked, and I had a vague suspicion that he wanted to prevent me from going to England. "Don't get excited;" said he, "when you become a magistrate like me, you will see my difficulty. Now, have you got any relative in Calicut?" I named a lawyer. He said "Bring him along with you tomorrow to my bungalow at 10 a.m., and let him give an affidavit before me that you are the child born on the date noted in the birth extract." I agreed, and did so the next day. The whole difficulty was solved. Now, I realize how reasonable the Collector's objections were and how unjustifiable my indignation was.

Having obtained these documents I went to my native village to take leave of all the villagers. For, my village, in those days, formed a social whole, and it was necessary to take leave of all. I was the first person to cross the unregenerated black waters with the permission of the villagers. Naturally, many of them still felt a misgiving as regards their

own approval. "It may be" said one "that you will never be contaminated by those wicked western ways, but, then, I have not yet known one Indian who returned from England who did not eat meat or drink or smoke." "How many Indians who have not gone to England eat meat, drink toddy, and smoke?" I asked. "Well, they are all abandoned fellows," replied he "you will never do these things if you remain in India, but whether you will be forced to do these in England I cannot say. Perhaps, the climate there requires it." "I will rather die than do these things" said I. "It is easier said than done. After all, life is a much greater thing than meat or wine or tobacco," was his reply. A malicious old relative, who had heard about the submarines, asked me "What if a submarine were to sink your ship?" "I shall go under the sea," I replied, "and you will be saved the observance of pollution, since the news will reach you long after the occurrence; you will escape with a bath." "But fancy your dying before me!" she said. "What is strange in it?" I replied "You came to this world long before I did, I shall be going to the other world long before you do, that is all." My grand-father's brother's advice was characteristic. "We have been orthodox so long" said he "This is the first time a member of our family is crossing the black waters. I give my consent only because I think you will become a Collector some day, a thing which never happened before in the annals of our family. Keep our customs intact. Avoid meat, drink, and smoke, and concentrate your attention on your studies. Before you return across the black waters, I might perhaps have crossed other waters," and he gave me his blessing. Poor man, his prophecy came true. He died long before I returned from England.

In some ways, the most embarrassing, and certainly the saddest, parting was that with my girl wife. She was only twelve

years old, had nothing but the most rudimentary education, and did not know where England was, or why I was going there. Her parents were followers of a fanatical orthodoxy and never liked the idea of my going to England. They sincerely regretted their having given their daughter to me; but the laws of Manu were on my side, and, so, they could do nothing. I cared little for their opinions, but the case was naturally different as regards my wife. I was eager to convince her that my course was right. She and I were partners for life, had become a spiritual unit the moment we joined our hands before the God of Fire, and I felt a greater responsibility towards her than towards all the others. Had she wept bitterly and implored me not to go, I do not know what I would have done. Most probably, I would have still gone, since I was too far committed to draw back; but, then, I would have gone with an oppressive sadness. Few Non-Hindus can realize the really ardent affection which springs up between a girl-wife and her husband after the marriage, which is a purely spiritual affair. In a really typical case, such affection is quite strong in spite of, or because of, the tender age of the parties. Each thinks of the other as his or her own, idealizes the other and gets to merge his or her interests with the other's. But, as I shall be dealing with this more fully in a separate chapter, I shall not dilate further here. Fortunately for me, my wife met the crisis with unexpected courage. No doubt, she was dejected at my going, especially since many had spoken, in her presence, of the physical and moral dangers of going to a foreign land five thousand miles away across the black waters. But she did not weep or ask me not to go. She merely told me that many people had talked about the physical and moral dangers of going to England, and implored me to steer clear of all of them. "I shall do also what lies within my power" she added,

smiling, "I shall pray every morning and evening for your welfare." I too smiled, partly in satisfaction at this proof of her great love for me, and partly at the folly of her childish belief in prayers. For, then, I was a typical product of the Madras University, sceptical in matters religious, and with little belief in begging, spiritual or economic. A spiritual gulf separated me from my uneducated wife. She was of the old school, with all the characteristic old ideas, and I was midway between the old and the new schools. When I finally took leave of her, she said, with tears in her eyes, "Remember me three times a day." I asked her "How often will you remember me?" "Always" said she, looking straight into my eyes with that dreamy depth which is so characteristic of Indian women. "Why, then, do you ask me to remember you only three times a day?" I asked. "Because" she said, "You have your studies also to attend to. I have no, such pre-occupation." So I parted from my girl-wife and went from her home. The voyage to England had already begun in imagination. Try to suppress it as I would, the feeling that I was to separate from my people for three years and more asserted itself and took a prominent place on my mental horizon. Afterwards my wife too has told me how, at that critical moment of parting, she felt an over-powering sense of desolation which she had to suppress lest she should grieve me.

That very day, I took the train for Bombay and reached that place in three days. There I began, on the advice of some persons, to eat loaves and unsalted potatoes, in order to be able to consume these, which were supposed to be the only vegetarian things in England, for the next three years. This fare was most monotonous, and gave me an acute vomiting sensation every time I took it; but, as vomiting would prove to the onlookers, who were many, that vegetarianism was

impossible in England, I made heroic efforts, and kept the sensation down. Still, the quantity I took diminished from day to day, and my sister-in-law remarked "In ten more days you will require no food except coffee. How can a man live on coffee alone, and in such a cold country as England? Take your usual food while you are here. You will have plenty of time to starve after you reach England." I declined to be persuaded. I felt that the mantle of the apostle of vegetarianism had fallen on my shoulders and that I must disprove the theories of the Bombay doctor and the Madras Advisory Committee, whose Secretary's remark to my query, whether vegetarianism was possible in England, was "Impossible, my boy." Little did I know, when I was eating the most uninspiring fare of loaves and unsalted mashed potatoes, that, in England also, many excellent and tasty vegetarian dishes could be had. As my eyes fell upon the loaves and unsalted potatoes, my heart sank within me, and I began to doubt whether, after all, the proverb "where there is a will there is a way", might not have its limitations. But, these doubts disappeared after meals, and recurred again only at the next meal. In those wretched days I hated meal-time, and made myself unnecessarily miserable by even refusing to eat Indian sweet-meats since these could not be had in England, and, so, I should not take them in this my probationary period. When I think of that period now, I feel astonished at what I endured then. I was a regular martyr in the cause of vegetarianism, but it was a wholly unnecessary martyrdom.

I had booked my berth in S. S. "NELLORE" which was to sail from Bombay on the 25th of October 1919. Most foolishly, I got some suits made in Bombay through a man who supplied me, perhaps in perfect good faith, with a number of misfits which included ladies' summer dressing gowns, a boy's hat, a dress suit which looked like a funeral

suit, trousers which were a close approximation to breeches, an overcoat reaching up to my navel, ties which were nothing but tapes, and shoes which appeared to be made of buffalo hide. Since the man told me that he had gone to England several times, and knew the fashions there well, and had equipped many others going to England, I did not scrutinise the goods. Nor, if I had, would I have recognized the incongruities; for neither I nor any one of my friends knew how to test these western articles of dress. We admired even these ludicrous specimens of clothing, though we were appalled at the prices quoted against each of these innocent and queer-looking articles. "England is a costly land to live in, and, so, these clothes also cost a good deal" said a friend, and we were satisfied.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE SAILING OF THE NELLORE

FIFTY days after the receipt of the letter at Mambalam, I was in the morning local train to Victoria Terminus with a few friends and relations who wanted to see me off. Absolute silence prevailed during this short journey, in sharp contrast to the vivacious and animated talks we used to have on the previous days. Every one of us seemed to be conscious of the plunge into the unknown that I was taking. Our thoughts were too deep for expression. I had put on that funereal dress suit which made me look like a goat being led to a sacrifice.

Many things were weighing on my mind, and, because of their very vagueness, exercising a powerful depressing influence on it.

The first was the feeling that I was leaving my home, friends, relations and countrymen, certainly for a long time, and perhaps for ever. I was then, as now, a firm believer in the transitoriness of life which I regard as a bubble which may burst at any time, releasing the immortal soul for pursuing its further adventures with bubbles of different kinds till it ultimately merges itself in Ether which is God. My attachment to the village of my birth was not very strong since for the last ten years I had remained in different far-off places for my studies. Friends, in the real sense of the term, I had but few, the vast majority of the others being mere acquaintances. Relations, no doubt, I had in hordes, but I cannot honestly say that I loved them all or even a decent percentage of them. In fact, the utmost I had wished from them was to

let me alone, and not to pursue me unnecessarily with their envious bad wishes and calculated misrepresentations.

My countrymen had not, as yet, begun to have a concrete shape, as an entity, before me. They were not defined either inclusively or exclusively. My conception of Indians then had a predominant Madrasi touch about it. No doubt, the Kashmiris, Punjabees, Rajputs, U. P. men, Bengalees, C. P. men and Oriyas did, for decency's sake, occupy a fringe in that picture; but it was an insignificant fringe, and, even so, they appeared in a Madrasi garb. Again, I had not yet seen enough foreigners to distinguish them always as Non-Indians and thus get a negative definition of my countrymen. At that moment, had I been shown an Afghan and told that he was a Punjabee, I would have believed it. Conversely, had an Assamese been shown and declared to be a Tibetan, I would have believed it too.

Still, with all this, at that solemn moment when the train was rushing towards the ship which was to take me across the black waters, away from my home, relations, friends and countrymen, all these assumed a rosy appearance. The ridiculous, orthodoxy-ridden, unprogressive and decadent village became, for a moment, more important than Bombay or England. The dark, ill-ventilated room where I was born was to me more sacred than Benares or Gaya, for that was the first piece of God's earth that my infant eyes saw. The brook flowing close to my house occupied a larger space in my mental horizon than even the divine Ganges which I had never seen and which, in any case, I could never call mine. The village temple, with its sleepy priest, unrepaired walls and selfish worshippers, appeared to me to be the very ideal of a holy place, the defects having receded into the background at the idea of long separation. The relations, even the relations, appeared to be not such a bad lot. I convinced myself that they were

all good at heart, though the exigencies of the joint family and the narrow atmosphere of the village had reacted on them somewhat badly, and warped their otherwise good natures. After all, I had no reason to believe that any other Hindu had a better set of relations. At marriages and funerals they had always mustered in their full strength; and that is, in the last analysis, what is wanted from relations. At that moment, I would have welcomed any relation, however distant, with a very warm heart in spite of all his past record and future potentialities.

The same favourable reaction was evident as regards friends. The few of them who were real friends appeared to me then to be models of friendship despite the many unfriendly acts they had done. And acquaintances, even acquaintances, appeared to be approaching friends. I sincerely regretted that I had not had the time to cultivate their acquaintance farther, though, now, I may perhaps agree that it was for the best. As for my countrymen, such was my exalted mood that day that I would have embraced a bearded Pathan from the North-West or a beardless Assamese from the North-East on being assured that they were Indians. It pained me even to part from the Mahrattas, Gujaratis and Parsis sitting in the same compartment, though I did not know any of them. I looked at them with brotherly eyes, but, those prosaic people made no response. So, I could not express to them the sorrow I felt at parting from them.

The second thought that oppressed me was the consciousness that I was to live for at least three years in a far-off foreign land where the people were of a different race, colour and creed. To live in a land where all people were white, and all English, was something of a plunge into the unknown. The very little experience of Englishmen I had till then had been somewhat varied in results. The professors had been

very kind, and gentlemen to the fingernails, but even they, without a single exception, showed unmistakably their belief in the innate inferiority of Indian civilization. Their theory of anthropology, culminating in the evolution of the Teutons, or latterly the Anglo-Saxons; their theory of religious evolution, culminating in Christianity; their theory of economics, culminating in the standard of comfort adopted by the white men in the west and the monstrous large-scale productions which throttled our cottage industries; their theory of politics, culminating in western world-empires, crushing the soul of our village life; all these were repellent to me and made me feel that I had little in common with them.

Even less had I in common with the missionaries. These disinterested gentlemen, anxious to extend the empire of Christ, and to save human souls from the eternal Hell-fire to which the vast majority were ultimately destined, shocked me, even early in life, by their greater eagerness to convert rather than to spread the gospel of Christ, by their ignorant condemnation of Hinduism, and by their offensive patronage. How many rivers are running into sand, when gardens lie unirrigated, was my thought then. Even in India, with its small Christian population, there were so many missionaries. How many thousands more would there be in England, I thought, and the thought made me shudder. I was no enemy of Christianity. I had read the Bible, and admired many of its teachings, but the same teachings coming from a missionary had somehow got an unpleasant jarring effect in the course of its transmission. And missionaries in India were very forward then. They waylaid you at Hindu festivals, they even met you at the gates of the temples, with their coarse music and heartless caricatures of Hindu religious teachings. In the years which have passed since then, the spirit of the missionaries has changed very much for the better. Some of them have begun to learn as

well as to teach, there is much less of that blatant self-sufficiency and shallow dogmatism found a generation back when theorising about Hindu doctrines, and there is a growing desire to spread the gospel of Christ and win Him souls rather than heads.

The rest of the Englishmen were more or less strangers to me. The English official was reputed to be brave and impartial, as between Indians, but had also the reputation of being haughty, reserved and unduly severe. The English trader was universally known for his high prices which were always fixed and unalterable. Indians of the middle classes never entered his shop except to feast their eyes, and sometimes also to find out the description of a particular article and order for it from some neighbouring Indian merchant who would charge less. The English soldier was a person who connoted to the Indians then unlimited rudeness and reckless courage, a being whom no middle class Indian ever desired to meet anywhere. The idea of living for three years in a country inhabited solely by Englishmen was, therefore, none too enchanting. Still, I had a desire to go to England and see for myself how life was like there. Moreover, my worldly prospects would be considerably improved by taking a degree at an English University. With all this, the prospect of a protracted stay in England did cause me considerable anxiety then, most unnecessary anxiety as it turned out later.

Then, there was the uncertainty of being able to get into the I. C. S., and the ruin which would ensue if I failed. My continued success at school and college had made me self-confident. Never for a moment did I seriously believe that I would fail to get through any examination; but, still, there was the vague anxiety that I was staking my all on this; and what certainty was there that I would come within the number wanted for that particular year? This was altogether a new

kind of examination from those to which I had been accustomed. No fixed percentage for a pass, no such thing as a pass even. It was a competition in which the topmost would be chosen. What guarantee was there that I would be among these topmost? What would happen if I failed to get through? How to pay back the loan scholarship? No doubt, there would remain the English University degree which would secure me a decent job in some college in India. But that would be but a poor substitute for the original idea. And, what is more, there was no guarantee at all that any such decent job could be got. Here was I going to the land of the Angles impelled mainly by a desire to improve my material prospects, and here were the foundations of the castle in the air shaking.

The fourth anxiety was regarding the possibility of remaining a vegetarian in England. Vegetarianism was with me, then, a religious dogma which could never be questioned, rather than a settled conviction arrived at after close reasoning. But its hold was equally strong. To cease to be a vegetarian was to me to cease to be a Brahmin, and to cut myself off from the untold generations gone by. It was practically committing religious and moral suicide. Many people had told me that vegetarianism was impossible of practice in England. I had pooh-poohed at them all, but, now there crept a doubt into my mind. Could all these be fools, and I alone wise?

Then there was the oppressive thought that, for the first time in my life, I was to be alone, and that too not for a day or two but for at least three years. Never before had I been absolutely in the midst of strangers even for a complete day. Always there had been with me some persons whom I knew. Now I was to be alone. Not a soul did I know among the intending passengers. Nor did I know anybody in England. This meant that I had to take care of my own purse, a thing

which I had never done before, invent my own amusements, and try to make some acquaintances soon with a view to while away the time. A loving band of friends and relatives were with me in the train. In less than two hours, they would all leave me, and I would be alone, on the wide sea. The multitude of strangers on board the ship would only serve to intensify my loneliness, by the sad thought that, in such a crowd, I had not a single friend.

The last thought was about the immediate problems on board the ship. These included the possibility of sea-sickness, the possible unpleasantness with European fellow-passengers, the well-grounded fear of the diet given on board the ship, and the queer ways of eating. Sea-sickness was a kind of bugbear with me then. When Lord Nelson was a victim to this malady, I did not dare to hope to escape from it, in spite of some curious contrivances called 'cholera belts' given to me by the Bombay supplier, and prophesied by that worthy to be sure specifics against sea-sickness if worn over the stomach. The almost certain prospect of incessant vomiting was not altogether delightful to contemplate. The possibility of unpleasantness with European passengers, however ridiculous the idea in the light of after—experience, was then a very real problem to be thought out. The many stories I had heard of European high-handedness towards Indians in trains had created in me an impression that such incidents were inevitable whenever the two races met. A friend of mine, whose imagination always delighted in morbid details, put the situation thus. "If you happen to be in the lower berth and the European in the upper, he will purposely tread on you, as if by accident, while getting up to his berth. If, on the contrary, you happen to be in the upper berth, the fellow will swear and curse every time you get up." The argument appeared to me to be conclusive.

The Goanese cooks were dreaded by all honest eaters as the enemies of good cooking. I had no reason to feel particularly optimistic on this score as, in addition to the difficulties in common with others, I had also my own particular difficulties as a vegetarian. Then, there was the problem of knives and forks. It is not commonly realized that it is as difficult for those who have not used knives and forks to use them as it is for those who habitually use them to do without them. I had never once used these before getting on board the ship. To eat along with all kinds of unknown people at the same table was itself a source of not inconsiderable anxiety. To have my eating watched by utter strangers was bad enough. To watch them eat meat and fish was worse. But all this had to be done, and I had to prepare myself for these.

While all these thoughts were coursing in my mind, the train was rushing to Victoria Terminus. It was a non-stop train, the wretched thing, and seemed bent upon taking me to the black waters as early as possible. As soon as we reached Victoria Terminus, we got down and went to the Alexandra Docks. There was a medical examination for all the passengers. A doctor was sitting there, and all passengers were asked to file past in singles. He referred to a list of passengers and did his work with extra-ordinary quickness, which was not quite compatible with maximum efficiency. When my turn came, he asked me my name. I said "A. S. Panchapakesa Ayyar." He looked up his list and said "There is no such person on this list. There is only one Mr. A. S. P. Ayyar," "I am he" said I. "Then please call yourself Mr. A. S. P. Ayyar, and don't confuse me by saying that you are Mr. A. S.—What is it—Ayyar." Then he felt my pulse and let me go to the other side. The eventful medical examination was over! The passport-checking officer gazed at my passport with lynx eyes and read out "Aiyam Subramania

Iyer Panchapakesa Ayyar" and asked me why I had not insisted on the ship's authorities putting my full name on their list. I said that they were not amenable to my authority and that, moreover, it would take up three lines. "Oh, they charge you heavily enough" he declared most truthfully. "Pass on." And I passed on.

I went on board the ship and was shown my berth by a cabin steward. It was facing the sea and had no berth above or below it. The cabin had two other berths on the other side, one lower and one upper. To my relief, I found that both the remaining berths were apparently to be occupied by Indians, so far as I could judge by the names. The occupant of the upper berth was Mr. G., a Lingayat gentleman from Bombay and that of the lower berth was Mr. A, a Wahabi gentleman from the Punjab. They had not yet arrived when I entered the cabin. I have always a healthy dread of parting with my luggage for any length of time. So, though the rules of the ship had clearly instructed me to keep all luggage, except small articles absolutely necessary for daily use, in the hold, and though three different kinds of labels "With the passenger" "Wanted on voyage" and "Not wanted on voyage" had been supplied to me, I had mentally resolved never to trust any of my things to the hold and had consequently pasted only the first two forms on every one of my articles and had conserved all the forms of the third variety for future emergencies. As soon as I entered the cabin, I had all my things put under my berth, and was delighted to find the whole space beautifully filled in with a giant pine-wood case, containing my books, jutting out a wee bit. Having thus finished this important preliminary, I sat down on the bed and looked out of the port-hole at my friends and relations standing opposite.

Soon, Mr. G. came with his enormous trunks and filled

the whole space under the other lower berth and half the cabin with them. Just when he had finished this herculean task, and was eyeing his trunks fondly, Mr. A. came with a goodly number of packages of various shapes and sizes. With an eagle glance, he found out that all the available space, and more, had already been occupied. He did not think it fair to expostulate with me, since his berth was not on my side of the cabin. But he was wroth with Mr. G. for taking away his share of the space. He was speechless with rage for some time, and, then, when he had found his speech, said "I say, I have paid as much as you have, and am entitled to half the space. Give me half the space," and, without more ado, began pulling out Mr. G's trunks. Mr. G. asked "Why not put some of your luggage under the other gentleman's berth?" "What!" replied Mr. A., with his fine sense of what was what, "Will it be fair to do so when he has paid twice as much as we have? Certainly not" Mr. A's brilliant idea, that I had paid twice as much as he, arose from the fact that there were two berths on his side, whereas there was only one on mine. I thought it prudent not to correct the mistake, since it was not in my interest to do so. Mr. G. watched half his trunks being pulled out, with unconcealed chagrin.

When this work of displacement was over, Mr. A's difficulties began. All his articles would never go into the space so cleared; one pet case especially, 72 inches by 18 inches, containing, as I found out later, choice Sialkot tennis and badminton rackets, and footballs, would perforce not go in. To send it to the hold would spell certain ruin for his delicate ware; so, at any rate, declared Mr. A, and I for one believed it. But there was no other alternative. Most reluctantly, Mr. A. prepared to part with it and sundry other articles. "A pity if it is to be put into the hold" said he, "Some-

wretched passenger's heavy lumber may be placed over it, and, then, .....

He had not the heart to finish the sentence. But both Mr. G. and I understood the meaning, and even mentally heard the crash of the long packet and the noise of the breaking of Mr. A's heart at the catastrophe. It would have been inhuman not to suggest a remedy. So, I volunteered "Well, Mr. A, why not affix a 'wanted on voyage' label on it? Then you can get it every week here and can satisfy yourself about its state." "Excellent," said Mr. A "and it won't be put into the hold also. But you know that I won't be wanting this package on voyage. How can I declare that I want it?" "Mr. A," replied I "you shouldn't be so particular. Nobody on a ship is, or should be. Besides, you would be wanting to see at least once a week the state of this package. So, I can't see where the lie comes in." Mr. A was convinced, and straightway affixed two "Wanted on Voyage" labels on either side of the package, which was then handed over to the cabin boy with special instructions to use super care.

Now came another difficulty, for difficulties, like misfortunes, never come single. There were a good number of unlucky packages of both Mr. A and Mr. G which were fated to be sent to the hold, and they had not stocked enough "not wanted on voyage" forms, perhaps because they had never thought that they would have to use these commitment warrants. But, fortunately, I was in a position to help without the least inconvenience to me. I had not used a single one of these forms and had naturally an abounding stock of them. Promptly opening my railbag, I handed over to Mr. A. twice the number of forms wanted by Messrs. A and G together, and was profusely thanked by Mr. A who, in his own simple way, said "Are you sure you won't be wanting any of these, yourself?" "Absolutely," said I, "These are all spare forms" and, in

fact they were, I having never used any such form nor having any necessity for any of them, thanks to the situation of my berth. Why, I even helped to paste some of these forms on Mr. A's packages! After this operation was complete, all these packages, as also a goodly number of Mr. G's packages, were removed to the hold.

Then Mr. A. asked me "How far are you going?" "To London" I replied. "So am I" said Mr. A. "And so am I" chimed in Mr. G. "You appear to be a Madrasi" said Mr. G. to me. "Your eyes have not deceived you" I replied. "I am indeed a Madrasi. You seem to be a Bombay man." "You are right," replied Mr. G. "I am a Lingayat from Bombay." "I am a Pathan from the north-west" said Mr. A impressively. "I am so glad all three of us are Indians" said Mr. A, and it sounded curious to me that a Pathan from the northwest should find greater pleasure in being cooped up with a Madrasi Brahmin and a Bombay Lingayat than with two Europeans. But I had also felt relieved on finding that my two companions in the cabin were Indians. I dare say, Messrs. A and G had also had much the same groundless fears as myself regarding the behaviour of Europeans. "What are you going to England for?" asked Mr. A of me. "For I. C. S. and a degree at Oxford" I replied. "For the very same purpose as myself!" said Mr. G. "I am going to England for the Bar, and also to advertise Sialkot sporting materials. If you were to see the excellent samples of tennis and badminton rackets that I am carrying with me in that long package, you will be surprised" said Mr. A. "But, Mr. A, do you really think that Sialkot articles will find a sale in England which has itself many firms for sporting materials? Is it not like carrying coals to Newcastle?" I asked. "No," said Mr. A. "Perhaps you may be right regarding ordinary sports materials, but not as regards those which I carry. Besides, cheapness tells in England, as

elsewhere, and Sialkot things are cheap, d-d cheap. Again, suppose I get only a few orders, what do I lose? I have to go to England anyway, for my barrister's course; why not do a stroke of business as well? Why not earn a penny for every pound spent?" The argument was convincing, and there was nothing more said about it.

"Come up; the ship will sail in half an hour, let us see our friends standing outside. From the deck we can see them much better" said Mr. A. So, all three of us prepared to go up. "Mr. A," said I, "Suppose somebody comes into the cabin when we are up, and steals all our things?" "I shall kill the fellow" said Mr. A, and his demeanour showed that he meant it. "Oh yes, if you catch him" said I, "but where is the chance of catching him once the ship sails and he is on *terra firma* with our articles?" "Then, what shall we do?" asked Mr. A "for go up we must." "Well" said I, "let us lock the cabin and post the cabin steward to watch it." "Excellent" said Mr. A. We rang the bell. The cabin boy, Antao, came. We locked the cabin, asked him to look after it, and went up.

For half an hour we gazed at our relatives and friends and at the dear motherland which we were about to leave. Bombay City, equally foreign to all three of us, appeared then to be representing Mother India, despite all her foreign tinsel and superficial cosmopolitan appearance. The half hour sped away rapidly. The bustle on board the ship, the innumerable people coming in with all kinds of bundles, the mail bags and other things being stowed in, the confused noises outside, all helped to pass time rapidly.

The inevitable moment came, the ship weighed anchor, the draw-bridge was raised, and, with one or two whistles, the ship began to sail amidst frantic shoutings and wavings from humans on board and on the shore. Soon, the ship gathered

speed, and the tall buildings of Bombay began to diminish in size. The distant landscape asserted its superiority steadily over the man-made usurper called Bombay City. Soon, all too soon, Bombay was a spot on the horizon, and the coast of India was a faint brown line on the fringe of the ever-widening blue. A few minutes more, the brown line had disappeared, and we were in the midst of the black waters.

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## CHAPTER III

### ON THE BLACK WATERS—BOMBAY TO ADEN

ALL three of us came down into the cabin. "We are now on the bosom of the black-waters" I said. My two friends agreed. "for seventeen days more we shall have to be like this" said I. "So long as that?" queried Mr. A. with the quietness of resignation. "Possibly longer" I replied, "The sea is like a glass; it is quite pleasant." "Yes" said Mr. G. "But they say that none can escape sea-sickness." "I hope I shall" said I, "I have got a cholera belt." "That may be a protection against cholera, but nothing can protect a man from sea-sickness" remarked Mr. G. with an air of finality. A very true prophecy, so far as he was concerned. I demurred, but still had small faith in the belt myself though I was wearing it next to my stomach, much to my infinite discomfort in that stifling heat. "I say," said Mr. A. "What is that bell ringing for?" "Lunch, I presume" I replied. At that moment the cabin boy came and brought me a telegram from an old teacher wishing me a happy voyage. "I wish somebody would send me a telegram" said Mr. A. "Even formal good wishes will have great value now. It is the first time I am on the black waters." "So also with me" said Mr. G. "I am also in the same predicament" declared I, "We shall all have to watch the effect of the sea on us." "No good effects, I can vouch for it" said Mr. G. "I shall be glad if no evil effects are produced" said Mr. A. "It is a plunge into the unknown" I admitted "Well, now, we must go for lunch." "Should we dress?" asked Mr. G; "I am going as I am" said I. "No

dressing for lunch" declared Mr. A. who was the most versed among us three regarding European ways. "Then off we go" said I "By the way, have any of you used knives and forks before?" "No" replied Messrs. A. and G. "The hand is far better than knives and forks" said Mr. A. "Undoubtedly, it is more handy", said I. "It is also far better, medically" said Mr. A. "Can you say why?" "I think I can" said I. "The forks and knives you use might have been used by others, but not so your hand. Hence you don't run the risk of being infected by other people's germs this way." "Excellent" said Mr. A. "you have hit the nail on the head." "Mr. A," said I "What about this problem of using knives and forks?" "We must manage it somehow" he replied. What do we care if we are somewhat awkward at first? Surely, you don't mind the opinions of these Europeans?" "Not I" said I "After all, we were not born with knives and forks." "Mr. Ayyar," said Mr. G. "I am a vegetarian. How shall I manage?" "I am also a vegetarian" said I "We must manage somehow. I expect we shall get almost reduced to skeletons before we reach London. We ought to have brought some fruits with us. Unfortunately, I have not brought any with me" "Nor have I" said Mr. G. "What shall we do now?" "We shall go and arrange with the steward" said I "Now, let us all go."

So we went into the dining room. There we found a third vegetarian, Mr. M., a pearl merchant from Cambay. All three of us went to the steward and told him that we were vegetarians and that some special arrangements should be made for us. "All right" said that Englishman "I shall ask the cooks to give you fish" "We don't eat fish" replied I. "Are not fish vegetables?" he asked in surprise. "No" said I. "Then I shall ask them to give you eggs" said he. "We don't eat eggs also" said I. "Why, are not even eggs vegetables?" asked the steward in utter surprise. "No" said I.

"Do you want to eat only potatoes and cabbage?" asked he. "No" said I "We eat also rice, and other cereals, and, of course, fruits." "All right, then," said he "You shall have porridge, rice and pepper-water, and plenty of potatoes and cabbage. Will that do?" "Yes," said I "Only, please see that the potato chips are fried only in butter or oil, and not in fat. Also, make ample provision for fruits which are absolutely essential for keeping us fit." "I understand;" said he "You are the extremest vegetarians I have ever seen. Personally speaking, I can hardly see how milk is a vegetable though you don't object to it." "Milk, ghee, curds, and buttermilk are what we may call customary and religious vegetables, having been sanctioned by custom and approved by religion," said I. The steward laughed, and we retired, thanking him for his attention to our comforts.

We had to wait for fifteen minutes before we could get our things. And when we got them they were not worth the waiting. The Goanese cooks on board the ship, whatever their other merits, were most certainly not expert vegetarian cooks. But, we were not hungry, and, so, did not mind the badness of the porridge, rice, pepper-water, potatoes and cabbage. The only fruits supplied were oranges which resembled their kind merely in the appearance of their skins, having the unmitigated taste of limes. But I have never fought shy of limes and so ate three of these sour oranges. Then, taking a good drink of water, I made an informal exit from the dining room. I was soon joined by Mr. A. who declared emphatically that the Italian steamers were far better than the P & O. in the matter of meals. "How do you know that?" I asked. "Because," said he "some of my friends who travelled by those steamers have told me" "Then why didn't you book your passage by one of those?" I asked, "We are not always wise" said Mr. A. "I preferred

the P. and O. since I would thereby reach London a day earlier, and since I do not know Italian.'

Then we went up the deck and sat on our deck chairs. Some passengers had not been wise enough to provide themselves with deck chairs and were forced to hire out some very dirty and disreputable-looking chairs from the deck steward for a sum which was slightly higher than the price of new deck chairs. The deck steward was busy letting out these chairs and also making arrangements for various kinds of games. It was simply surprising to see how many varieties of games could be played on the deck. Many passengers took part in these. A less praiseworthy thing was a kind of gambling on the ship's speed. Each person had to contribute a shilling and guess how many miles the ship would do that day. The whole collections would be divided among those who got the correct figure or the nearest approximation to it in case none got the correct figure itself. Some clever ones used to ask the ship's officers on the sly and get almost accurate figures. Perhaps this gambling thrives because of the tediousness of a sea voyage and the urgent necessity to create some kind of excitement to make time pass quickly. Some passengers were vigorously walking on the deck in order to have a little exercise.

That day, I saw some more Indians. Messrs. L, B and S, were the other Indians on board the ship. Mr. L. was a Punjab Hindu who volunteered to me the information that he had been to England nine times before. He was extremely anglicized, and was a regular smoking furnace, having always a cigar or cigarette in his mouth. He came to me and said "Young man, you are going to England. If you want to remain there, you ought to be like the English. Why do you still stick to your vegetarianism and water drinking?" I said that we should go to England only to pick up the good

things there, and not the bad things. "Taste meat and wine and see whether they are not good," said he. "I have no desire to taste them" said I. "Ah, it is this type of mind that I hate" said Mr. L. "Condemning a thing without trying it oneself." "According to your argument," said I "an honest man cannot condemn a thief without trying to thief himself, and a good woman cannot condemn a bad woman without following the bad ways herself." "Similes don't prove anything" said Mr. L, and thus our first conversation ended.

Mr. M. was very weak and lean. The sea voyage seemed to upset him completely. "The sea looked attractive from the beach at Cambay," he told me confidentially "but it has lost half its attractions now." "Why?" I asked "The sea is not at all rough." "No" replied he "but the smell is awful, and the food, it is simply execrable." I readily agreed and mentally registered Mr. M as a possible victim of sea-sickness in the near future. For it was, and is, my firm belief that one who broods on the smell of the ship and the sea is on the high-road to sea-sickness, Mr. B was a Parsi gentleman from Bombay who was going to England for studying medicine. He was a man of few words. Mr. S. was a Bengali who was going to England to take the barrister's course. He was bursting with eagerness to express himself in Bengali. But, as none of the other Indians in the second class understood that language, he had to stop himself in mid career and begin in English. No wonder, he told me one day. "Mr. Ayyar, what a pity we have always to talk in English!" The sentiment was just, but, as I myself did not know Hindustani, and as I could not conceive of any common language for India except Hindustani, I had to content myself with a laconic 'It is a pity, Mr. S.'

Messrs. L and B were not inclined to mix with us freely, perhaps because they were older, and perhaps also because

we were so unacquainted with English manners and customs as to make them desire not to be seen in our company. But Mr. A, though very much older than we, and perhaps older than Messrs. B and L, preferred to associate with us whenever he came on deck which was but seldom since he preferred to sleep on his bed in the cabin during the long intervals between breakfast and lunch, and lunch and dinner. This, I learnt later, was to avoid sea-sickness though the principle underlying the practice was thoroughly wrongheaded, inasmuch as he who avoids the sea invariably gets the sea-sickness soonest. Mr. A's inclination to join us rather than Messrs. L and B might probably have been due to his also being quite unaccustomed to English manners.

We used to sit, the five of us, sometimes in the companions' room, sometimes in the library and, sometimes on the deck. We generally avoided the smoking room as we were not smokers; and since the library was situated in the smoking room, we did not frequent the library; nor were there many good books there, though some ships' libraries contain excellent books. We did not go down to tea as we thought that it was charged for extra and did not think it worth it. Messrs. L and B were sitting on the deck after their tea when Mr. S and I were walking along. We had just seen a notice requesting all passengers who saw anything on fire on board the ship to go and ring the ship's bell at once three times. Seeing Mr. L light his cigar, I said to Mr. S. excitedly "Go at once and ring the ship's bell three times." "Whatever for?" asked Mr. L. "Because there is a fire on board the ship" said I. "Where, where?" asked Messrs. L and B in one voice. "Why, your cigar is on fire" said I to Mr. L, and walked away with Mr. S., leaving Mr. L to swear to himself.

Some time afterwards, I sat by myself in a corner of the deck watching the sea which had just begun to roll. Soon

I was disturbed by Mr. S. who came and told me that an English passenger had sworn at him rudely for going up and down so often. I felt this conduct as most outrageous and decided to vindicate our rights against all attacks. It seems the passenger had remarked to Mr. S "Why the devil do you go up and down like this?" I went down purposely to my cabin, though I had no business there. The man, who seemed to have had a drop too much, shouted out "I am sick of these niggers." "Your sickness is incurable" said I "for the niggers number many hundred millions, and are increasing rapidly." The man looked ferociously at me, but said nothing. When I returned to the deck a minute later, he shouted out "D-n me if I will stand all this nonsense." "You will have to," said I "for I have paid as much as you have, and have just as much right as you." At this moment Mr. A. came up. "What, is this a conspiracy among you to worry me?" said the irritated Englishman and went away. Never more did he grumble at us for our going up and coming down.

Soon it was time for dinner. I went down into the cabin. Mr. A. was putting on his dress suit. I did not want to put on mine since it was so absurdly made as to look a cross between a funeral suit, a dress suit and a Jodhpuri riding suit. Unaware though I was of the latest English fashions, and more or less insensible to criticisms as regards details of dress, I knew by instinct that my so-called dress suit would be most ridiculous if worn as a dress suit and only slightly less ridiculous if worn on other occasions. Mr. G. had no dress suit. So both Mr. G. and myself went in ordinary flannels to the dining room whereas most of the passengers were in dress suits. I was able to see at a glance what a wise resolution it was not to have worn my wonderful dress suit. Being in ordinary flannel trousers and coat might raise some comment, but not any laughter or ridicule like the so-called dress suit.

The sea had begun to roll heavily. Messrs. A., G., M and I sat at the same table. The steward had placed only the usual five oranges on the table. even though we had specially requested for a plentiful supply of fruits which were the mainstay of our diet. In spite of all his tall promises, he had not provided any vegetarian dishes worth the name. Boiled rice, boiled potatoes and boiled cabbage represented all that a vegetarian could eat. The principle seemed to be that since we ourselves omitted a lot voluntarily from our diet we could afford to miss a lot more.

That day, I found for the first time meat and drink being served. I had always a lively horror of seeing meat. The mere mention of beef or mutton or pork or veal would conjure up before my mind a milking cow, a bleating sheep, a grunting pig or a gambolling calf. On one occasion, when I was thirteen years old, I remember having been horribly shocked by seeing meat exposed for sale near the Residency at Trivandrum. I saw something red hanging, and that was about all. But it was quite enough to shock me. Needless to say, there was no separate table for vegetarians. At our table, for instance, besides Messrs. G and M and myself, who were vegetarians, there was the non-vegetarian Mr. A. When meat was served for Mr. A, all the rest of us had a look of unspeakable horror and disgust on our faces. We turned our faces away. It was not the pleasantest thing for Mr. A. who, turning to Mr. G., said "Why do you look like that? Have you no manners?" We said nothing. Now I can see that we were in the wrong. At that time my impression was that Mr. A was adding insult to injury.

Before long we found wine bottles being placed on all the neighbouring tables. This was also a shocking thing for me. I was for the first time in the midst of drinkers. I felt very uncomfortable. Fortunately, none at our table were

addicted to drink; so I was spared the sight of a liquor bottle on our table.

Soon, another funny incident took place. We vegetarians got so little to eat that we fell upon the oranges. There were only five in all for us four. I was very hungry, and, so, ate two of those. Mr. G. also ate two, and Mr. M ate the odd fifth. Mr. A., who had not yet come to the stage of dessert, was furious. "You vegetarians are worse than Englishmen" he said in an angry tone "Fancy your eating up all the oranges leaving nothing for me!" We apologized and told him that the steward had promised more oranges than usual for us and that we really stood in dire need of fruits. "Meat is no compensation for fruits" said Mr. A. with dignity. I called the steward and requested him to let us have two more oranges. That worthy looked most displeased, but complied with our request. And, so long as he did that, we didn't mind his displeasure. But we did mind his remark. "Hereafter, gentlemen, you shouldn't exceed your allotment." "How can we do that?" said I "we get so little to eat; without fruits we shall starve." "You ought to have brought some of your own" added the steward. "We haven't, though," I replied "So, for the present, you will have to supply us vegetarians with double rations as regards fruits." "I shall see," said the steward and went away. I heartily regretted having taken neither fruits nor eatables from home, and looked forward to slow starvation.

The meal over, I went up to the companions' room and the deck and strolled about here and there for some time. I could not join the card parties since I did not know to play cards, cardplaying having been considered, in our puritanical family, as one of the seven deadly sins. Nor did I feel any curiosity to learn it, as I felt a moral repugnance to learn a game which led to so much gambling. But all this meant

that I could not join the others and while away the time. The ship's library was none too good, and I found hardly any book there fit to be read. My mind was also full of all kinds of thoughts and anxieties. I went to the deck and walked six or seven times round and round, but all this artificial attempt to generate gaiety out of depression resulted only in a ludicrous failure, and so I went down into my cabin to adopt the last remedy, that remedy which has not failed me as yet at any crisis, sleep.

Of late, it has been the fashion with some doctors to call sleep a lamentable waste of time, and even a disease, and some of these busybodies are breathlessly trying to devise some method by which to eliminate sleep and restore the lost hours for work. As if men are born for work and work alone! If sleep were to be eliminated, murders will increase ten-fold, and suicides hundred-fold. Many an evil thought is drowned by sleeping over it; conversely, care-charmer sleep is the greatest medicine for weary souls. The very doctors who preach against it have not entirely abandoned sleep. If they did so, for one month, no more will be heard of the disease of sleep, "the great waster of time!"

Well, as I said, I resolved to try, my infallible remedy and went to my cabin. I found my cabinmates, Messrs. A. and G., already in their beds but not yet asleep. Mr. A. told me "Mr. Ayyar, how are we to pass eighteen days on board this ship? We are like orphans here." I agreed, but said "Where there is a will, there is a way." "Oh, yes" said Mr. A. "But the will will be crushed out in two days if things go on like this, and then there will be no way." "Sleep out the eighteen days" said I. "Easy enough for you at your age but not so for me who am past middle age" said Mr. A. dolefully. "Mr. G. how do you feel like?" I asked. "I feel the rolling very much" replied Mr. G.

Sea-sickness was in sight. No more word was said. I put on my pyjamas, put out the electric light and went to bed and, in a second, was in the fairy lands of sleep. My dreams were all horrible, but that didn't matter so long as my thoughts were away from the loneliness, the monotony and the starvation on board the ship.

At 5 a.m. I rose, and putting on one of those blessed *kimonas* given by the Bombay supplier, was walking towards the bath-room when the stewardess, who happened to be walking on the other side of the passage, shouted out "This way, madam, those are the gentleman's bath-rooms." As soon as she was out of sight, I rushed back to my cabin, took off the precious dressing gown, bundled it up most unceremoniously, and thrust it into the bottom of my suit case, never to be used again. Then, in sheer vexation and chagrin, I lay down again, contemplating on the many misfits I had received from the Bombay supplier. Worried by this, I fell asleep again, and woke up an hour and a half later, and then rushed to the bath-rooms. All were occupied. So I stood outside, in my pyjamas, with a towel and soap under my arm. Two Englishmen were also standing in front of the bath-rooms apparently with intent to take baths but at that moment engaged in conversation. Soon three others joined them. Presently, a bath-room door opened and a man came out. I was proceeding towards the bath-room thus vacated when one of the two men who were originally in the room said "Excuse me, it is my turn," I was very much surprised "Have you got turns for baths too?" I asked. "Of course," he replied "But if you are in a hurry you can have your bath first with the permission of this gentleman also" he added, pointing to his comrade. I was abashed at thus having appeared to be stealing a march over the others. I replied that I was in no particular hurry and waited resignedly

in that room, with no one to talk to, and with no mind to return to my cabin lest I should lose my bath altogether. Soon two more bath-room doors opened. I had not noticed this and was standing quietly when one of the three, who had come later, told me "Your turn now." I at once rushed to the bath-room, wondering at the sense of discipline and order of the Englishmen who regulated even the order of bathing according to approved constitutional canons.

The bath was quite refreshing. The bath-tub was full of warm saltwater, and there was a bucketful of fresh water for washing off the saltwater from the body. It was the first occasion when I took a bath, after the European fashion, but I found no difficulty at all as the bath was like a small tank and could easily contain me. At first, when the water became rather dirty with the soap, I was wondering how a man could rise up quite clean. But the problem was easy. I turned off the dirty water, cleaned the bath, got a fresh supply of hot water by turning on the tap, and had a luxurious bath. It was no doubt a bit of a problem to manage with the small bucketful of fresh water. I, however, managed it quite well by using the fresh water as we do oil on days of oil-bath.

Considerably refreshed by the bath, I came back to my cabin and found both my companions still in their beds and the cabin boy Antao just bringing in the morning tea which consisted of a small cup of tea, two or three water biscuits, of a particularly thin variety, a plantain fruit which was of the size of a little finger, and an orange whose sourness could not be equalled by any lemon. I was quite hungry and so ate up my share. Then I loudly called Messrs. A and G by their names and asked them to wake up. This they at last did. Mr. A rubbed his eyes and asked me, "What is this?" pointing to his morning tea. "Your morning tea"

I said. "Where is the tea-pot?" he queried. "There" said I pointing to the cup. "I say," said Mr. A. "You seem to have bathed already." "Of course, I have" I replied with some pride, "I have not only bathed but have also taken my tea; yours is getting cold." "I shall just have a wash, clean my teeth, say my prayers, and take it" said Mr. A, and got up and proceeded to clean his teeth in the basin in the cabin.

Meanwhile, Mr. G. was groaning in his upper berth. "What is the matter with you?" I asked. "The sea-sickness" he said, and then, with remarkable rapidity, got down from his berth, went to the bucket kept for that purpose outside the cabin, and vomitted as if he would vomit his whole stomach out. I was greatly impressed, and made not a little anxious, by this scene. The expected had come to pass as regards Mr. G. But who could guarantee that any would escape it? Mr. G., after the fury of his attack was over, was horribly weak, but yet managed to whisper his firm conviction that none could escape sea-sickness. I believed in this dogma then, though I now know how untrue it is. I regretted that I had not taken any lemons with me, but secretly congratulated myself on the fact that the ship's oranges would beat any lemons. Mr. A. had by now proceeded to eat his tea. "Ah," he said "What a horrible orange!" "Mr. A" said I "It is for your good. The orange will stop sea-sickness." "I see" said Mr. A, "But hard is the lot of the passenger on board a ship." "Undoubtedly" said I.

Later, I went on deck and had a walk. I met a friendly Irishman called Griffiths. He chaffed me about some change of customs. "What will become of you when you return to India?" he asked, "you have dined along with men of other castes, you have drunk water brought by Goanese, you have even eaten food cooked by them, you will have

to perform a costly *prayaschittam*.<sup>1</sup> I laughed and said nothing, I had resolved, even when I started, never to perform any *prayaschittam*. There was a missionary family on board the ship. They were Swiss by nationality and were returning to their native land after some years of stay in Ladakh. They had a number of robust children who were busy doing gymnastic feats on the stairs. The husband and wife were serious people, as became their vocation. As the companion room was very small and close, I could not but overhear some part of their conversation, especially as it was conducted fairly loudly. "Prices have gone up terribly in Neufchatel, as in all other places. The war has done it" said the lady to her husband whose agreement was expressed by an elongation of the face. I too reflected on this. I would have to spend twice the sum spent by students in pre-war days, I thought, and the thought made me sad.

That day, at about 4-50 p.m., while I was on deck with Mr. A., Mr. Griffiths came along, and asked me "Why didn't you come to tea? you don't like it, perhaps?" "I don't think it worth the price" said I. "What price! It's free" said Mr. Griffiths. Mr. A and I were both startled. Mr. A said to me "Fancy their trying to cheat us of our tea! Let us go down at once." So, down we went in a trice, and found the tea things being removed. We asked the steward to bring us tea, urging that we had not had any even the previous day. The man agreed with a wry face. "This is downright Indian punctuality" he said. "Yes" I replied, unabashed, "We are a bit late, but that is because we were not informed about this at all till now. Tomorrow we shall be punctual." "I can quite predict that" replied the steward. We had a hearty tea. This tea was a good make-up for the starvation lunch and

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1. A purificatory ceremony involving much feasting of priests and Brahmins. Literally, "Pure again."

dinner, and I congratulated myself on getting the information at least then. Needless to say, I never missed any more tea on board the ship.

The sea was rolling somewhat heavily, but the weather was beautiful and I enjoyed walking on deck. There were many games on deck but I took part in none of them, partly because I feared that I would not be welcome and partly because I did not know those games. After dinner, I pulled my chair to a sequestered place on the deck and peered out into the darkness for a long time. I was woken up from this reverie by Mr. A., who came and asked me whether I wanted to take part in a whist drive. I declined, without the least hesitation, and went on gazing at the sea. The dark waters had a great fascination for me. I thought of the scene where God, taking the form of a fish,<sup>2</sup> saved the Vedas from the measureless depths, after slaying Hayagriva; I thought of the divine tortoise<sup>3</sup> which saved the world from the onrushing waters and bore it on its back and helped to churn the nectar of immortality. I thought of the sea of milk, of Narayana of the moving waters, and of the day of the great flood, at the end of the Kali Age, when the whole world will be covered with miles of water, and twelve suns will shine. I thought too of the Ancient Mariner and of the lines "Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink." All these thoughts ended in sleep. I had slept for about an hour on deck in the pleasant breeze when the deck steward woke me up and asked me "Do you intend to sleep on the deck, sir?" "Certainly not" said I indignantly, at what I supposed to be the man's insolence, but soon discovered that some passengers were really sleeping on deck in order to get good breeze. Mr. A., was one among them. His bed was brought up by

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2. *Mina Avatar.*

3. *Kachchapavatara.*

the deck steward. I preferred my cabin and went and slept there, and soon forgot the moving world and the moving ship in the fairy lands of sleep.

The next morning I woke up early and took my bath and tea. When I was about to go on deck, Mr. A., came with a woeful face and told me that one of his slippers was missing from the deck where he had kept it for the night. As Mr. L also missed one slipper, and as no thief will steal a single slipper, we were all of the opinion that some man, who did not like the idea of Indians' sleeping on deck, must have done the mischief. After an hour's search, the two missing slippers were found thrown into the hold. Messrs. A and L never more slept on deck.

Some time after the missing slippers were recovered, an Englishman of the opposite cabin, to whom I casually spoke about the sour oranges, told me that the oranges supplied to him with the morning tea were good. I told this to Mr. A., who was very furious. Calling the cabin steward, he said to him angrily "Come here, you Tomato," (Mr. A., always called Antao Tomato) "I shall kick you if you bring us any more sour oranges." The quality of the oranges thereafter improved till we got semi-sour and even insipid ones. I called these semi-sour ones "mule oranges" and the insipid ones "donkey oranges." I sometimes wondered whether we had improved our lot at all by the change.

After breakfast I went on deck. Then chancing to return to the cabin quite casually I found Antao tugging at my trunks. "What are you doing with my trunks, Antao?" I asked. "Cleaning-up, master. The captain visits the cabins at 11 a.m., and if he finds them unclean we are punished," said he. "I see" said I. "Master," said Antao, rejoiced at finding a listener, "The Captain has a search-light and can see right into the boxes without opening them." "Can he, really?"

I asked incredulously. "He can, master" replied Antao, "and, what is more, he did yesterday." "Did he see into my pine-wood case?" I asked "Yes" replied the steward. "And what did he find there?" I asked. "How do I know?" replied Antao, "He never tells us." "I say, Antao," said I. "Is it a fact that you people are not paid the same salary or given the same meals as the Europeans who do the same work?" "Yes, master," said he. "Why do you put up with it?" asked I "Same work, same wages, that ought to be the rule." "But it is not" replied Antao "And who will give us Goanese more pay than we get?" I agreed that this last argument was unanswerable, and left for the deck again.

Some ten minutes later, Mr. A and I again came into the cabin and found Antao swearing awfully, and with a wry face, picking out something from various parts of his body. "What is it, Antao?" I asked. "Master, Mr. G. keeps ants in his bundle, and they bit me, d-d creatures" replied the cabin steward. We laughed heartily at this and saw the abode of the ants in the shape of a parcel of sweetmeats kept in a corner of his berth by Mr. G. We certainly felt no sympathy for lazy Antao, and thought that it served him right.

That night, however, Mr. A changed his opinion. Ants have a way of climbing up and down, and the ants in Mr. G's bundle were not exceptions to the rule. Poor Mr. A was sleeping in the cabin on his lower berth after the bitter experience on deck over-night. At 1-20 a. m. I heard a great uproar, and, opening my eyes, found Mr. A, on the warpath, angrily demand of Mr. G. why he had let loose his ants on him. I interfered and asked Mr. A to adjourn the controversy till the morning Mr. A agreed on one condition, namely, that the offending bundle and the ants should be placed in the cupboard for the night. I made Mr. G. agree to this, and thus secured peace and sleep for the night. The next morning,

the controversy was resumed. Mr. G's contention was that these were sweetmeats given to him by his mother, and he was not responsible for the ants entering the bundle. He made it clear that he never invited the ants, and that Mr. A was welcome to deal with them as he liked. Mr. A's demand was that the bundle should be thrown into the sea without any more ceremony. Mr. G. was reluctant to do this. On opening the bundle, it was found that the ghee and oil used in the preparation had gone rancid, and, so, I also advised Mr. G to throw the sweetmeats and the ants into the sea. This Mr. G. did at last, and, for his sacrifice, was rewarded by peace.

This day Mr. A felt thoroughly disgusted at my persistence in remaining a vegetarian and told me that I was offending against God since He had created the animals only for our food. "God created them for us, and they are excellent food. Then, why not eat them?" he asked. I said in reply "God created children too, and cannibals consider them excellent food and created solely for their food, especially if they happen to be one's neighbour's children. Will their argument be accepted by you?" "There is no analogy at all" declared Mr. A, horrified, "and there never was. Man stands by himself. He is not an animal." "The evolution theory is against you" said I "It holds that man is only the noblest animal yet evolved." "Damn the evolution theory!" said Mr. A, "and I may tell you that you may continue to remain a vegetarian till the end of your life if that pleases you." "Thank you" said I "So the controversy is closed." "Yes" replied Mr. A "your evolution theory did it."

A few hours afterwards, Mr. M. came and requested me to accompany him to the ship's doctor as he was feeling some severe pains in the chest. I readily agreed, and both of us went to the first class saloon, and entered the doctor's room.

The doctor was a thin serious-looking man with a knowing look in his eyes. As soon as he saw Mr. M, he asked "Suffering from a weak chest, eh?" "Yes" said Mr. M. "How did you know?" I asked. "His pale, bloodless face revealed it, let alone his coughing when coming here." What should I do?" asked Mr. M, "Eat some eggs. Your diet is too poor" replied the doctor. "Doctor" said I "We are vegetarians, and cannot eat eggs." "You must," said the doctor "if you want to live in a cold climate for some years. Your rice and dhal will be no good. Are you going to stay long in England?" "Yes, for at least three years," said I. "In that case you too will be forced to eat eggs." I hope not" said I. "It is a religious conviction with me." "Life is greater than religion," said the doctor, "I am determined not to take to eggs, come what may" said I. "You may depend upon it I shall not take to eggs." "Tell me this when you return after three years" said the doctor. "There is no use saying it now." Then he gave Mr. M. a bottle of medicine and a bill for 2s. 6d. After I retired to my cabin I wondered whether I too would have to take to eggs.

That afternoon we had for the first time training in the use of life belts. All of us were forced to go to the deck at the call of a bell and were shown the way of using the belts by the Captain, his lieutenants, some cabin stewards and some of the passengers who considered themselves experts. Those were days when the fear of hidden mines was superme, and, so, particular care was taken to teach one and all on board the ship the use of the life belt. All remembered the story of the Lusitania and the Aquitania and wanted to escape a watery grave. Mr. S. put the life belt just like a garland round his neck instead of putting it under his arms as well. The disadvantage was, of course, that it would slip off as soon as he leant over and so would be of no use whatsoever in

the case of an accident. The captain reviewed us all with our life belts on, and, when he came to Mr. S., who was standing next to me, said, "At this rate, my boy, you will never live to return to India and practise as a lawyer." He then showed Mr. S. the correct way to put it on.

On the fourth day we began to see the Arabian coast distinctly. It was not much of a sight though. A barren coast with barren hills inland, it was as unattractive from the sea as the west coast of India is attractive. But, with all that, it was the land of the Prophet, and, so, I did not regard it with contempt. Here, from these sandy deserts, arose a cult and a culture which at one time threatened to overwhelm the world and which has lasted for thirteen centuries increasing the number of its adherents every successive century. I thought of Islam and its emphasis on the joys of life, and Hinduism and its emphasis on the sorrows of life. It was plain to me that the children of the desert, accustomed to a very hard life, found a luxurious life very attractive, whereas the Hindus, satiated by luxury, were craving after more and more austerities. The nature of the two lands, I said to myself, has a great deal to do with the difference between the two philosophies.

I was disturbed in these reflections by a shout "A whale! a whale!" As I had not seen as yet this King of the Deep, I rushed to the spot indicated, and saw a jet of water going up. "That is the whale" said a friendly passenger to me. Soon, the monster rose, and we had a good view of it. The Captain directed his glasses towards it though I couldn't make out why he did so, seeing that the animal itself was so huge that it required no magnifying glasses. It was only 2 furlongs from the ship. The whale followed us for about a mile and then disappeared.

Thus, days dragged on till, on the seventh morning, the ship arrived at Aden, and we were allowed to go on

shore on condition that we returned within six hours. A barren peak devoid of all vegetation, a true representative of Arabia, was staring at us forbiddingly. But a large number of Arabs and Negroes were boisterous with joy at seeing the ship anchor. "So many sheep to be fleeced" must have been their thought. Taxis and hackney carriages were available on the shore. All was bustle on board the ship. Everybody was getting ready to land. After the monotony of the sea for six days, land had a charm, aye, even the land of Arabia. We were also anxious to land. A friend from the next cabin told me that thieves were numerous at Aden. So I locked every one of my trunks and boxes and finally locked the rail-bag also lest perchance somebody should come and steal its contents. When I had just finished locking it, the painful thought occurred to me that the thief who wanted to steal the contents of the rail-bag, when unlocked, might carry away the rail-bag itself even though locked. "Something must be left to Providence" said I, tired of these petty worries. I told my difficulties to Mr. A, who exclaimed, "Thank God, my long case is in the hold! It is safe from theft." So, even the evil thing had its silver linings. In five minutes, we had locked the cabin and got into the country boat. A quarter of an hour more, and we had set our feet on the land of the Prophet.

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## CHAPTER IV

### ADEN TO MARSEILLES

WE separated into batches of twos and threes, for the purpose of sight-seeing. Myself and Mr. S. formed a group. We hired a hackney carriage whose driver had begun with a demand for fifteen rupees but had finally been only too glad to accept five. The understanding was that he should show us round the whole of Aden. First he took us to the European quarter of the city which was, as usual spruce and neat. Then he took us to the bazaar which was evil-smelling, crowded and full of flies. We went past the bazaar to the parade ground where some Sikh soldiers were patrolling. It cheered our hearts to see these countrymen of ours. One of the soldiers wanted to talk to us in Hindustani; but, as the utmost Hindustani either of us knew was but to say that we did not know any Hindustani, the conversation ended abruptly. The hackney-carriage man was a cunning Arab and wanted to cheat us by telling us that we had seen the whole of the town. Unfortunately for him, I had heard of the famous tanks of Aden, and, so asked him to take us there. "They are far inland, master" he said, but a policeman, whom we questioned on the subject, told us that they were within three miles, and, so, we forced the hackney-carriage man to take us there. On the way we saw the Arab city which was neater than the bazaar but still far from attractive. The houses had no proper light or ventilation; and the faces of the inmates were none too pleasant to behold. In the bazaar, everybody seemed to be pleased to see us, but, here, we saw the scowling faces of the Arabs.

All their women were veiled heavily, a most curious sight for a person like me from the veil-free west coast.

At last, we reached the famous tanks scooped out of the hills. They were very imposing to see, and spoke volumes about the industry, ability and wealth of the ruler who made them. To my mind, he appeared to have had far more goodness in him than wisdom, for the tanks were bone-dry when we saw them then, and such rain as Aden was likely to have would not suffice even to satisfy the thirst of the rocky beds. But, on my return journey, I found these very tanks three-fourths full, and revised my opinion about their constructor's wisdom. For, water in Aden is a precious commodity and is sold in the bazaar at an anna per pail. This water at the time we went was distilled from sea-water but, on my return journey, there was the tank water selling at three pies per pail side by side with the distilled water. To the poor Adenite this must have been a boon, and he must have blessed the constructor of the tanks every time he drank their water which he would either buy from the street purveyors at concession rates or get himself from the tanks on a camel's back.

There are few trees in Aden, and even those few which exist are stunted. So the only real shades are those cast by buildings and also the under-parts of culverts. We found about sixty camels lying under a culvert and enjoying themselves. I was very much surprised at seeing so many of these uncouth creatures together. When I expressed my surprise, the coachman said "What wonder is there in this? The camels are our cows and bullocks." This reply of the Arab was just and to the point. I had been so much accustomed to regard camels as rare animals to be found in zoos that I had forgotten that in Aden they were mere beasts of burden. At a certain corner in the Arab quarters a-

disreputable-looking man was selling a yellow liquid which we were told was camel's milk. Of course, we never felt tempted to drink the potion though our coachman was reciting a regular epic in its praise. We saw Aden through and through, and were much amused at the two main races to be found even in this small town. The one was the tall, graceful, proud, serious-looking, brown Arab, and the other was the black, woolly-haired, ever-merry Somali. I talked to one Somali who knew a bit of English. "Where do you come from?" I asked.

From Djibouty my father came, and in Aden I was born" he replied. "What was your father?" I asked. "He was servant in Arab family as I is," was the reply. We were agreeably surprised to find some Parsi shops in Aden. For, though Aden was then a part of the Bombay presidency and therefore of India, I had always regarded it as a bit of Arabia. We took some tea and then returned to the wharf. There we paid the hackney-carriage man off and took a boat and reached the ship.

There was still an hour for the ship to sail. I went into the cabin and found my things safe. Then I went on deck and watched the brisk trade which was going on. Arabs in country craft were exhibiting furs and other fancy articles. They were not allowed to come up, and, so the articles were, as usual, drawn up in baskets tied to ropes and lowered in the same fashion if not wanted. Money too was transmitted in the same way. Sometimes, the ship sails before either the money or the article is delivered to the other party. Such cheatings are far more numerous on the part of the Arabs. So much so, all passengers are warned by the stewards and others not to part with their money till the article is secure in their hands.

The ship set sail at 3 p.m. The next day we were in the Red Sea. The heat became terrible, and, even on deck, there

was no breeze. The deserts on both sides radiated heat. The scenery also was most depressing except at sunrise and sunset. The sunset on the Red Sea is specially impressive. The blood-red colour of the sun and the sudden drop below the horizon are unforgettable. Such a glorious sunset I have never seen except at Cape Comorin. But the sunrise and sunset are about all that can be called attractive in the Red Sea.

After a few tiresome days, the steamer reached Suez at the head of the Suez Canal at about 5 a.m. All of us passengers had been asked to assemble in the dining hall so that the doctor might examine us in order to satisfy himself that we were not carrying any diseases to Europe; for, Europe begins with the west of Suez. To the east of Suez lies the vast Orient. So this petty little place is the traditional boundary between the East and the West. The Sun Life Assurance Company people had given me a form to be filled up as soon as I reached Suez and to be posted to them, noting therein the date and hour of the ship's arrival at that place. This was, of course, to calculate the rebate due to me, for all insurance companies consider the climate of the countries to the west of Suez to be far less dangerous to life than that of India and reduce the premium for the period of stay in those countries. Myself and Mr. G. were the only persons who went to the dining room that morning dressed. All the others, including the ladies, were in their sleeping garments and dressing gowns. The doctor never examined anybody. He merely read out the names and, finding all present, went away thanking us and permitting us to disperse. Perhaps his idea was that anybody who was healthy enough to be present in the dining hall at 5 a.m. after a voyage of ten days might be safely presumed to be no carrier of disease.

We were not allowed to land at Suez, and, indeed, there

was nothing attractive there. Soon the ship entered the famous Suez Canal. Being a Mail steamer, it was given preference over other ships which had arrived slightly earlier. The Canal is a marvel of engineering skill, considering the time when it was constructed. Now that the even more wonderful Panama Canal has been constructed, the magic of the Suez Canal scarcely appeals to people. But had we lived in Lesseps' days and listened to the innumerable objections raised to the opening of the Canal, all of which objections have now been proved to be extremely silly, we would have understood the courage and faith which Ferdinand De Lesseps had. At the other end of the Canal stands the statue of this indomitable man who carried out the dream of ages and marked an epoch in engineering. The statue is fully expressive of the man; his unshakable resolution, inexhaustible faith and supreme self-confidence are all faithfully portrayed. Mr. Griffiths saw me looking fixedly at this statue and asked me what there was in it to deserve such close scrutiny. I replied "That man made history by this work of his, and linked up three continents in closer embrace."

We saw the sections of the Canal where Turks and Britishers faced one another in the late war. The sinister-looking Mount Sinai was glaring at us from a distance. Both the Banks of the Canal are sandy wastes, useless for all cultivation. At last, the ship reached Port Said and cast anchor. We again went on shore. This time also Mr. S. and I went together sight-seeing.

Port Said is pre-eminently a cosmopolitan city. All the nations of the world are there. The principal nations have their separate quarters also, e.g. the French quarter, the Italian quarter and the Greek quarter. Egyptians, Nubians, Indians, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Greeks, Italians, Germans, Hollanders, Portuguese, all jostle one another in its crowded streets. In one sense Port Said is not a city. It is a mere caravansera.

Its population changes every day almost, old people going away and new ones coming in. It is a creation of the Suez Canal, solely depends on it for its existence, and will disappear if the canal is abandoned.

In Port Said, while roaming about, we found a Madrasi shop, the worthy proprietor having the typical name of Ramaswami. Kachchi and Sindhi shops there were innumerable, as in Aden, Gibraltar and other places, the principal trade of these people being in curios and fancy goods.

We returned to the ship, and it soon set sail again. In a few hours we were on the Mediterranean. A perceptible change took place. The climate became suddenly chill, and it was no longer possible to venture on deck after night-fall without an overcoat. I was forced to put on my ridiculous overcoat, which was hardly longer than an ordinary coat and was made of the coarsest stuff imaginable; compared with other people's overcoats, it looked so ridiculous, and excited so many adverse comments and attracted so many eyes, that I resolved not to use it despite the cold except when it was completely dark and nobody could see it. An Italian had come on board from Port Said, and he and I used to sit together on deck in the evenings and talk about India and Italy.

The ship was to have gone straight across the Mediterranean to Marseilles, but news received about a hidden German mine on the straight route made her deflect her course and go between Sicily and the toe of Italy. I saw the coast of Sicily and thought of Syracuse and Carthage. As the night came on, the ship crossed the Straits of Messina. It was a beautiful spectacle. The two towns of Reggio and Messina on opposite coasts were brilliantly lighted and presented a festive appearance. The rows of lights reminded me of the Karthigai lights in South India. An hour later, we saw the famous volcano Stromboli in eruption. It was a most impressive sight

to us who had never seen an active volcano. Jets of steam and living fire were being thrown up every five minutes. Two days later, the ship passed between Corsica and Sardinia. The coasts of both these islands were plainly visible from the deck. I gazed at Corsica intently. The land which gave birth to Napoleon must always remain an object of intense interest to all. Even to see it from a distance was a great pleasure to me. It is indeed wonderful that this petty island should have produced a man who was a terror to Europe for twenty-two years, who conquered Egypt, and who had designs even on far-off India.

The longest journey must end at last. The *Nellore* reached Marseilles on the 12th October at about 11 a.m. Notice had been given that the passengers could land at 12 noon and that the special train from Marseilles would start at 7 p.m. A lunch was offered for those who would register their names. Myself and Mr. A, were too eager to land to care to register our names. I landed at 12 noon with all my belongings. Mr. A's long case was in the hold, and we had to wait for it for about an hour. Mr. A was anxious that we should venture together into Marseilles. So I waited. By the time we got Mr. A's case we felt hungry. We enquired of the steward whether we could get lunch on board the ship. He said that we could not, since we had not registered our names. So we had no other go but to venture into the town in quest of food. After the customs examination of our goods was over, we left our things in charge of one of Cook's men, and plunged into the City of Marseilles.

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## CHAPTER V

### MARSEILLES TO LONDON

WE set out with a light heart, never dreaming that we would meet with any difficulty. Our plan was first to go to some restaurant and satisfy our hunger, then to go to the Marseilles branch of Thomas Cook's office for cashing a draft of Mr. A and for taking delivery of any letters which might have arrived for him, and then to go round the great city sight-seeing.

In the first flush of enthusiasm, on entering a European City for the first time, we walked on for about two furlongs crossing one or two roads and not noting particularly the route we had taken. Then we saw a bus coming, hailed it, and, when it stopped, got into it and sat down very comfortably alongside a number of Frenchmen and women who stared at us with smiling good-humoured eyes and faces. The bus rattled along and had gone about half a mile before the unbusiness-like conductor, who was in his own leisurely way issuing tickets to passengers, came to us. He asked us "*ou allezvous. messieurs?*" (Where do you go to, sirs?). I knew no French; even less did Mr. A. I replied in English "we want to go to a restaurant first. Please give us two tickets for the nearest restaurant." The conductor laughed and said "*Je ne parle pas anglais*" (I do not speak English). Then, finding that we had not understood him, he said with an effort "English no." We were astounded. We had thought that there was no corner of the world where English was not understood, and, here, in the very next country to England, the conductor of a bus did not know English. We were

also in an awkward predicament. How were we to make the conductor understand what we wanted? Eagerly we searched the bus for an Englishman, but to no avail. There was not even a single English-knowing person except ourselves. Many a genial Frenchman and woman tried to help us, but all in vain. They knew not a word of English and we knew not a word of French; hence they could not be of any use to us. It must be remembered that even the words common to both the languages are pronounced differently in each language, and so cannot be understood by the speakers of the other. Our surprise and embarrassment knew no bounds. In what a fool's paradise had we lived, we thought to ourselves. We had not learnt then that on the continent of Europe a man could get on more easily with French than with English. Nor would such knowledge have comforted us much. Several kind souls plied us with questions in the rapid dialect of the south of France, but we understood not a word. A certain elderly gentleman, who wore the well-known uniform of a Roman Catholic priest, stroked his flowing beard, and asked us a question in Latin, expecting that here at last was the master-key. But alas, I knew nothing of Latin except to recognise it when spoken or written; and Mr. A, though a lawyer and as such presumed to know at least dog-Latin, was so innocent of that knowledge that he mistook the Latin for another dialect of French. He told me later that he was under the impression that the priest spoke dignified French as opposed to the colloquial French of the rest, in much the same way as a Brahmin priest in the United Provinces would use dignified Hindi, fortified with a plethora of Sanskrit words, unlike the colloquial Hindi of the vulgar folk. Be that as it may, I was highly amused when Mr. A, thinking that he, as an elderly man, was the proper person to reply to the venerable priest, said "Sir, I am sorry I do not know French." None except

myself understood the humour of the situation, as the others did not understand what Mr. A said.

There was silence for some time. The priest and the others resumed their seats and gave us up as hopeless. I thought of a working plan. I touched the ticket bundle of the conductor, showed the number two by holding up two of my fingers and said "Terminus." My idea was to take the tickets for the terminus to be on the safe side and to get down as soon as we saw any restaurant. I asked Mr. A to keep a sharp look-out for restaurants. The conductor understood the word "terminus" and gave us two tickets. Thus our first problem was solved in truly Indian fashion. Mr. A was deputed to watch one side of the street and I watched the other side. In ten minutes we reached the heart of the city and got down.

We saw what appeared to be a restaurant and went in. Some people were drinking wine there. They looked up as we entered, and there was a good-humoured grin on their faces. A waiter came and asked us "*Que Voulez-vous, messieurs?*" (What do you want, sirs?). By this time I had found out that the best method of making ourselves understood was by using signs used by the deaf and dumb. So I touched my lips with all the fingers of my right hand. This universal language of humanity was readily understood. The waiter repeated my sign and then shook his head to signify 'No.' Then he said "*Cabaret, pas restaurant*" (A tavern, not a restaurant) and brought a glass to impress on us his meaning. I was choacking with merriment at the use of these deaf and dumb signs between two civilised people in a country in Western Europe and wondered what a certain professor of mine, who had asserted that there was no place on earth where English was not understood, would have said had he been present then. Most probably, he would have thereafter taken a vow of silence and

perhaps become wiser thereby, though not as wise as the *Munis*<sup>1</sup> of old. My merriment was not quite unalloyed, as my stomach was crying for food and I could not find out how I would ever be able to tell any French waiter that I was a pure vegetarian and get vegetarian dishes. In any case, it was quite useless to stay in that cabaret; so we went out into the street. A few yards farther, we found an old woman selling small loaves (*petits pains*) and oranges. We bought some of these loaves and ate them greedily. We ordered for two citronnades and sipped the whole quantity through the reeds. Our hunger and thirst were satisfied. I bought ten oranges for a franc and ate two. I gave two to Mr. A and put the remaining six into my coat pockets which bulged out prominently. Then both of us set out in excellent humour in search of Cook's-branch.

The problem was to find somebody who could understand what we wanted and give us the directions for reaching Cook's Office. After our experience in the bus we were not very hopeful of getting this information from Frenchmen. So we were on the look-out for some Englishmen. But we were in no desperate hurry. We sauntered along looking at the shops on either side and admiring the shop windows. Quite a lot of people were about, and all had that gay appearance natural to the children of Southern France and Italy. We saw some Algerians and Tunisians, but Mr. A could not make himself understood by them in spite of his boast that Arabic was understood by all Muslims and that he was an expert in Arabic. Either the Algerians and Tunisians knew no Arabic, or Mr. A's Arabic knowledge was not so extensive. His fellow-Muslims gazed at Mr. A wonderingly. Mr. A told me after they had gone that they must have been Frenchified Muslims and that he was sure that at least the Moroccans and Egyptians would understand his Arabic perfectly. Presently we came across a

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1. Sages. Literally, silent men.

body of Moroccan soldiers strolling about. The indefatigable Mr. A approached them, and, after an exchange of profound salams, tried to open a conversation in flawless Arabic, but the result was no better than with the Algerians and Tunisians. However, this attempt of Mr. A led to an amusing incident.

The French, after the War, were terribly afraid of German spies who were supposed to be tampering with the loyalty of French Colonial levies, and especially with the Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians. Of these they were most careful about the Moroccans, as they were nominally subjects of an independent Sultan, were turbulent by nature, and were supposed to be more excitable than the Algerians and Tunisians who had been under French rule or protection for a far longer time. - Evidently, Mr. A's attempts at friendly conversation with his fellow-Muslims roused the suspicions of some passers-by and policemen, for hardly had we gone a hundred yards from the Moroccans than two policemen swooped down on us from a neighbouring cabaret and asked "*Papier ! Papier !*" We did not understand what they wanted and simply stared at them. Without any more ceremony they put their hands in our pockets and began a search. I was apprehensive about my oranges, and, so, said "These are oranges which I bought. Why do you want to take them?" On the policemen, who understood not a word of English, this protest, as well as the insinuation, fell flat. Finding that a crowd was gathering, the policemen hastily finished the search of our pockets. Fortunately for us, our passports were in our inner pockets. As soon as the constables saw these, their whole attitude changed. "*Voila !*" (There !) said one to the other, holding up my passport. The other got Mr. A's passport also at once, I was afraid lest these constables should take my passport in addition to my oranges. I said "That is my passport. Give it to me." The constables looked at our photos in the passports and at us. Then they

scrutinized the French visas. They became frankly apologetic. " *Sujets Britannique* " (British Subjects) they said to one another. Then, turning to us, they said " *Excusez-nous, messieurs, Nous n'etaient pas avis de vos nationalite. Acceptez nos apologies sincere.* " (Excuse us, sirs. We were not aware of your nationality. Accept our sincere apologies), restored all our things, including my oranges, and let us go. We understood the drift of their remarks, and I said to Mr. A " You see what a good thing it was that these fellows saw our passports. Else, we might have been put to untold trouble. " " Perhaps by asking for our ' *Papiers* ' they wanted only our passports " said Mr. A. " I too think so " said I, " Now, let us go to Cook's. "

We went on again merrily along the streets of Marseilles. Opposite a big shop we found a large crowd gathered staring at the many beautiful articles exhibited artistically at the window. There was an English Tommy in that crowd. We went and stood near him. " Damned nice, isn't it? " said he to us. " Yes " said I " Will you please tell us where Cook's is. " " Rather! " said he " It is close by. I shall myself take you there, " and he started. I wondered how the very soldier, whom we would have dreaded to approach in India, was so readily helping us. The soldier was glad to know that we were Indians, told us quite gratuitously that the War had made the white, brown, and black equal, adding with an odd naivete " You ought to see them Blacks on the Rhine; regular lording over the Germans. It would have been impossible seven years ago. " We agreed. Soon, Cook's was in sight and we left our soldier friend thanking him profusely. " Ugh! " said he on leaving us " These here Frenchmen will never improve. Even after the War they don't know any English, not they. But once you learn to speak their funny language, they are not half bad, you know. "

Mr. A was brisk with his business at Cook's. He presented

his draft and got payment. Then he enquired for his letters. After a prolonged search, he was given a solitary open cover containing printed matter from Messrs. Grindlay & Co., who assured him of their prompt services, should he book passages through them, and of their readiness to bank his money at all times. Poor Mr. A went red with rage at this printed callousness. Where he had expected numerous letters from friends and would-be buyers of Sialkot sporting materials, here was this officious company giving him his solitary welcome. It was as if a man expecting a cheque finds a Bill instead! Mr. A was sick of Cook's, and we resolved at once to leave this office of many regrets and go round the gay city. After three hours' roaming about and sight-seeing we got into a tea-shop and had a very fine tea with plenty of excellent cakes. The ship's tea was worthless in comparison with this gorgeous affair; and we felt not the slightest regret in paying five francs for us both. The rate of exchange was then favourable to us.

After the tea, we proceeded to return to the docks and our luggage. Here a difficulty arose. How were we to name the place we wanted to get to? There were many extensive docks at Marseilles, and how were we to name our particular dock? Above all, how were we to find 'out the number of the bus going to the docks? While we were pondering over these problems, who should come along but the soldier who had directed us to Cook's? He asked us whether we had finished our business at Cook's and had seen the town. We replied in the affirmative and then explained our new difficulties. He laughed and said "I think I can help you." He led us to another road and then took us to a policeman. He asked the policeman to put us into the bus which went to the harbour and then gave us a chit with "Hangar 7" written on it which slip he asked us to show the conductor. We thanked

him and he went away after shaking hands with us vigorously and hoping to see us again. "Not here, I hope" said I, and we laughed. The French policeman perhaps thought from our laughter that we were a humorous lot, and, so, said something in French and laughed. Most probably, it was a witticism, from his way of saying it and his subsequent behaviour, but, as we knew no French, we could not appreciate its humour, and, so, did not laugh. The laughter of the policeman died away suddenly, and he must have mentally registered us in the same class with Scotchmen. However, his private discomfiture did not swerve him from the path of duty, and he showed us the right bus for the harbour though I had feared that the man, out of revenge or pure devilry, might put us into a wrong bus. We showed the chit to the conductor, and he readily issued us tickets for 'Hangar 7' which we reached quite easily. As soon as we got down, we went to the place where our luggage was stored, and found it safe, to our inexpressible satisfaction.

It was only five in the evening when we returned, and the special train was to leave at 7 p.m. We got our things weighed, and I had to pay 40 francs more as luggage fare. After the weighing was over, we took a gorgeous fruitarian meal and prepared ourselves for getting into the train. At 7-45 p.m. the train started. Myself and Mr. G were given the same compartment. I got the lower berth, and Mr. G the upper. The berths were quite comfortable, though the fare (£6-10-0) was, to say the least, exorbitant. Mr. M, the pearl merchant, had stayed behind at Marseilles with intent to go by the morning train to Paris at 1/3 the fare charged for this train. The night was cold, and I wrapped myself in my rugs and was soon asleep. The train's motion was very agreeable and conduced to bring about sleep earlier. When I woke up late in the morning, we were in Paris. All were taking their tea.

I also took some tea and joined Mr. A and others who were talking in the corridor. "The train is three hours late" remarked somebody. "So, oriental punctuality is not confined to the orient," said I. "Then why did you come at all to Europe?" asked the drunken Englishman with whom I had had a verbal duel on board the ship. "I did not come at your behest" said I. "What did you say?" asked he in a threatening voice, and advanced a step towards me. "Don't think that you can cow me by threats here" said I. "This is not India; it is France, the land of liberty, equality and fraternity. You can't get any unfair advantage here, as in India. The same judge and jury will try us if it comes to blows." The other muttered an oath and withdrew his step. My reference was, of course, to the racial distinction in India in judicial trials in those days. Mr. Griffiths came to me shortly afterwards and said "Why do you say that in France alone you will get justice? England will not lag behind France any day." His remark was perfectly justified by what I saw of the trials in England which were scrupulously fair whoever the parties might be.

Snow had fallen over-night, the winter having set in early that year. The train left Paris and soon crossed the Aisne on whose banks had been fought one of the most murderous battles in the Great War. Before I ceased thinking about the battle of the Aisne, the train had rushed past Beauvais and had arrived at Amiens. There was some ice lying at the end of the platform, and Mr. Griffiths pointed it out to me. It was the first time I saw natural ice and so I got down from the train and took a piece in my hands. The thing was so cold that I dropped it almost instantly and came back to the compartment. Mr. A was wonder-struck and asked why I felt so curious. "Is this the first time you see ice?" he asked. "It is," I replied. The sight of the Aisne and Amiens, which

had also figured largely in the war, made me resolve to visit the battle-fields in the near future, a resolve carried into effect in July 1920. The train passed Abbeville and reached Boulogne at about 4-30 p. m. We were informed there that, owing to the lateness of the hour and the roughness of the channel, the crossing would be done only the next day and that the mail boat would start from Boulogne at 8 a. m., the next morning. We were therefore asked to get down at Boulogne and make ourselves comfortable for the night in either of the two hotels there. So we got down with all our belongings and went to the bigger of the two hotels. Myself, Mr. G and Mr. S got one room. After taking six little loaves and a litre of milk, I went to bed and fell fast asleep.

I woke up at 6 a. m. the next day and took a good breakfast on loaves, butter, fruits and coffee. Then, taking all my things, I went to the beach where, in 1803, Napoleon had camped with his army for his projected invasion of England. One by one, all the other passengers came toiling along. None of us were cheerful. We were slightly put out at the unexpected delay of one day. After the inevitable customs examination and checking of passports and visas were over, we got into the boat and started for Dover. Generally, boats from Boulogne go to Folkestone, but that day, owing to a combination of untoward circumstances, the boat cut across the channel to Dover. It was a cold day and the channel was rough, I had a poor opinion of the English Channel and expected to see a thing as placid and calm as a lagoon. I was somewhat taken aback at seeing the stormy waters, and realised that, after all, the Armada had some little justification for its grotesque failure. I strained my eyes to catch a glimpse of the opposite English coast, but, owing to a mist, could not see it. The crossing took three hours, and I was somewhat amused at the anxiety of some passengers on seeing the channel a bit stormy. Finally, the cliffs of Dover

came in sight, and I remembered the famous scene in King Lear. They are really impressive, but that is because they are chalk cliffs and not because of their height.

Dover reminded me of the days of the cinque ports. Soon, the Customs House was in sight. We disembarked and went through the awful routine of passport checking and Customs examination. The English Customs Officers were more thorough in their examination than the French. We were all asked to take our things to a long room and place them on benches. The customs officers would go round inspecting and marking with a piece of chalk the articles examined. Everybody was anxious to get his examination done first, and I was no exception to the rule. My articles were soon transported to one of the benches. They consisted of two suit cases, one giant pine-wood case, a rail bag and a few sundries. A Customs Officer came and asked me what my suit cases and pine-wood box contained. I said "Books and clothes." "Open everything" said he. I opened the two suit cases and the rail bag and exposed their contents. He smiled at the wonderful articles of dress given to me by the Bombay supplier. The bundled-up ladies' dressing gown he took in his hand and perused with a mystified expression in his eyes. Then he asked me to open the pine-wood case. I told him that it would be very difficult as the lid had been securely nailed in on all sides. "But it must be opened somehow" said he, and asked one peon to go to work at the nails with a hammer. "What will happen if you break the lid?" I asked "It will be impossible for me to carry it afterwards." "What to do?" said the Customs Officer, and then, seeing my face fall, he said "Don't fear. We shall nail in the lid after examination, as a special case." But there was no need for this generosity. At the first blow of the hammer a chip of the good old pine-wood case flew off. There was no sign of any of the four-inch nails coming off. The

Customs Officer and his peon were frightened. More and more passengers were coming with their luggage. "You may take all your luggage and go" said the Customs Officer "I dare say that box contains only books as you say. It is a wonder it stood the journey to England. Is it old?" "Very" said I, and departed with two porters carrying all my belongings.

Dear old pine-wood box, it had a very long life. Bought in Trivandrum in 1912 A.D. for fourteen annas as a second-hand box, it went to England carrying my books in 1919, and, after various journeys to the south coast health resorts, France, Belgium and Germany, returned with me to Bombay in December 1922 and was left with my brother as a trustworthy vagabond and is still doing yeoman service as a lumber box. It was nothing flashy, this box, but did unostentatious work of the greatest utility for 14 years. Some who have seen it attribute its fidelity and endurance to the quality of the pine-wood, and some to the tin plates inside, but I attribute it to a combination of both these.

I boarded the train for London. I saw some curious warnings not to put heavy articles on the racks, but nevertheless put my two suit cases there with the hearty co-operation of the two English porters. The pine-wood case was about to be taken into the compartment when the guard came along and said "That there, big case should not be put into the compartment. It should be put into the luggage van." He tried to lift the thing, but the good old case had no ears or brims to catch, and was none too light. Naturally, it did not even rise up two inches and look at him. "My!" said the guard, dropping the thing, and taking care that it did not fall on his toe. "It is a real heavy weight. Whatever does it contain? Bullion?" "No fear" said I. "Books." "Going to some Varsity, I suppose," said the guard, "but, what a load of books, though!"

I asked the two porters to carry the pine-wood case to the luggage van. They deposited it neatly on a new trunk of some person with brilliant varnish on it. As the pine-wood case sat on the trunk, the latter groaned, and its heart seemed to break. The owner of the trunk shrieked out "I say, don't put that big case on my new trunk. The varnish may go, and the trunk may even break." He rushed into the van, and tried to dislodge my pet; but it was too heavy for him, and, so, he called in the help of my two porters, and, all three of them together put the pine-wood case down, rescued the trunk, which escaped with a few discolorations, and reversed the positions of the pine-wood case and the trunk. A few minutes afterwards, the train started. I feasted my eyes on the English country scenery. We passed Canterbury, Rochester, and other old and historic towns. An hour later, we had reached our destination. The train stopped, crowds of porters boarded it, shouts of "Victoria" "Victoria" were heard, and a fleet of taxis, cabs and lorries met our eyes when we looked out of the windows. We were in the heart of London.

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## CHAPTER VI

### 21 CROMWELL ROAD

THERE was a frantic eagerness on all sides to get down from the train as early as possible and be off. The men and women, who had so patiently waited for 19 long days, suddenly became unreasonably impatient of a few more minutes' delay. On the ocean there was no use fretting, and, so, all had kept quiet. But now that they were in the heart of London, within sight of their homes, so to speak, all patience gave way, and minutes became almost as important as days. The porters who invaded all the compartments rose to the occasion and were, with truly wonderful rapidity, unloading trunks, suit cases and other luggage. Often, in their zeal to be expeditious, they used to unload and carry away other people's luggage, mistaking them for their clients, and make the hapless owners run after them, leaving their other luggage behind. For, if they delayed the pursuit, those articles of theirs would have gone miles in some taxi or trolley.

We Indians had no homes or friends or relations in England; but that did not make me or any other Indian more patient. We saw no reason to stay a minute longer in the train than the rest. We were anxious to plunge into the new world in which we were to spend at least three years. The eagerness to see our new surroundings acted on us in much the same way as the desire to see old haunts and old friends operated on our English fellow-passengers. We got down from the train with all our luggage. It took me some little time to get my pinewood case which had to be extricated from a lot of other articles. A porter carelessly put it down on the

platform, incidently crushing his left big toe on which a corner of the wretched box squatted. With a shriek, he dislodged it from his toe and said to me "Why ever do you gents carry such boxes about with you? Coming from India—r I suppose? Them boxes are never seen in this country with passengers. Them are book-shop boxes." "That box too contains only books." said I.

Then the porter hailed a taxi. Myself and Mr. S resolved to go together in it. There was some trouble in getting all our things into it, especially the pine-wood case. The taxi-cab man demurred to taking so much and so heavy luggage and suggested that at least the pine-wood case might well be entrusted to a carrier who would deliver it, at any address I wanted, for a low fee. But I had little faith in carriers. I always like to have all my luggage with me. An extra shilling offered made the taxi-man cast off his scruples. All our luggage, Mr. S. had little, was soon beautifully loaded in the taxi which groaned under its weight and assumed a new shape with many more angles than before. While this was going on, I was busy looking round for Dr. Arnold, or at least one of his lieutenants, from 21, Cromwell Road. By reading the hand-book issued by the Advisory Committee, I had been led to expect that either Dr. Arnold or one of his lieutenants would come to the station for every mail train in order to meet new Indian arrivals. My friends also had expected this. But we were disappointed. No one had come from 21, Cromwell Road. So we were left to shift for ourselves.

Fortunately, our taxi-man knew where 21, Cromwell Road was. Myself and Mr. S. got into the taxi and drove off after paying the porter half a crown. There was a metre for the taxi, but that did not help us materially as the taxi-man took a very devious route and made us pay twelve shillings where we ought to have paid only six. But since we were two and

thus had to pay only six shillings apiece, and since we saw a good bit of London on the way, we did not grudge the payment. The taxi stopped before a large building opposite the South Kensington Museum. The driver said "Here you are, sirs." We got down and went to the door and knocked. A short fat man opened the door and stood rubbing his hands. He, I gathered later, was the head porter. An elderly lady with a very good-humoured face and grey hair stepped forward and shook hands with us, hoping that we had a good voyage and welcoming us to 21, Cromwell Road. That was Miss Beck, the lady in charge of the place. After Miss Beck had shaken hands with us, a comparatively young man shook hands with us and repeated her kind enquiries. That was Mr. Gordon George, the warden of the hostel. To us, Indians, the cordial welcome extended by these two and their kind enquiries looked a little artificial and mechanical, but were, all the same, welcome. Soon, Messrs. G., A., B and L arrived, and Miss Beck and Mr. Gordon George turned their attention to them. We made the porters take our things from the taxi into the building. Then we paid the taxi-man twelve shillings and asked him to go away. "Where is my tip?" asked he. "Are not twelve shillings enough for you?" I asked. "The metre gave me that," replied he, "Don't you want to give me something extra?" As there were several persons about, I paid the man an extra shilling and sent him away. Turning to Mr. S, I said "These taxi-men are no better than our rikshawalas in the matter of extorting backsheesh. Only, they call it a tip." Mr. S. agreed, and, with a mournful air, gave me the six shillings and six pence he owed me. We asked the porter where Dr. Arnold was. He told us that he was at the India Office. We had thought that Dr. Arnold was in charge of 21, Cromwell Road. Indeed, so deep-rooted was this belief with the Indians going to England in those days that one

Indian is said to have made the absurd mistake of taking the head porter to be Dr. Arnold, Miss Beck to be Mrs. Arnold and Mr. Gordon George to be their son! The ludicrous fellow, it seems, even went to shake hands with the porter, neglecting Miss Beck and Mr. Gordon George, and was saved from making a worse ass of himself only by the porter's awkward but wise retreat!

We were told by Miss Beck that there was no room available for us but that we could put up in a hall upstairs along with several others. We were shown this hall which was next to the reading room and contained nine beds. There was a side verandah with three beds adjoining this hall, "You see, we are full up at present" said Miss Beck to us "I am sorry I cannot offer you better accommodation now". "That is all right" said I "Please don't worry." I was given a bed in the big hall. After this, I went downstairs to look after my things. I was told by the porter that only the absolutely essential things were to be taken upstairs, the rest remaining in his safe custody in the luggage room below. I was not very much in favour of leaving my things in a place which could not be reached by my eye always, but the idea of leaving them in the hall where several people were coming and going constantly, as in a caravanserai, was even more intolerable. And, as so often happens in this world, I had to choose the lesser of the two evils and leave the bulk of my luggage downstairs. In order to mitigate the evil, I used to inspect my suit-cases and pinewood box at least once a day, and, incidentally, found that the same healthy habit was indulged in by others also. When I mentioned this to a friend, who was a bit of a cynic, he remarked "It is not those who have left things there that haunt the place so frequently; it is those who have not," "What interest have they?" I asked, in my innocence. "Just to see if any

things have been left for them" was his smiling reply. My anxiety was increased twofold. "How to escape this evil?" I asked. "Travel with no luggage" he replied. "That is impossible" said I. "Well, then, if you want the luxury of having much luggage you must take the ordinary risks." A poor consolation this, and I did not thank my friend for it. Nevertheless, I made my visits to the luggage room more frequent.

The charge for lodging and breakfast was £1 11sh. 6d. per week. If a lunch were wanted, a ticket for one shilling had to be bought. For dinner, tickets were sold at 1sh. 3d. each. Special arrangements had to be made if tea were wanted.

That night, Miss Beck sat at the same table as myself, Mr. G and Mr. A for dinner. First, soup was brought. I said that I did not want it and began to eat a piece of bread and some peas and boiled potatoes. Miss Beck took a spoonful of soup and, sipping it, said "It is very good. Why don't you take it, Mr. Ayyar?" "Because I am a vegetarian and don't eat any meat" said I. "It contains no meat" said she. "Do you mean to say that it contains no meat substance whatsoever?" asked I. "Well, hardly anything" said she. "That is enough for me. I won't touch it" I replied. "You must get used to it if you are to live for three years in England" said Miss Beck resuming her soup-drinking. "I am confident of getting on without it" I replied, and ate my peas and potatoes. At 21 Cromwell Road, it was a settled conviction that no man could get on in England without eating meat, and a regular propaganda was carried on for converting vegetarians to meat-eating with the best of motives. One of my friends was made by his table-mates to eat a soup on the assurance that there was no meat product at all in it but only ginger. Poor man, he ate the soup and incidentally found, while eating the so-called ginger pieces, that they were really minced meat.

But the object of the proselytisers failed. For, the man, indignant at the fraud, left Cromwell Road for good and lived a strict vegetarian life from whose even equanimity he would be disturbed only by the mention of 21 Cromwell Road. To this day, he believes that his table-mates, who were all Indians wanted simply to degrade him and were actuated by the basest of motives. He cannot speak of these deluded sons of India without such epithets as "Rascals," "Scoundrels," etc. It must, however, be admitted that this gentleman was an exception. The rule was for a man, who was once trapped like this, to reconcile himself to the situation and begin to eat meat and fish with alacrity. For, having once fallen from the ideal, though unwittingly, these people saw no use in defending a breached fort, and, with that suicidal genius so strong in present-day Hinduism, made no distinction between a conscious fall from virtue and an accidental and forced lapse.

Vegetarians and meat-eaters, however, had a common grievance at 21 Cromwell Road, namely that there was never enough to eat. This, of course, applied with far greater force to the vegetarians who could eat only a fraction of what was served, owing to their dietary scruples. The fact was that the rates charged at 21 Cromwell Road were so ridiculously low, for England, that nothing much could be given. First gone, first served, was the principle, and there was generally a scramble for seats as soon as the bell rang. There was a keen desire for a seat at the tables where Miss Beck or Mr. Gordon George sat, since there was a belief that a comparatively greater quantity of things could be got there, though, from personal experience, I can say that there was no truth in this. However, one advantage could be derived from sitting at these official tables, and that was that a strictly equitable distribution would be made of the foodstuffs placed there unlike at other tables where the first who got hold of the dishes served

for themselves a quantity far in excess of what a just distribution would have given them. One curious result of this ration scarcity was that we vegetarians became popular and were invited by everybody to sit at their tables, for the rest could appropriate our share of the meat, in much the same way as tee-totalling Bar students are popular with the rest at dinners and are invited by many to sit at their tables and thus give an extra portion to their comrades.

That food was not plentiful at 21 Cromwell Road may be readily admitted. But my own idea is that the scarcity was exaggerated a good deal by the inmates who invented many witty stories about it. One of these was that a man suffering from chronic and apparently incurable, indigestion, and given up as hopeless by many eminent doctors of France and England, finally went to the very best doctor in London whose advice was "Go to 21 Cromwell Road, and you will be cured." Another story was that a diner in 21 Cromwell Road swallowed a fork since there was so very little at its end that he mistook the fork for the thing! Another popular joke was that a special art called stomachic telepathy had been evolved to perfection in Cromwell Road since every inmate instinctively knew when the bell would ring for lunch or dinner. The fact is that the Cromwellians' love of jokes made them grossly exaggerate the inconvenience, which, though real, was not after all, a tenth of what they represented it to be.

A popular, but altogether unjustified, belief among the Indians of 21 Cromwell Road was that the India Office, under whose control the institution was, had directed the warden and others to spy out the movements of the Indians, and that Miss Beck was principally engaged in such spying. Those were wretched days when the fear of the C. I. D. was very great with the educated classes, and all persons in the least connected with the Government, nay even one's professors and fellow students, were suspected by students of advanced political views. No

wonder, that, in the general atmosphere of suspicion bred by the war, these young Indians suspected Miss Beck and mistook her kind and motherly enquiries to be inquisitorial questions of a trained spy. The very day that I reached 21 Cromwell Road, two Indians there warned me against this supposed danger and adjured me not to give out my movements to Miss Beck lest I should be ruined by her reports. It is rather curious that the Indian students always believed that these so-called informers exaggerated and perverted everything in their reports in order to ruin innocent people! I was, in those days, of the same opinion, and, so, while unwilling to believe that the kind old lady had any such evil motives, resolved to be fully on my guard. Thus it happened that on two or three occasions when she asked me where I was going, I told her repeatedly "Just round the corner, Miss Beck," a reply which was effective in stopping further enquiries from her. In retrospect, I am disposed to laugh at my behaviour then. I must confess that the third time I gave that reply I saw Miss Beck pained. But, in my then frame of mind, I felt no pity for the old lady. Later on, closer acquaintance and her many kindnesses convinced me that she was unjustly maligned, and I ended by getting rid of all unjust suspicions. Every Christmas I used to receive a kind card from the lady, a reminder of the days I spent at Cromwell Road.

Now that I am on the subject of spies, I may add here how deep-rooted the belief among the Indian students in England was that the India Office employed some spies of all classes and vocations, including students, to watch them. A year after I had been in England, I went to Shakespeare Hut, the Y. M. C. A. Hostel for Indians, and, one evening, casually met a young intelligent-looking Bengali. He told me, rather pathetically, that some fellows had spread a scandal that he was an India Office spy, and that most Indians were

consequently avoiding him. I sympathized with him, but spoke no more to him, as I considered it dangerous to move with a man whom so many suspected, I told some of my friends about this young man and his grievances. One and all of them avoided him thereafter, and thanked me profusely for my information. "The man is probably innocent" said I. "Doesn't matter. We can't take risks" they said "We spend a lot of borrowed money here, and if this fellow is, by any odd chance, a spy, he will ruin us and our families. It is bad enough to mix with people against whom there is suspicion." I kept quiet. Some four days later, the young man left the hostel, quite disgusted at the boycott, and almost everybody was convinced that he was a spy and breathed a sigh of relief that he had gone!

I give one more funny instance. I got a letter safely delivered to me at the proper time, when I was at Oxford, though the address on it was only "A. S. P. Ayyar, England." I pointed out to a Mahratta friend the efficiency of the English Post Office. "Say, rather, of the English Police" said he, "Every Indian's name and address are with the spies of the India Office, and the C. I. D. of Scotland Yard. Else, how did your letter reach you so soon?" He assured me coolly that every letter sent to an Indian was opened and re-sealed. "I see no marks of opening" said I. "They are all steamed and opened" said he, "No marks are left. They take copies and re-seal." "My letters are in Malayalam" said I. "Photographic copies are taken" said he. "What about translators?" I asked. "Excellent ones are with the police" said he, "Even the University professors are not up to much" said I. "That's why" said he, "The best translators are with the police, believe it or not." When the Lytton Committee for enquiring into the condition of Indian students came to Oxford, the representatives of the

Oxford Indians told Lord Lytton that there were spies employed by the India Office to watch their movements, and persisted in this belief despite his lordship's emphatic disclaimers. In 1922, the Indian students were reassured to some extent, and, now the persecution of supposed spies is considerably less than between 1919 and 1921.

To return to our story: After the dinner was over, I went upstairs. It was bitter cold, and all were huddling round a fire in the reading room. Some brave spirits were playing ping-pong and billiards. Others were reading books or chatting round the fire. I somehow managed to get a seat between two fat people, and, being wedged in and hardly a foot from the fireplace, got some warmth. After some ten minutes I found that I was getting unequal warmth, and being moreover tired by the steamer and train journey, felt an overpowering desire for sleep. I went and searched for my bed and found it. It had but one lean blanket which was threadbare, having perhaps braved many winters to the infinite detriment of its fluffy surface. Happily, the Bombay supplier had given me two thick blankets, and, so, down I went into the luggage room and fetched them and had them spread on the bed. Then I stretched myself on the bed. "Hardly eight thirty yet. So soon to bed?" asked Miss Beck, seeing my preparations. "Yes, Miss Beck," said I "I am tired to death." Seeing my example, some others, who were troubling the company with their interminable yawns, quietly followed. "I say, you have no hot water bottle?" asked a neighbour. I hardly understood what he meant. I was thinking of the leather bottles used by the military for storing drinking water and said "No, I don't keep such things." What he meant was a hot water bottle for warming the feet. But my reply would have applied equally to that. In five minutes I fell fast asleep.

Next morning, I woke up at 5-30 a.m. and, as usual, went

to take my bath. It was bitter cold, and I had no slippers; the bath sandals the Bombay supplier gave me were not only curious in shape, but would not also fit my feet. So I walked bare-foot in my pyjamas with my bath-towel and soap. To go to the bath-rooms I had to go up several steps to the third floor. I was shivering with cold, but thought that I should bathe before 6 a.m. as on board the ship. It was an open secret at Cromwell Road that the hot water would not be so hot after 8 a.m. and, so, all would flock to the bath-rooms between 7 and 8 a.m. To take a luxurious bath undisturbed, 6 a.m. was the time. Hence, I had pitched upon it along with another. We two went and took possession of two bath-rooms and revelled in the baths, forgetting all cares and worries, the beastly cold, the scanty food, the strange country and the unsettled nature of our plans. A comfortable bath after a good sleep is, in my view, a very good remedy for cares and worries. As I lay immersed in the hot water of the bath, I felt myself to be like the Maoris described in geography text-books as wallowing in the hot springs.

An early bath is always associated with religion among the Brahmins. Old associations made me repeat some hymns and verses. My example made my companion in the next bath-room also repeat some hymns of his part of the country. All this noise proved too much for the sleepers in the adjoining rooms, and, soon, we heard some thumpings on the doors, an unmistakable warning to us to stop. We stopped our recitations and went downstairs and changed. At breakfast, Mr. Knaster, the sub-warden, was asking people as to who the noise-makers were, and I and my friend pleaded guilty. "You go to bed at eight and get up at four. Pray, have some consideration for those who go to bed at one and get up at nine" said he. We promised not to recite our psalms and hymns so loudly in future. "Why not stop it altogether?" asked Mr. Knaster. But we

appealed to Miss Beck, who agreed with us, like the good old lady she was, that their recitation was quite essential but that they should always be muttered to oneself.

After breakfast, Miss Beck offered to take us to the South Kensington Museum. But I wanted to visit Mr. Mehta, the local agent of the Tatas. So I looked up the telephone number of his office in New Broad Street and tried to phone to him. As I was a novice in this art, what happened was rather funny. I picked up the receiver and said "Hullo! Hullo!". The girl at the Exchange responded. Instead of giving the number, I asked absent-mindedly "Is that you, Mr. Mehta?". I heard a girl's laughter and then "No, I am the Exchange." Then, realizing my mistake, I gave the number and got into touch with Mr. Mehta. He told me that I could see him that evening. I, therefore, started after lunch, and took the 'tube' at South Kensington station.

It was an Inner circle train. I didn't know this. I had been told that I would reach Liverpool Street, the station for New Broad Street, in 45 minutes. After an hour and a half I found myself again at South Kensington. I was astounded. I had seen the train moving for so long and yet I was in the same place though the train had not turned back. On enquiring of a neighbour I learned that I had made one full circle and had passed Liverpool Street without noticing it. With unabated enthusiasm, and somewhat more watchful eyes, I again travelled in the train till it reached Liverpool Street where I alighted and made my way to Capell House, New Broad Street, where Mr. Mehta's Office was, with the aid of a constable whose soldierly bearing and unfailing good humour impressed me very much. The police are much sought after in England and are regarded as the friends of the people. In our country, on the other hand, all men avoid the police who are, quite unjustly, regarded as the enemies of the people.

I shall deal with the reasons for this strange phenomenon in a later chapter.

I had expected the Tatas to have a whole building for themselves after what I had seen of their palatial office at Bombay. But I had reckoned without the immensely higher rents prevailing at London. The Tatas had only one floor, out of four, for themselves. I saw Mr. Mehta who was the son of Sir Phirozeshah Mehta and was the very model of politeness. He gave me much sound advice, took down my address, and asked me to call on him whenever I wanted, and then we parted.

I returned to Cromwell Road at about 5 p.m., and found some tea being distributed. On enquiry, I learnt that twice a week, roughly speaking, this tea was being given free to all Indians who cared to go to 21 Cromwell Road and that the officers of the institution were supposed to be "At Home" on those occasions to the Indian students. Very generally, there were lectures by prominent people on these days. I was glad to find a tea in progress, and took my fair share of it as well as of the cakes and currants. One Muslim student from the United Provinces, who introduced himself to me as the father of six children, was eating currants by handfuls. He asked me also to do the same. I demurred to this wholesale devastation and said that it was hardly decent. "What! it is our money which is spent for these tea parties. The India Office supplies the sinews of war. That is why I come on every such occasion here and get what little dividend I can for Mother India" he said, and I had a hearty laugh. I treated this reply as lightly as his statement that he had six children, but six months' acquaintance with him made me realize how truthful he had been in giving both these statements. Incidentally, at these teas I used to see many other Indians, from Oxford, from Cambridge, from Edinburgh

and from London. The Oxford and Cambridge Indians used to treat the rest in much the same way as the Chinese are said to have regarded foreigners, and, needless to say, many uncomplimentary side remarks were whispered against these university men by the rest.

The third day after I went to Cromwell Road, a bed felt vacant in the verandah adjoining the big hall, and I shifted to the verandah where I found two others who, were Punjabi Hindus, and were quite easy to get on with. Mr. G had gone to Cambridge to try to get admission into some College there though it was the middle of a term. Mr. A, having become thoroughly disgusted with Cromwell Road meals, had gone to live as a paying guest with an Egyptian who had married an Englishwoman. Friends of Mr. A had apprehensions about Indo-Egyptian relations; Mr. A's parting words to me were these: "Mr. Ayyar, you are sure to get into the I.C.S. Why put up with this hellish food? If you will listen to me, choose some place which will cater to your belly better. Otherwise, well, you may be starved to death before you get into the I.C.S." Then he vigorously shook hands with me and left. I heard later that Mr. A exhibited his famous samples contained in the long case to various renowned London firms. Suffice it to say, no great revolution took place in the London market. Once in three or four days I used to see Mr. A at 21 Cromwell Road. Gradually his visits became fewer and fewer and finally stopped altogether.

Mr. A's advice had some effect on me. I resolved to supplement the lean meals of Cromwell Road by substantial lunches outside. The first experiment was quite by accident, and not very hopeful. I was very much in need of a good dressing gown as I found it impossible to walk up the stairs at 5 a.m. for a bath in my pyjamas. So, I started one day after breakfast to buy a new dressing gown and to order

for two new suits. These latter were necessary as the suits given by the Bombay supplier were ridiculous in the extreme. Miss Beck had, with a woman's eye, seen the impossibility of my being allowed to walk about London in those clothes, and, with the tact so natural to women, did not want to broach the subject herself. She told me that Mr. N. C. Sen, an assistant Adviser to Indian Students, would be delighted to see me in his room. I went and was courteously received by Mr. Sen who was a grave elderly gentleman. Somehow or other, though I had never before met him, I felt more at home with him than with Miss Beck or Mr. Knaster or Mr. Gaster or Mr. Gordon George. The ties of the common motherland and dark skin perhaps accounted for this. Mr. Sen talked to me about my going to Oxford and various other matters. Then, as if casually, he told me that my clothes were too thin for the English winter and that I should go in for two new suits. "Besides," said he with a benevolent smile "those clothes are not of the latest cut." I replied that I did not care for fashion. "No; nor do I" said he, "But all of us want to escape being laughed at." I suddenly remembered that many people had smiled at seeing me go past. But I had attributed this to the natural amusement of white people at seeing a dark man. Now I knew the real reason. Without any more argument, I agreed to Mr. Sen's proposal. Then I asked Mr. Sen when I should go to Oxford. "There is no hurry now," said he "You won't get admission this year as it is the middle of a term. As soon as your new suits are ready, you can go to Oxford and see Mr. Burrows, the local adviser." I thanked Mr. Sen and left.

I ordered for two new suits at once from a reputed tailor in London. The whole of the establishment there got a fit of uncontrollable mirth at seeing the misfit in which I was dressed. "Wherever was this suit made, sir?" asked the tailor taking the

measurements. "At Bombay" said I. "Are they so bad at it, sir? Well, I never—" and then, perhaps out of politeness, he cut himself short. This tailor had, like all English firms of repute, only fixed prices, though, later on, I came to learn by experience, that this fixity was by no means static, but thoroughly dynamic, a kind of fluid fixity which left considerable scope for bargaining, though nothing comparable to the higgling in India. I also learnt subsequently that the fluid fixity would rise or fall like a barometer on coming into contact with each customer. After taking my measurements, the tailor said "Sir, excuse me if I seem to be impolite, but your hat does look odd." I resolved to buy a new hat, and, on my return journey, stepped into a hatter's and bought a fine Velour hat for 45 shillings. A friend had told me that my Bombay hat could be sold to some dealer; I took this opportunity of getting rid of that. On my broaching the proposal to the girl who had sold me the hat, she was overtaken by a violent fit of laughing and said "Oh, no, sir, we don't buy hats. Where did you buy it, sir?" "At Bombay" said I. "Perhaps, the dealers round the corner may buy it," she replied. I put on my new hat, and, wrapping my old one in a newspaper which she gave me, I stepped into the street, leaving the girl to enjoy her uncontrollable fit of laughter. I directed my foot-steps to the shop indicated by the girl and found it to be a curio shop! Needless to say, I never entered it. Then I understood why the girl had got such a fit of laughter. I thought of throwing the old hat away somewhere but finally resolved to keep it with me in order to confront the Bombay supplier with it. Besides, I had begun to contract an affection for the poor thing. It had travelled with me over land and sea for six thousand miles. Would I be justified in deserting so faithful a thing simply because it had no voice to reproach me with? I am ashamed to say that, in spite of all

the generous emotions I felt then, I threw away the hat just before returning to India.

As I felt hungry, I went into a wayside restaurant and wanted to eat something. It was a restaurant of the commoner sort, and my demand for purely vegetarian food roused much hilarity. "This is all the vegetables we have got" said the waitress, bringing bread and butter and some boiled potatoes and cauliflower. Nothing loath, I made a meal out of these, to the wonder and amusement of the waitress and my neighbours. On another occasion I had to content myself with bread and jam. But those were days before I came to know of first-class vegetarian restaurants like Abdulla's, the Indian Restaurant, the English Food Reform Restaurant, etc. etc.

Meanwhile, life in Cromwell Road was pursuing its even flow. Miss Beck had very great difficulty in licking the newcomers into shape, but she was never dismayed by the enormity of the task. She almost always sat with the inmates of the hostel at dinner, as well as by the fire-side, and conversed with them on all kinds of topics. Sometimes, no doubt, she must have been greatly embarrassed by the awkward questions which some Indians, ill-acquainted with British manners, put to her. For instance, one day, she distributed some chocolates among us, telling us that it was her birth-day. After wishing her many happy returns, I asked her what her age was. This simple question, which would invariably have been asked in India and no offence taken, seemed to upset her a little. She asked me to guess. My inexperience of the west made me bluntly ask her "60?" She said with warmth "Oh no!" I ought to have stopped, but didn't. "55?" I queried. "No" said she. "50?" I asked with a pertinacity which now astonishes me. "No" replied she. "Then, what is your age?" I asked. "I am not so old as you think," was her reply. Miss Beck was never offended with me for my impoliteness, perhaps

because she saw that it was due to my ignorance of western conventions.

Another curious episode in the early days of my stay at Cromwell Road related to a man called Mr. X. He had unnecessarily made himself thoroughly unpopular with all other Indians by his carrying tales to the warden and the rest, by an inquisitorial questioning of all whom he met and noting down the answers in a note book, thus lending colour to a suspicion that he was a spy, and by his affected contempt for Indian customs. Whenever a new Indian came, Mr. X used to ask him what his name and father's and mother's names were, his village, details of property, brothers, sisters, etc., and intended movements in Europe. All the replies were taken down in a note-book. Most people resented this, and one Punjabi Muslim even went to assault him when questioned about his sisters' names. Mr. X was saved from a beating on that occasion by the interference of half a dozen of us. But his alarmed look and precipitate retreat, even dropping his note-book, proclaimed his abject cowardice. The affronted Muslim was about to tear the book when the warden appeared, pacified all, and returned the book to Mr. X. Poor Mr. X resolved to leave Cromwell Road within a week. But he did not leave it early enough to escape an actual assault and further ridicule. He went to Oxford for seeking admission to an Honour School and got the ever-famous, reply from the head of a college, "Mr. X, you are too old to learn anything new, so there is no use admitting you." Another Indian, who was waiting outside for an interview overheard this through the open door and spread the news like wild fire among the Indians in Cromwell Road who were most grateful to receive it. So, when Mr. X returned, he found all the inmates of Cromwell Road roaring with laughter over the reply which had blasted his hopes. Most prominent among the merry-makers were

two medical students from Edinburgh. As fate would have it, one was to occupy the same room with Mr. X while the other got only a berth in the verandah. Mr. X gnashed his teeth at his scoffer's securing a place in the room, but could do nothing. His secret anger only increased the more. The next morning, both the medical students had to attend an examination, and, so, wanted to shave early. As the one in the verandah had no shaving mirror, he also went to his friend's room, where there were two basins and mirrors, and both the friends began to shave. It was about 6 a.m. then, and Mr. X never used to get up from bed earlier than 8 a.m. But, that day, he woke up at 6 a.m.; and saw with unconcealed anger the gentleman from the verandah lathering his face at his basin. He got up from bed and said to him "I say, who asked you to come to my room, and who gave you permission to use my basin? Get out, or I shall push you out." "I shall save you that trouble" replied the other, and, placing his shaving materials on the table, went and gave Mr. X a number of thundering blows which were distinctly heard in the bath-rooms twenty-five yards away. Mr. X howled with pain till the other medical student, after having enjoyed the fun, took pity on him, and stopped his comrade, just as myself and others rushed from the bath-rooms to see what the matter was. "I have been beaten like a drum" was the expressive way in which Mr. X related the incident. The very next day he left Cromwell Road for good.

Miss Beck was very particular that no women of evil repute should be allowed to come to the hostel and mix with the students, and generally succeeded in doing so. One exception however occurred. A certain handsome young Frenchwoman used to come to the hostel and was not suspected of anything bad. This woman gave out that all her six brothers had been killed in the great war, and that her home in Amiens

had been burnt by the Germans, and she forced to flee the country and seek refuge in England. All believed her. But, daily her behaviour, whenever Miss. Beck was absent, became more and more suspect. One day, she asked for a diamond-set ring from a young Hindu and got it. The next morning, however, he repented. Having consulted a few friends, he bought a trinket worth seven shillings six pence, and, that evening, gave it to the woman, taking back his ring, saying "That ring has a sentimental value for me, Miss. So please take this." "Certainly" was the astounding reply "I am sorry, Monsieur, I gave you some trouble. I took the other ring because you gave it." One thing which astonished me in this woman was her outward polish, as evidenced by the above reply. She was also, to all appearance, a guileless creature. A year later, she figured in the courts claiming maintenance for her child from a man who disclaimed its fatherhood but was ordered to pay ten shillings per week. At the trial of this case she gave out her occupation as a "model." Then we understood how she was able to pose so successfully.

No wine or other alcohol was ever sold in 21, Cromwell Road. Nay, it was not allowed to be brought in by anybody. But I must say that this did not prevent the inmates from taking to drink. Those who felt inclined to do so went out and had their fill. Indians who had contracted the drink habit used to harangue to the others to take to the cup, and many succumbed. The Bar was another agent in converting Indians to drink. Few could resist the temptation of the wine served at the dinners without extra charge.

After some days' stay at Cromwell Road, I learnt from a friend that the I. C. S. open competition examination had been thoroughly overhauled and that the new system would be brought into operation from 1921, the year of my first

chance. I was, if anything, cheered by the change of curriculum, for that saved me the trouble of taking up Roman Law and Roman History and studying Latin. I could choose for my optionals the whole of English History, European History and English Private Law.

As soon as the new suits were ready, I prepared to go to Oxford. I went to the India Office to take a letter to the Local Adviser at Oxford. Mr. Arthur Davies, who was the President of the Madras Advisory Committee, had written a strong letter of recommendation to Dr. Arnold who was the head of the London Committee. I must say that I had no great confidence in the advisers in England, mainly due to the many stories I heard from Indians at Cromwell Road. One story was this. A certain Matriculate from the Punjab had, it seems, been, with many sugary words, given a letter by the London Committee to the Oxford Committee, and assured that he would be certain of an admission. Owing to the absence of the Oxford Adviser, this Punjabi was walking along the streets of Oxford with the letter when some fellow-Indians met him and warned him about the duplicity of these advisers. So the man tore open the letter and found, it seems, the following words. "When graduates cannot get admission into the University, what use is there troubling about these Matriculates? Such claims as this man's deserve only summary rejection." Greatly enraged, the Punjabi is said to have torn the letter to pieces and forthwith gone to the head of a college and got admission by his independent and unaided pleading. I was not able to verify the truth of this story which was very much current among the Indians and was believed in by them devoutly. My own idea is that the story was the invention of some clever brain to suit the highly-strung temperaments of the Indian students. Be that as it may, the story had this much effect on me that I insisted on the

Assistant of Dr. Arnold's reading out to me the letter he gave. He read it out, and I found that he had written a really strong letter in my favour and regretted that I had entertained any suspicions.

I went to Oxford from Paddington, but, owing to my newness to the place, caught a train which involved getting down at Reading and catching another, instead of a direct non-stop train. As soon as the hideous smoke and dust of London had been left behind, the scenery became pleasing though, being winter, the naked trees added a certain gloom. That day there was a heavy fall of snow. A snow-fall is beautiful to look at. It appears like innumerable small feathers being thrown down from the sky. The nearest comparison is that of the bursting of silk-cotton pods and the falling of the cotton, or the ocean foam being lashed up by the waves, but neither of these is near enough to give a correct idea of a snow-fall. The train had heating arrangements. So, we were quite comfortable inside. I sat near the window in order to look at the scenery and the snow-fall. Once I tried to open it, but a lady in the compartment said "Please don't. It is bitter cold outside." So I desisted.

One thing that struck me very much in England was that there were compartments reserved for non-smokers in every train though their number would hardly exceed 1 per cent of the male population and 50 per cent of the female. Nobody could smoke in a non-smoking compartment except with the consent of all the inmates, and should stop whenever anybody objected. In India, where the non-smokers are perhaps in a majority even among males, and are in an absolutely over-whelming majority among females, the theory is, no doubt, that nobody should smoke in a railway compartment without the permission of all his fellow-passengers, but, owing to the absence of separate compartments for non-smokers, and the lack of courage of the

average passenger, smokers, make every compartment a hell for non-smokers, blowing their smoke right into the faces of non-smokers and even women, and behaving with an unparalleled insolence whenever a stray person objects to their smoking. In England, the liberty of both the smoker and non-smoker is respected and protected by the law and by the citizens. But any person who is willing to abstain from smoking for the period he is in the train can occupy a non-smoking compartment. Hence there is no caste rigidity in this division as is only too likely to develop if introduced into India.

The train stopped at Reading, and I had to wait for two hours to catch the one going to Oxford. I used the time profitably by paying a visit to the famous Huntley and Palmer's biscuit factory and seeing the up-to-date way in which biscuits are manufactured without anybody touching them with hands. I saw nothing there which could not be done equally well by Indians if only they were given the chance. But India was, in those days, in the back-water of industrialism and was more busy with importing her own raw products touched up by more advanced countries than with any serious attempt to meet all her needs herself, as far as possible.

After returning from the biscuit factory, I boarded the train for Oxford. Within an hour, the towers and spires of the Oxford Colleges came in sight. The sight of these ancient buildings inspired in me much the same love, awe and reverence as I used to feel whenever I saw the towers and flagstaves of our ancient temples. The places where generations of students had found solace for their minds struck me as strangely similar to the places where generations of men had found solace for their souls. I got down from the train, took a taxi, went to the Randolph hotel, put my things there and went to Mr. Burrows the local Adviser, who was living at 9 Canterbury Road. Mr. Burrows received me warmly, perused the letter written by

the India Office, and told me that he would secure for me admission into Magdalen or Christ-Church next October. I told him that I wanted to join the University the very next term. "Then, you will have to become a Non-Collegiate" said he "for the colleges don't take anybody in the middle of a year. Perhaps, as you are a vegetarian, it will be better for you also to be a Non-Collegiate since it is very difficult to get purely vegetarian dishes in colleges while it is quite possible to arrange for them in private houses." I agreed. So we went to Mr. Baker, the Censor of the Non-Collegiate Delegacy. He readily agreed to admit me at the beginning of the next term which would commence on the 18th of January. After securing the admission, I went to the Randolph hotel, stayed there for the night, and left next morning for London. The bill at the Randolph was rather heavy, and the tip too was nothing inconsiderable.

Here I may give the three principal differences between an English hotel and the average Indian hotel. In India there is a fixed rate for all eaters, and the customers are given their fill; whereas in England a man pays for whatever he eats, and there is, in general, no fixed rate, and even where there are lunches and dinners at fixed rates a person never gets his fill but only the things mentioned. The second great difference is the great variety of things to choose from in an English hotel unlike in an Indian hotel where only one uniform kind of meal can be secured. The third is that the tip alone in England costs more than a meal in India.

In a good hotel the minimum tip expected is six pence, though, to win a real word of thanks, from the waiter or waitress, instead of the formal, curt, half-injured "thank' u, sir," a shilling will be required. If tips are not given, the persons practising this abstinence will be on subsequent occasions made to wait long before they are served, the tip-givers being attended

to with alacrity. From mere shame, people will, thereafter, pay tips, for it will be none too comfortable and dignified to be waiting while others who came later are eating. Some restaurants, like Lyon's numerous ones, have mitigated the tip evil but have not succeeded in entirely putting a stop to it. In some big hotels, waiters are paid nothing. They are merely given their grub and allowed to keep all the tips they get. In Southern France, in order to stop the tip evil, some hotel-keepers passed a rule that no tips should be given or received, but that 10 per cent over and above the bills should be charged and the proceeds distributed among the waiters and other members of the hotel staff. Soon, however, the ambition of some customers, to be served earlier than those who came before, made them give tips, and the whole evil sprang up again. The horrified customers found that, by the rule, they were simply mulcted of 10 per cent on their bills without any corresponding benefit, and, so, agitated and got the rule cancelled.

My return journey to London was uneventful. I had booked two rooms in Oxford from the 6th of January. There was still nearly a month and a half left to me, and I spent it all in seeing London.

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## CHAPTER VII

### LONDON

LONDON is certainly the most gigantic town known to history. Never in the history of the world has there been a town equal to it in size, population, trade and political importance. The giants of the ancient world, Babylon, Pataliputra, Alexandria, Rome, Athens and Carthage, will look veritable pigmies when compared to it. Modern towns like New York have also tried in vain to excel it in population and importance. Not the least remarkable thing about London is its enormous size. London may be called a city. It may also be called, with equal truth, a collection of cities. In the 17th century, London was only a big town. After the great fire, and especially in the 19th century, the growth has been tremendous, and in all directions. The London of Pepys was much smaller than the London of Johnson which, in turn, was much smaller than the London of Dickens which was very much smaller than the London of to-day. The elephant's cub of the 17th century has become a full-grown elephant in the 20th and is still growing. Whether it is a healthy growth or a disease, like elephantiasis, time alone can show. The extent of London is so great now that it is a county by itself, and millions of its inhabitants have never seen the whole of it. It is not in mere extent that London excels. The population is even more striking than the extent. No less than seven and a half millions live there, a population larger than that of Norway and Denmark put together. Even in an age of mammoth things and super-products this is something colossal.

However much we may deprecate man's attaching any weight to mere size, there is something in the gigantic which strikes man with wonder, awe and reverence. The ocean is so impressive and so much admired, loved and feared only because of its apparently boundless extent, and limitless waters. Exactly the same is the case with the sky with its infinite, space and sun and moon and stars of eternal light. Man's soul, coming as it does from the infinite, yearns after the infinite, or anything which practically approaches the infinite, whether in time or in space or in numbers. Hence his love and reverence for the sky, the ocean, the mountains and the rivers; hence also his awe and elation of heart at seeing huge congregations of human beings. Who will not be roused by the sight of a sea of heads or faces? And yet what is there remarkable in such a sight except mere size and numbers? Bulk for bulk, an ant is any day a far more remarkable animal than an elephant or a whale. But, for all that, who will care to go to a zoo to see an ant, though it is an apostle of quality and efficiency, and how many will rush to see the elephant or the whale? The thing is so obvious that no zoo has ever thought of putting an ant on show though all will count it a pride to have a live elephant and a full skeleton of a whale. But if a trillion of ants were to assemble and remain in a place, many men and women will be eager to see the spectacle. Alas for those who preach that bigness is not greatness, humanity will always be moved by bigness, and will hold it to be one of the signs of greatness, and I am not prepared to say that humanity is wrong, especially when I see the apostles of the crusade against bigness apostrophising the sky and the ocean and going into raptures over them but failing to exhibit the same enthusiasm over a homely cup of salt water taken from the ocean. I must confess that I was very much moved by the size and population of London, even as I am

moved by the size and population of my dear motherland. Our country occupies so much of the attention of the world only because of its gigantic size and population. If it were as small in area and population as Montenegro or San Marino, it would have fallen into great contempt and oblivion though no deterioration in quality had taken place. More than half the joyous swelling of the Britisher's breast when he thinks of the British Empire is due to its enormous size and population, and not to any consideration about its qualitative excellence. As I say, I was frankly struck with awe and admiration at the immensity of London, and I have no reason to think that I was a solitary exception.

The sea of houses in London is something which must be seen to be fully appreciated. As far as the eyes can reach, you see only houses and factories, factories and houses, not always beautiful or attractive, but tremendously impressive collectively. Often, whole streets are built on the same model and present an ugly barrack-like uniformity, as unpleasing to the eye as it is inartistic. This is so because each man has not built his house after his own aesthetic instinct, but some capitalist has built them all on a type design with a view to renting them out. It is notoriously easier for man to copy than to invent. So, some of the London streets have houses of identically the same shape like the cells of a bee-hive. It is a wonder that the inmates and the visitors don't mistake the houses oftener than they do. Perhaps, being forewarned of the difficulty, they are most careful about the number. If the number is lost, it is hopeless to find out a particular house in London even though the street is known, for very often people in the same street do not know the names of any but their immediate neighbours and sometimes not even of these. Each person follows his own vocation and moves in his own circle. Even in towns like Oxford, houses of

uniform type are sometimes found, but the thing is rarer than in London and in any case the difficulty of tracing out a person is far less owing to the smaller size of the towns and the greater circle of acquaintances.

As I have said, many of the houses of London are unattractive, without any front yard or backyard or a single patch of green anywhere near. But the case is different in the garden cities which have grown up all round the parent city. Here, as the very name indicates, there are plenty of trees and flowering plants and a strenuous attempt is made, with a large measure of success, to combine the advantages of town and country life. For, town life, pure and simple, without any touch of the country tends to sap physical, mental and moral vitality. That is why Professor Marshall said that all men of prominence in London in any walk of life could be proved to be the descendants of country people who migrated to London not more than three generations back. After the drastic improvement of London, now going on in the shape of garden cities, extensive parks etc., it is doubtful whether the same devastating effects of town life will continue. There are many beautiful parks in London now where the people can have as much fresh air as they like. Hyde Park, Finnsbury Park and Hampstead Heath are only a few examples. These are aptly called the "lungs of the city." If they were to be abolished, London will become uninhabitable.

In former days, there used to be a distinct cleavage between East End and West End, the former being the proletarian quarters and the latter the aristocratic. This distinction has become somewhat blurred owing to the rise of North London and South London, where the intermediate classes reside, and by these classes also invading the west end. Still, there is an appreciable difference even now between the fashionable West End quarters, like South Kensington,

Piccadilly Circus and Russell Square, and the far poorer and dirtier East End quarters like Chatham, Poplar and Chinatown. Naturally, there is more crime in East End than in West End, but I am not satisfied that the East End man is a more criminal type than the West End one. Many refined crimes take place in West End which do not attract anything like the attention drawn to the coarse and brutal crimes of East End. I had a special desire to see East End at close quarters, for our industrial towns, like Bombay and Calcutta, tend to develop far more East Ends than West Ends, and a study of the measures adopted to ameliorate the condition of East End would be of great use in solving similar problems in India. Besides, I had a great curiosity to see the slums of East End so graphically and luridly described in many of the books I had read.

Hence I devoted nearly three complete days to a close scrutiny of East End. I travelled by buses, and also walked along many streets. The people were certainly poorer and less refined than in the West End, and shops and cinemas were distinctly fifth-rate. One thing which surprised and pleased me was that many of the worst houses had been pulled down and were being re-built in a better style. I was even more pleased to find a band of university students from Oxford doing disinterested work for the poor in the slums, it being vacation time. I was told that many such bands from different universities and many philanthropic associations were working in East End, trying to render financial, medical, intellectual and religious aid. This golden chain of sympathy between the intelligentsia and the proletariat is perhaps one of the greatest safeguards against Bolshevism and the persecution of the intelligentsia in England as in Russia. Indian university students can profitably copy this praiseworthy activity of their western brothers.

A third thing which struck me in East End was the growing awakening of the working classes to their political power. In

casual talk, many labourers, whose mental calibre was not higher than that of the average Indian cooly, told me how they were going to capture the municipal bodies and parliament and redress the wrongs of the poor. Many complained to me that the great war had made their condition much worse though some of them still wore the over-coats given to them as soldiers. I asked them whether Lloyd George had not said that it was a war to end war, and that at the end of the war, England would be a place fit for heroes to live in. They laughed out-right. "Who but foreigners like you would have taken Lloyd George seriously when he uttered all this nonsense of bringing the Kaiser to trial, warring to end war, and making England a place fit for heroes to live in? In fact, as all England knows, he has made England, with its horribly high prices, watered beer and monstrous taxes and rates, a place fit for only heroes to live in. As for war to end war, the phrase has been invented only recently, and will, doubtless, continue to be used for centuries to gull honest workmen and will have no more meaning than the many 'perpetual peaces' strewn all over the pages of history" said a politico among them. I was impressed by the shrewdness of the remarks, and thought that, if this man was a fair sample of a budding labour politician, the party need not fear comparison with its rivals. On the whole, my visits to East End convinced me that the difference between East End and West End had been grossly exaggerated, much to the disadvantage of the former. This was, of course, due to the fact that most of the writers were West End men or at least members of the middle classes who pretended to have more in common with the aristocrats than with the proletariat. With the emergence of first-rate Socialist authors like H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, and Bernard Shaw, things will change for the better.

London counts among its immense population almost all

the races of the world, and people from nearly every country under the sun. Thus, this mammoth town is a microcosm of the world. Nobody need feel himself a stranger in London. He can soon find some of his fellow countrymen. It may perhaps be not a matter for surprise that the inhabitants of every country in Europe, including Lapland, Finland, and Iceland, are to be found in this great emporium. Nor may it cause much surprise that Indians and other nations inhabiting the British Empire are to be found in plenty there. But it must surprise anybody to see Liberians, Chinamen, Siamese, Annamese, Persians, Afghans, Nepalese, Turks, Arabs, Egyptians, Nubians, Abyssinians and others in London. Not the least of London's attractions is the variety of races to be found there. In fact, it is an anthropological museum if only one keeps his eyes open. This fact makes the Londoner more tolerant about colour than the morose Englishmen though even the latter is normally devoid of race and colour prejudice.

Another striking thing about London is its enormous and varied manufactures. The dirty-looking noisy factories, whose smoke is one of the perennial nuisances of London, are also the mainstay of a large part of its population. Many, while mentioning the smoke emitted by the factories, omit to mention the food given by them. Almost every kind of manufacture is carried on in London from hand-lacing to stream-engine and air-craft making, and factories vary in size from those employing thousands of hands to those where the workers are only two or three.

Even more remarkable than its manufactures is its trade. The volume of London's trade is immense. Ancient Tyre, Carthage and Syracuse can no more bear comparison with it than an ant with an elephant. Despite the great war, and the depression it brought about in trade, and despite constant strikes of miners, the vast volume of trade is something. Ships

arrive in the Thames every day from the ends of the world, and ships depart from the Thames every day to the ends of the world. The East India Docks are a sight to see. London is indeed peculiarly fortunate in having the Thames. The dirty water of this river is totally different from the pure waters of the Ganges, but, from the point of view of giving food to the people of their basins and estuaries both the rivers are equally sacred. The gift of the Ganges is more direct, the food given by it is from its own body, and, so, it is appropriately called *Gangamata* "Mother Ganges;" the Thames, on the contrary, is a sterner taskmaster, and gives a more indirect gift, requiring arduous exertion, great risk and untold labour. Hence it has been appropriately called "*Father Thames*." The same difference may be seen in the Englishman's preferring to call his hard-yielding close-fisted country "Fatherland" and the Indian's preferring to call his indulgent, all-giving country "Motherland."

One thing peculiarly struck me about English rivers. They were always having plenty of water. There are two reasons for this. The first is that rarely is river water used for irrigation in England, where the problem is drainage, or how to get rid of the surplus water, and not irrigation. So, river water, like donkey's milk, is not much in request, and hence rivers have plenty of water. The second reason is that there is less loss by evaporation. In India, on the contrary, river water is much in request for irrigation, and even the mighty Ganges cannot give as much water at times as its farmer devotees want. And, of course, the loss by evaporation is far greater. But the English rivers are excellent for navigation whereas our rivers, with a few exceptions, are practically useless for navigation owing to sandbars, whirlpools, waterfalls, eddies, fierce currents, torrential flow or shallowness.

Anybody who sees the volume of sea-borne trade at London

can readily understand England's naval supremacy and her desire to retain it at all costs. England is primarily a trading and manufacturing country, and hardly grows one-fourth the quantity of grain and other food-stuffs needed for her. If she loses her naval supremacy, or if some enemy power were to invent super-aircraft able to sink all the ships by bombing, she will be starved out in three months. Even the devastation by German submarines in the late war wrought a lot of havoc, and raised the prices of foodstuffs enormously, making even rationing necessary in articles like meat, sugar and butter. As an Englishman told me feelingly, "You may as well ask England to give up her naval supremacy as ask India to give up the Himalayas and choose the river Ganges as its frontier." He spoke the truth, and the terrible 'Battle of the Atlantic' in this War proves it.

But nobody should think that London's internal trade is negligible. A market catering to the varying needs of  $7\frac{1}{4}$  millions can never be dull. Mammoth establishments like Harrod's and Selfridge's stock every conceivable article, and sell things at the cheapest prices consistent with quality. A friend of mine told me that in 1921 he saw a Gandhi cap exposed for sale at Harrod's. This gives us an indication of the push and all-embracing activity of the leading London Merchants. Big firms send cars free for intending customers, with no obligation to buy anything. The clever traders know that once the customers walk into their parlours they can somehow make them buy something by an attractive display of their things. Few human beings are so mean as to go in a car free with no intention of buying anything.

I have remarked above that the fixed prices of London firms are subject to the law of relativity and have merely a fluid fixity. This however does not apply to big and world-renowned concerns like Harrod's and Selfridge's whose

prices have a fixed fixity irrespective of the customer's colour, race or country. These big firms have also several enterprising ways of drawing attraction and pushing the sales. One is, as I have already said, the supplying of free cars to would-be customers. Another is by glaring and alluring advertisements not only of articles but also of record bargain sales. Long queues of ladies wait for the opening of the doors on these days, in the case of big and reputable firms, in order to have the first choice. Every alternate day, there is a bargain sale, and some firms, have a bargain sale on always. Prices are slightly lowered in view of the tremendous increase in sales. A third is by showing all the latest news by means of electric lighting arrangements on their top floors facing the streets. Of course, their best way of securing business is by winning the confidence of the public by the quality of their goods and their reasonable and fixed prices which are the same for a child of five as well as for a man of fifty.

In this connection I must say that perhaps advertising costs as much as the article itself, in advanced western countries. This, however, is not to be considered as wholly a waste, but rather as a painful necessity. Without crying up the virtues of articles, men are not likely to buy them. Competition and free trade require advertisements. Many a useful trade in India dies out because of lack of sufficient advertisement. No doubt, many deleterious things, harmful to the body, mind and soul, are sold every day by advertisements in England, as in India. A man's tongue is, in the last resort, the greatest and cheapest advertiser, and there never was a day when traders and hawkers did not cry up their goods. Of course, it is to be regretted that so much money should be wasted on a thing which has so little productive value, but the same applies to the administration of justice and the immense army of judges, magistrates and lawyers. If men would but settle

their disputes amicably, or buy goods even though not so heavily advertised, a lot of the waste could be avoided. But, human nature being what it is, we cannot hope for either of those things and, so, ought to put up with their consequential evil. My only regret is that some of the most beautiful country places in England, especially if they happen to be near the rail road, are spoilt by ugly posters and placards blatantly advertising some ridiculous wares, pills and tonics.

One direct consequence of London's enormous population, trade and manufactures is the heavy traffic. Trains, tubes, trams, buses, and taxis are seen in innumerable numbers and are almost always crowded. Some of the leading thoroughfares, like Charing Cross, Victoria and Leicester Square are always dangerous to cross for inexperienced pedestrians. One of the most important duties of the London police is to regulate the traffic. Those tall soldierly constables do this work admirably. A single raising of the hand, and traffic is held up in one direction; a single wave of the hand, and the traffic held up in another direction, flows. Implicit obedience is rendered to these mute signs, and the magistrates of England are not likely to let off lightly a man who disobeys. For, if disobedience is not cured then and there, and is allowed to spread, the resultant loss of lives, by careless driving etc., will be appalling.

In the middle of these heavy duties these constables find time to give directions to people to go to the places they want, and to warn careless passengers. One day, as I was passing along Leicester Square, I found a fellow-Indian, who was evidently afraid of the traffic, and was looking round in all directions and proceeding timorously, about to be run over by a taxi which was closely followed by some fifty other motor vehicles of various kinds. The constable regulating the traffic suddenly held up his hand, and the leading taxi stopped within six inches of the panic-stricken Indian who

stood rooted to the spot in utter bewilderment. The constable swooped down on him, pulled him safely to the place where he was standing, and said to him "My boy, if you turn round like this, instead of keeping your eyes front and your nerves cool, you will never go back to your native country." After the vehicles had passed, he took the Indian to the other side of the road and advised him to cross the roads thereafter only with eyes front and nerves cool.

The greatest crowding in the trains and buses was in the mornings and evenings when the army of clerks, typists, accountants, business men etc., go and return from the City. Though the services during those hours are more numerous, still the crowding in the trains and buses is great on most days. As the distance to be covered is only very short, people don't complain so very much and are content to stand in crowds in the corridors, considering themselves fortunate if they get a strap to catch hold of. Many don't get even this, and are thrown on their neighbours whenever there is a jolting. As there will be no space for falling, owing to the crowd, nobody falls down. When I was in Cromwell Road I remember that the trains, and especially the underground, were horribly overcrowded in the mornings and evenings owing partly to the dislocation brought about by the war in the shape of a depletion of the rolling stock. In those days many were the sufferings of the passengers and especially of the hordes of office girls. Chivalry had declined after the suffragette movement and the great war, and many men were not willing to offer their seats or straps to ladies. Those who were willing had little to offer. Those who were willing and had something to offer found such a crowd between the intended offerees and themselves that they despaired of ever effecting a passage for them. The appeals of the "underground" asking people to travel at midday, whenever possible,

and thus relieve the congestion in the mornings and evenings had little effect except on the shoppers. Discontent waxed high. A cry for more trains and more accommodation was raised. An indignant M. P. asked a question in parliament on this burning topic. The reply, while admitting the evil, also attributed part of it to the reluctance of the people to walk even short distances and to their getting into the trains and adding to the congestion. "The fact is that Londoners have lost the art of walking" was the witty reply. "They have also lost the art of sitting" was the wittier retort. Soon, more trains began to run, and the congestion was somewhat relieved, though there will always be some crowding in the mornings and evenings due to the movements of the army of clerks and other business men to and from the City.

Owing to the great population, trade and traffic, a most efficient body of police is required in London, and, so, we come to another remarkable feature of this great City, its wonderful and world-famous police force. The fame of the London police is very great, and thoroughly deserved. A better class of men has never adorned the police force in any country under the sun, at any time. To a certain extent, the London constable is the creation of London traffic and London thieves. Some of the most intelligent thieves and scoundrels of the world live in London which, by its size, population and trade, offers them wonderful opportunities for amassing wealth and avoiding detection. To deal with these thieves, men of courage, strength, integrity and reasonable intelligence are required, men who are not cowards or weaklings or idiots, men who cannot be bribed, and cannot be daunted. For traffic also, men of imposing physical appearance and responsibility are required. A dwarf at the cross-ways will look as ridiculous as a cat in a Zoo. Owing to both these causes, tall muscular people, of commanding appearance, unquestioned.

integrity, unfailing good humour, dauntless courage and reasonable intelligence, had to be, and have been, appointed. Character certificates are insisted on, a very good pay is given, and a first class police force has been created, the pride of England, the envy of other countries, and a model for other police forces.

Corruption is very rare among these policemen. Some Englishmen, however, told me that the quality of the force had deteriorated after the great war. Before 1914, it seems that the London Police were taking neither tips nor bribes, but that, after the war, many had begun to take tips, though not bribes. The distinction is roughly this. A tip is a gift for extra service done which the doer was not bound to do; for example, a constable bringing a taxi for a person: whereas a bribe is a payment for making the constable do or abstain from any act contrary to his duty. I have personally seen some London constables accept tips for rendering such extra services as bringing taxis. This, no doubt, is a falling-off from the high pre-war standards. A strike spirit also is said by some to have caught the constables and adversely affected their character and efficiency. I do not agree. Simply because the London police, seeing their wages standing still while those of others rose, struck work, they are not to be condemned. The dignified nature of their strike, during which they never allowed the regulation of traffic and detection of crimes to be neglected, was itself a proof of their worth and sense of duty. A powerful auxiliary of the police in London is the Scotland Yard whose contingent of expert detectives solves a larger number of intricate criminal puzzles than any other body of men in the world. Owing to the excellence of the London police and the staff of the Scotland Yard, murders and crimes are far rarer in London than in cities like New York and Chicago.

This city is also a great intellectual centre, despite all its

commercialism. A casual visit to the London University, the South Kensington Museum, the British Museum, the School of Oriental Studies, the School of Tropical Medicines and the School of Economics will easily convince anybody about this.

Perhaps the greatest charm of London is the infinite variety of entertainments it provides. The number of first class theatres, cinemas, hotels, music halls, and shows is very great. There is a wide range of choice. Some of the best theatres are simply models of their kind with such up-to-date equipments as would make an Indian open his mouth wide with astonishment. Acting has reached a high level, and famous actors and actresses attract huge crowds. India, which was the first country to have women playing the women's parts, had a long period of retrogression and has not even now regained her lost ground, whereas England, which had no actresses till two hundred and fifty years back, has some celebrated actresses who give endless pleasure to thousands by their masterly acting. Such is the admiration of the English public for actors and actresses that cinema stars like Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford are almost worshipped. One healthy thing in London is that many of the plays at theatres are by recent authors, like Bernard Shaw, Drinkwater, Galsworthy, Barrie and others, thus encouraging living talent while at the same time old classical plays too are not altogether neglected. In India, on the other hand, almost all the plays are old, old ones. Sometimes some plays run for several months and attract enormous crowds for reasons which are not altogether clear. One such play was the Chu-Chin-Chow which ran for several months and had many exciting "last nights." Most of the music halls of London will not bear comparison with similar institutions in Dresden or even in Berlin or Leipzig. Englishmen believe in enjoying the good things of the world, and the places of entertainment are never deserted.

Fortunately, national and racial prejudices are not allowed to warp the aesthetic taste, and, so, Madame Pavlova's dances and Kreisler's violin performances gathered record crowds though the performers were a Russian and an Austrian. This fact struck me with especial force in the case of Kreisler, for he was an Austrian who had fought against the Allies in the late war and had sustained on his face wounds whose scars still remained fresh, and a section of the press had tried its best to make people boycott his performances by playing on their false patriotism. By the refusal of Englishmen to listen to this ridiculous advice I knew that the aesthetic heart of England was sound. "We go to hear his music, not his politics" was the crushing retort the officious journals received.

Not the least noteworthy thing about London is its host of newspapers, authors, booksellers and publishers. One of the most important centres for the creation of world opinion is London. Much of this opinion is generated or broadcasted by the powerful newspapers like The Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Manchester Guardian, the Daily Mail, the Chronicle and the Daily Herald. In a democratic country, newspapers are a necessity; they are also a terrible scourge unless carefully watched and controlled by the public for whose needs they cater. If the newspapers get into the control of selfish trusts, cartels or capitalists, and the public sleep over important questions, the so-called representatives of opinion will mislead the people and drag the country into all kinds of useless and costly wars, shameful peaces and pernicious legislation. Fortunately for England, her parties, clubs and associations keep the newspapers under proper control.

One of my pleasantest memories about London is regarding the numerous lectures on various subjects by such eminent people like H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, and Bertrand Russell. The number of authors to be found in London is great, as is

only to be expected in the capital of a country having one of the finest literatures and one of the most book-loving peoples of the world. Books are bought in England on a scale which can never be dreamt of in India where only very few buy books though many may read each copy. Booksellers are numerous in London and fully meet the demands of the authors and readers. Journalists and pamphleteers are, of course, innumerable, and find, round about Fleet Street, congenial lodgings and occupations.

Though I spent nearly fifty-six days in sight-seeing in London, I could not exhaust all that was worth seeing there. The first thing that I saw was Madame Tassaud's wonderful collection of wax images looking so vivid and life-like. Miss Beck took a party of us Indians there. As soon as we entered the establishment, she, in order to play a practical joke on me, asked me to go and buy admission tickets from a girl at the counter. I went there unsuspectingly and made the request. The girl having failed to respond, and having continued to merely stare me as before, I repeated the request. Miss Beck laughed and said "Well, Mr. Ayyar, give it up. She is only a doll and can't reply." All laughed loudly at this, and chaffed me about my folly. Then we went up and saw the various images of historical and fictitious persons, being struck by the apparent life in these lifeless things. Mr. S., who had laughed loudest at my discomfiture at the gate, pointed to the figure of a policeman leaning against the wall and said "I say, how life-like it looks," when suddenly, to the unutterable merriment of all and the infinite confusion of Mr. S., the constable smiled and began to walk. My mistake as well as Mr. S's proved, by converse processes, the excellence of the figures at Madame Tassaud's. This enterprising lady was a French woman who took refuge in England during the days of the French Revolution. Hence the wide range of the collections, the predominance of

historical personages and the daintiness and grace of the figures. The best compliment to Madame Tassaud is that her countrymen have thought fit to imitate her, and that the imitation, the musee Grevin in Paris, has fallen short of the original. It is a pity that we in India have no such institution. A greater aid to education and a more genuine and innocent source of pleasure can hardly be imagined.

The houses of Parliament left on me an indelible impression. Thoughts of England's constitutional struggles in the 17th century rushed into my mind at the sight of the House of Commons and the Thames close by. Memories of Elliott, Pym and Hampden, the escape of the five members, the beheading of the ill-fated Charles, the Civil Wars, the iron rule of Cromwell, the Restoration, the Great Fire and the new Houses of Parliament, possessed me. I gazed at the dirty Thames flowing sluggishly past, and the distinctive pile of buildings on its shore, like one fascinated. Here in these buildings were fought out countless wars against tyranny and despotism, here were innumerable wars and peaces agreed to, here were dynasties made and unmade, here was passed that monumental act of philanthropy, the emancipation of the slaves, and here, I thought then, must be fought out the right of my dear motherland to self-government of which the first saplings had been planted only a few months ago. I also thought of the growing lack of confidence in Parliament on the part of a section of the labouring classes, as well as among some prominent intellectuals, and wondered whether this mighty institution also had reached its zenith and had only the days of its decline to look forward to, and the thought made me sad. I repeated to myself Dryden's famous line. "All human things are subject to decay."

The British Museum took me full three days for even casually going round. What a wonderful collection of things

is stored there! The Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian and Greek sections were specially interesting, and I feasted my eyes on all these masterpieces. I was also attracted strongly by the sculptures of M. Rodin which had a profundity which is very rare in European sculpture but fairly common in Indian statues. After my visit to the British Museum, I went and visited the National Gallery. Here I saw hundreds of excellent paintings though I must confess that the Louvre in Paris and the National Gallery in Dresden are far more attractive. The reason is simple. The English kings had not the taste of the Electors and Kings of Saxony. Nor had England kings who plundered the art treasures of other countries, as Napoleon did for the sake of France. The South Kensington Museum also is quite worth a visit, and I spent many odd hours there, it being just opposite 21, Cromwell Road.

The tower of London is a quaint old building which would well repay a visit. The places where the two princes are supposed to have been murdered at the orders of Richard III are still shown to visitors. So also the Crown Jewels are exposed to public view.

St. Paul's cathedral is a fine structure of the Restoration period and a thing which no visitor to London can fail to see and be impressed with. The whispering gallery there is famous. Some of the best sermons of England are delivered at St. Paul's, and I had the fortune of being present at a sermon of Dean Inge whose outspokenness, evident sincerity and hatred of cant were most refreshing. The Westminster Abbey is another famous place which no visitor to London will care to miss. I saw the Abbey thoroughly but was struck more with the omissions in the list of eminent Englishmen who sleep there their last sleep than with the actual persons who have been given that honour. Many buried there distinctly deserved the honour less than many who were denied it. With all that,

the Abbey is the repository of the remains of some of the greatest of England's children and is, for that reason alone, sacred. The Albert Memorial is an impressive but unlovable monument, very like Prince Albert whom England respected but never loved.

I spent a very pleasant evening at the Zoo. I was highly amused at seeing a lot of English people admiring a third-rate elephant. I daresay this was nothing wonderful. I might have admired a third-rate whale equally. Only, since I had seen many first-rate elephants, this poor specimen in the Zoo struck me as unworthy of even half the admiration it evoked. I had been directed to the Zoo by a friendly policeman who showed me round the whole place for nearly three hours. When I was about to return, I offered him a tip of two shillings for his trouble. He refused it, saying, "No, sir, thank you, I saw the Zoo too. So, where's the trouble?"

While going about London sight-seeing, I had occasion to observe casually some things which threw a flood of light on certain aspects of English life. Beggary in the streets is prohibited in London, and the police arrest beggars. But the begging instinct is too strong in some men to be eradicated altogether. Hence I found two or three ingenious devices by which the spirit of begging was preserved while discarding the letter. Thus several men, mostly ex-service men, were grinding hand organs at people's doors producing an intolerable noise miscalled music. Generally, the house-owners preferred to pay something than allow the dreadful noise to afflict their ears. Another method is by drawing some ridiculous figures or pictures on the pavement and taking whatever charitable passers-by give. I told one such man, after giving him a three-penny bit, "Why, this is sheer beggary." "No, sir," replied he "It is an appeal to your artistic charity and generosity, and that is no offence." A third device is by

pretending to sell boxes of matches. To one who pestered me to buy a box of matches, urging that I would require it for lighting cigars and cigarettes, I replied that I didn't smoke and so didn't want his matches. "It won't hurt you, sir, to pay a penny to a poor man, seeing that you save a lot by not smoking" was the resourceful reply. Needless to say, I paid a penny and went my way. Other disguised beggars sell picture cards, scissors etc., in a similar fashion.

Within a month of my going to Cromwell Road, I discovered an Indian restaurant near Leicester Square where good Indian curries, pickles and sweetmeats were available. I used to go there often and have my lunch. A friend accompanied me one day. He was from Sind and had a vivid sense of the value of money. When I left a sixpenny bit for the waitress, he told me that I was extravagant and that one penny was enough and more. I asked him to do as he liked so far as he was concerned. So he placed a penny on the table. The girl took my six penny bit and thanked me but pretended as if she had not seen the penny left by my friend and was about to go away when he foolishly called her and said "Miss, here is something for you" pointing to the penny. "You may keep it, sir. I shall not miss it" was the crushing reply.

On another occasion, I went to a theatre to witness a first night performance. There was along queue waiting outside. I went and took my place at the end of the queue. Presently, another Indian came a long, and, despite my advice, went and stood in front of many who had come before him. On some people giving the information, after some time, to a policeman, that worthy quietly brought him and put him at the end of the queue ten places lower down than the place he would have occupied had he followed the right course at the outset.

After some 40 days' stay in London I lost about 'fifteen pounds' weight and was told by a doctor that I stood in

danger of catching consumption unless I took to eggs. "You eat but vegetables, and you get no dhal or ghee. You will not get enough butter here so long as this wretched rationing system continues under which you are entitled only to one ounce of butter per week, a quantity entirely insufficient to supply the necessary fat to your body in a cold country like this. You need not take meat or fish, but eggs are indispensable if you are to preserve your health," said the doctor. So, I had a mental and spiritual struggle. I was at first inclined to stick to my guns and refuse to eat eggs, come what may. Finally, thoughts of my dear girl-wife and her miserable plight, should I die, and of my heavy undischarged debt to the Tatas made me reluctantly resolve to take to eggs. Even after the resolve was made, it was difficult to put it into execution. The inborn abhorrence to eggs had to be overcome. I went to Eustace Miles' vegetarian restaurant in Charing Cross and ordered for a scrambled egg in addition to vegetable dishes. I could not bring myself to eat it. The waitress was puzzled at my leaving it uneaten. To her query, I told her my difficulty by way of reply. She then said "Why not drown it in salt or pepper, and eat it? Then you won't feel the taste." I followed her advice and drowned the egg in pepper and swallowed it at a gulp. Gradually I got used to scrambled eggs drowned in pepper. It was a long time before I could eat boiled eggs, but, finally, I found myself able to do that also. When the rationing was abolished, my egg-eating diminished till it was reduced almost to nothing.

Almost all London shops are closed on Sundays. One Sunday, I wanted to buy some paper urgently and was directed to a Jewess's shop by a friend. I found it open and bought the paper. Then I asked her why her shop was open on a Sunday. "Because I am not one of them Christians. What

do you and I care for Sundays?" she asked. "I care, because it is the day of the sun" said I. "Ah, yes, that way, but that is not the Christian way" said she. Another day, the same friend mischievously persuaded me to go and ask the Jewess for a *Swastika*. I didn't know the underlying intention of my friend and, so, innocently did as he asked. The Jewess was furious. "Them Christians must have set you on. You heathens don't dislike us Jews" said she. "Why do you dislike the swastika?" I asked. "Because it means pogroms. Ah, you don't know how the Jews are treated in Russia and Poland" said she, and her face depicted the concentrated horror of centuries of persecution. I repented of my thoughtless action and returned after expressing to her my utter abhorrence of all persecution.

London abounds in knaves of various kinds just as it abounds in good men. New-comers are trapped in a thousand ways by even apparently respectable people and fleeced of their money by cunning devices. A friend of mine, a gentleman from the United Provinces and a government Officer on leave, was the victim of a typical fraud like this. He was nearly forty-five years old, and wanted a hair-cut and shave badly. He got into the shop of a hair-dresser with high-sounding pretensions, and had these done. Then he was persuaded by the clever hair-dresser to consent to a shampoo, which, by the way, is only a mimicry of our beautiful oil-baths. The hair-dresser, while looking at the customer's hair, which was wholly grey, put on a grave face and said "Sir, a dreadful disease has begun to invade the roots of your hair. No wonder it has made you look ten years older than you are." The U. P. gentleman looked anxious and troubled "What is to be done?" asked he. "We have got just the medicine, for it, sir, Our expert chemists invented this. It took 25 years to invent that. Will you permit us to put it on your head, after getting your

hair singed, sir? It will be a pity if your beautiful head of hair were to fall down and leave your pate bald like an egg-shell" was the reply. The deluded son of India agreed. So his hair was duly singed, that is to say burnt at the tips, and then one barber held his head and another sprayed the boasted medicine, the discovery of 25 years. The Indian had a pleasing sensation while all these things were in progress, and genuinely regretted that they were all over so soon. His pleasing look however gave way to grim despair and fierce hate when the smiling hair-dresser handed over a bill for £ 3-10-0, being £ 0-7-0 for shaving shampooing and singeing £ 3-3-0 for the precious medicine and spraying. He protested. and met with only ridicule and an indignant demand for payment. "If you could not afford the treatment, sir, you should have said so" was the principal hair-dresser's biting retort. The poor Indian cursed himself, forked out the money, and walked out of the shop with hair turned doubly grey by the ordeal. "I won't here-after be carried away by high-sounding names, and will enquire about the fees before I consent to any damned treatment by such fellows" said he to me warmly. He had seen London at its worst.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### OXFORD

MY second journey to Oxford was uneventful. Starting from Paddington, I reached Oxford in seventy minutes by a non-stop train and, proceeded straight to my pre-arranged lodgings, in 15, Chalfont Road, in a taxi. Within an hour after arrival, I had settled myself comfortably and was taking lunch. A strange sensation possessed me. I was feeling like a ship at anchor. In London I had always felt like a bit of flotsam. My landlady was quite a genial old woman and kept on talking about various things in Oxford all the while I was taking lunch. Her principal topic was the Colleges. I was so interested by her discourse on these that I set out immediately after lunch to have a look at them.

The Colleges of Oxford number twenty-six, four of them being meant solely for ladies. Those for men are:—All Souls, Balliol, Brasenose, Christ Church, Corpus Christi, Exeter, Hertford, Jesus, Lincoln, Magdalen, Merton, New College, Oriel, Pembroke, Queen's, St. John's, Trinity, University, Wadham, Worcester, Keble and St. Edmund's Hall. The Colleges for women are:—Lady Margaret Hall, Somerville, St. Hugh's and St. Hilda's. In addition to these Colleges there is the Society of Non-Collegiate Students for men and the Society of Oxford Home-students for women. There is also the Manchester College for the theological students of a broad-minded variety. All these colleges and institutions are situated within an area of one square mile, and can be seen superficially in the course of a single day though, for a proper visit, each major institution will require a day by itself.

The older colleges, with their stately and antique buildings and richness of historical associations, impressed me considerably. I was reminded of the ancient temples in South India, but had regretfully to acknowledge, in my mind, that, while these temples had a long history of mismanagement to their credit and had passed their halcyon days long ago, their Oxford counter-parts had no such shameful record and were every day advancing in popularity and esteem. Age has not sapped their vitality or diminished their utility. Their buildings too are kept in proper repair, unlike our famous temples. The colleges which impressed me most were Christ Church and Magdalen. The tower and chapel of Christ Church require particular mention. Magdalen has a better general appearance than even Christ Church. Some of the old colleges, like Merton, Worcester and University, are also well worth a visit. Balliol is perhaps, next to Christ Church and Magdalen, the best known college in Oxford, but its architectural merit is but little compared with those.

Besides the college buildings, the chief University buildings of interest are the Sheldonian Theatre where all the convocations are held, the Bodleian Library, the Indian Institute and the Clarendon Press. An Oxford convocation preserves many of the ancient formalities handed down through the centuries, and, to the outsider, is as amusing as it is impressive. The Bodleian Library is too celebrated to require any comments. Suffice to say, that it is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. to all persons possessing tickets, which are very easy to get, and cost nothing, and that almost all the research students of the University, and many ordinary students too regularly go there to read. The most absolute silence prevails in the Radcliffe Camera, the reading room attached to the Bodleian, and electric light, blotting paper etc., are supplied free. The library derives its name from Sir Thomas Bodley who refounded it

in 1597. Radcliffe Camera came into existence in 1647. The Bodleian Library has reached its present state as a result of magnificent gifts by private individuals as well as by the steady supply of books got under the Copyrights Act which stipulates that a free copy of every book published in the British Isles should be given to it. Among the gifts I was pleased to see a fine collection of Sanskrit manuscripts presented by the King and the Prime Minister of Nepal. It did me good to see those manuscripts transferred, from obscure, inaccessible Khatmandu, to this famous library where scholars, including Indian scholars, would have free access to them and could acquaint the world with their contents before they were eaten up by worms. We Indians are somewhat hyper-critical. Some of my friends criticised the action of the King of Nepal as most unpatriotic, I pointed out to them that no manuscript had been given to Oxford of which a more ancient and better copy did not exist at the Khatmandu library and that those manuscripts presented to the Bodleian were ensured as long a life as science, money and care could assure. Together we looked at the wonderful manuscripts, and, as we finished, had some affection for those nameless Kings who had lovingly collected them and handed them down to posterity. The Royal Libraries at Khatmandu, Tanjore, Trivandrum, Mysore, Udaipur, Srinagar and other places are among the glories of India and certainly have contributed not a little to the feelings of affection which the average Indian entertains for Royalty. Our Kings were among the most cultured and accomplished in the world. It will be difficult to find a parallel in other countries to Emperor Harsha who wrote the Ratnavali, Nagananda and Priyadarsika or to King Bhoja who wrote that amazing book, the Yuktikalpataru, to quote only two instances. The latter-day Kings, no doubt, fell away greatly from the high standards of Harsha and Bhoja, but something remained of

the old royal patronage of learning, as evidenced by the example of the rulers of Nepal, Tanjore, Travancore and Mysore.

The Bodleian has now become overcrowded with books and has invaded the surrounding buildings. Still, there is no room for the steady stream of new books, and the problem of solving this difficulty is engaging the anxious attention of the university authorities. Some are for splitting up the library into sections and housing them in different buildings; others are for destroying the unimportant books and releasing the large space occupied by them; but most are for getting a new building, large enough for present and prospective needs, constructed. The public spirit of Englishmen and their affection for Oxford are such that there will be no great difficulty in getting funds for pursuing the third course. In India funds are readily enough given for starting a new institution, but, soon, the enthusiasm fizzles out, and the problem of maintenance is so difficult that many foundations go to ruin while others are started. The innumerable ruined temples, schools, tanks, wells and rest-houses in our countryside and the appreciable number of new structures of the same kind prove my point. If people had cared less for their personal glory, and more for the good of the country, they would have spent their money in renovations and restorations than in new constructions, and the country would have benefited more by their charity. In this respect we may well take a lesson from England.

The Indian Institute is a solid building at the end of Broad Street and is the place where lectures on Indian History and Indian languages are delivered. It has a good library, but a declaration has to be signed for taking out books. Hence few Indians ever take advantage of the facilities offered by the Institute. The adviser to Indian students has his office there. Most Indians in Oxford fight shy of the Indian Institute and never enter its portals except when absolutely necessary.

They never used to feel the same freedom and dignity there as at the Bodleian or any other rendezvous at Oxford. Perhaps, this was inevitable, under the circumstances, but was, all the same, deplorable.

The Clarendon Press is the official press of the University, and was founded by Lord Clarendon partly out of the profits got by sales of copies of "The History of The Great Rebellion." The readers of the press are generally Masters of Arts. Hence the innumerable printers' devils found in books printed in the mofussil Indian pressēs are unknown.

The colleges in Oxford are hostels with a staff of professors and lecturers attached. All the lectures in every college are open to all who are members of the University and care to attend. Each undergraduate is given a list of the lectures every term and may choose which he will attend and which not. He is expected to intimate to his tutor the lectures which he intends to attend so that the tutor may see whether the discretion has been rightly exercised. Apart from this, there is no obligation on the part of any undergraduate to attend any lecture. There is no conscripted audience kept ready for lecturers and professors, as in India. Hence, lecturers in Oxford have to prepare well, and deliver really good lectures if they are to attract many students. Brilliant lecturers gather large members while the bores generally have to lecture to empty halls. If the conscription system were abolished in our colleges, the quality of our lectures is sure to improve.

Generally, each student is given one tutor to whom he goes once a week. The usual thing is for the student to write an essay on a subject set by the tutor and to read it over with him. A very frank discussion follows. Then the subject for the next week is given. The tutorial system is analogous to the upanishadic system of Ancient India, when teacher and pupil sat together and discussed. Ordinarily, the tutor is from the same

institution as the student, but there is nothing to prevent a student from getting a tutor from a different institution through the head of his own. An undergraduate can also have a number of tutors at the same time if he is prepared to pay for them. A fixed fee is paid per term to the University for the privilege of attending lectures, and to each tutor for the tuition he gives.

As Oxford is a residential University, all the undergraduates have to keep residence within the limits of the university. There are three terms every year, Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity. The academic year commences from about the middle of October, and ends about the middle of June when most of the examinations take place. Each term consists of eight weeks out of which residence has to be kept for at least six weeks continuously if the term is to count towards one's standing. Residence is to be either in the colleges or in any lodgings approved by the University. All students attached to the Non-Collegiate Delegacy and the Society of Oxford Home Students, of necessity, live in these licensed lodgings. Some of the older students attached to the colleges also do so as there is no space for all the students of a college in the college itself owing to the phenomenal rise in the number of students after the war. For residence in the colleges, pretty heavy bills have to be paid every term. They vary from college to college and from undergraduate to undergraduate. The costliest colleges are Magdalen and Christ Church, but, even in these, there live some frugal undergraduates whose expenses are only half of the average. In good private residences with airy rooms, bath etc. the usual charges will be about three to three and a half guineas per week for two rooms, three meals and tea. Of course, entertainments are extra, and a good bit will be spent on them. On the whole, an undergraduate who wants to pull on comfortably at Oxford during term time, and at some seaside resort

during the vacations, will require at least four hundred pounds per year for all his expenses. Continental tours, wine, cigars and cigarettes will be extra.

Of these, continental tours are indispensable for an Indian student if he wants to broaden his mind. But wine and smoke are quite unnecessary, despite all the sophistical arguments adduced in their favour. The Indian who avoids them in the West will not only have a robust health but will also have a sounder finance than his brother who has contracted these habits so deleterious to health. A cold climate requires no more alcohol and smoke than a hot one. The only advantage of a cold climate is that the evil effects of these pernicious habits will be less marked than in a hot climate. Nor are these habits a necessity for sociability except of the vulgar kind. No doubt, at present a person who abstains from wine and smoke will be regarded as something of a crank in English social circles of the ordinary variety, but so will a man who abstains from chewing betel be regarded in Indian circles of the same cultural level. All this proves really nothing except that the majority of a nation loves even its vices, and wants others to follow them.

Among Indians in England I noticed one thing peculiar. Many of them who took to wine after landing in England became so addicted to it that they knew no moderation and would drink to excess till they fell down and rolled in a disgraceful state vomiting foul liquid and fouler language. The sight of some otherwise good fellows in this shameful condition impressed on my mind the necessity for prohibition in India if only we could make real prohibition, without illicit manufacture, a success in a country where a knife and a mud pot are all that are required by way of implements, and the coconut, palmyra and sago palms and cashew and mahua plants exist in millions. The problem of how to make up the

lost revenue, though great, is nothing compared with that of preventing illicit manufacture. One day, certainly, we shall solve these problems, but before that is done, the best brains in the country will have to furiously think, in company with the Abkari officers who know the practical side of the question. In England, though not less than 95 percent are persons who use alcohol, the general public are not so much molested by drinkers as in India. This is because a large percentage of the drinkers never lose control over themselves, and, besides, there are the ever-vigilant police who prevent drunkards from assaulting or abusing wayfarers. The magistrates also are pretty severe with those charged with drunken and disorderly behaviour. Wine and cigars are very costly in England, and are the prime causes of the chronic impecuniosity of the young middle-class Indians who fall victims to them.

Though Oxford is known to the outside world only as the seat of a University it is also a considerable town with a brisk trade. The very name shows that there was an important ford across the Thames at this place. At present more than half the trade is with professors and undergraduates. In Oxford itself the University men are known as the "Gown" and the townsmen as the "Town." In many notices both the "Town and Gown" are invited to attend. The early kings of England have given special privileges to the Gown which thus dominates the Town. All cases between Town and Gown, within University limits, that is roughly within a radius of three miles from the clock in the Corn Market, are heard by the Vice-Chancellor's court. Annually there is also a mimic fight between the Town and the Gown where the Town invariably goes to the wall.

Oxford cares very well for the physical, mental and moral welfare of the students. Boating, football, cricket, hockey, tennis etc., cater to the physical needs. Of these, by far the

most hankered after is boating. Every institution for male undergraduates has got a barge on the Isis and has one or two sets of competitors. The training is hard and the trainers exacting. At the end of every term there are races between the various college teams, watched by hundreds of spectators. At the end of every academic year, in June, there are the Eights or the annual competition which settles the rank of every boat. Thousands assemble to witness these races, and the excitement is tense. There are races between the Oxford and Cambridge teams every year in London.

All the boat races in Oxford are in the Thames which is locally known as the Isis. For pleasure, the undergraduates, including ladies, punt in the Cherwell, a tiny but deep tributary of the Thames. Even the Cherwell is not without its dangers. It is a deep stream with troublesome weeds at the bottom. Once when I was punting with two other Indians, the boat got caught in some thorns on the side and both my friends went suddenly to extricate it. The balance was, of course, upset and I went like a bullet into the river in all my clothes. Ludicrously enough, my first inclination was not to swim to the other shore but to go to the bottom and fetch sand, as was my habit in the tanks and rivers of Malabar. I found weeds instead, and came up to the top just before my breath was out. I went to my lodgings quick, undressed, took a glass of hot lemonade and went to bed. The next morning I was all right.

All accidents in the Cherwell do not end so happily. Once, a newly-wedded clergyman went with his bride punting in this river. The punting pole stuck fast in the mud. In attempting to extricate it, the unfortunate man lost his balance and fell into the river, was caught in the weeds and was drowned within sight of his agonized and helpless wife, who was sitting in the boat. Six hours later, the body was recovered, along with a hundredweight of weeds. On another occasion,

a youngster who had just bought a new bicycle rushed madly on it, was unable to negotiate a sharp curve near the river, and fell into it with his bicycle. A gentleman rushed into the river and saved the boy but got the cramp and died.

Though boating is the favourite sport of the undergraduates, cricket, football, both Association and Rugby, and tennis are also popular. Annual cricket and tennis matches are played between the Oxford and Cambridge teams. The peculiar thing in Oxford is that the tutors and lecturers urge the students to take to sports, and, in many cases, act as coaches. Herein there is a remarkable difference between our tutors and lecturers and their Oxford brethren. Ours take no interest in sports at all, and one must thank God if they do not actively discourage boys from taking part in them. Things are, however, changing slowly for the better. Among Oxford undergraduates, those who take no part in sports are regarded with contempt even though they pass high. Ordinarily, the sports do not in the least stand in the way of one's studies, though it is possible that the Blues, the top sportsmen, suffer from an examination point of view by the excessive time spent on sports. The games teach the Oxford undergraduates resource, self-confidence, fair play and team-pulling, besides improving their physique.

Mentally, there is the very greatest intellectual freedom allowed. In olden times, there was much suppression of opinion, mainly by clerics, but, now, there is absolute freedom. Even tutors encourage free discussion, and are disappointed with tame acquiescence. Students are allowed also to speak what they like at their meetings and associations. The Oxford Union is the greatest of these associations. In its spacious rooms, free and full discussion on every possible kind of subject is carried on, and many of England's best-known politicians and orators had their baptism of fire there. Membership is open to all members of the University, subject to a pretty heavy fee. The Indians

have their own Oxford Majlis which counts on its roll all the Indians in Oxford with a few insignificant exceptions. The name Majlis is of Persian origin and was adopted for a curious reason. When the association was started, the Hindu promoters chose as its emblem a lotus and as its motto the well-known words "*Vande Matharam*" (Hail Motherland!) in Devanagari characters. Their Muslim colleagues were somewhat embarrassed and wanted to know where they came in. The resourceful Hindus at once agreed that the Association should be called the Majlis. Thus the Muslims were placated. This was long before the Lucknow pact, in days when Hindu-Muslim differences had not been advertised too much to admit of informal compromises agreeable to both. In the Majlis there is absolute freedom of discussion, and, as is perhaps but natural, extreme opinions find constant expression, amidst applause. In Cambridge also there is a Majlis. In London and Edinburgh there are Indian Associations. Besides the Oxford Union and the Majlis there are many other associations, in Oxford like the Anthropological association, the Lotus club, the associations in every college, etc.

Morally, Oxford cares for her students in three ways, firstly by the teaching of philosophy and theology, secondly by healthy association between the lecturers and the students, and, thirdly, by the institution of proctors and bull-dogs who hound out the morally delinquent and get them punished suitably. Post-war days were very trying to proctors and bull-dogs as many grown-up men, who had fought in the war, were undergraduates under the shortened course system and did not easily conform to the rules of the University about hours, associates etc and were not always amenable to reason.

During term-time, undergraduates usually remain in Oxford, and, during vacations, of which there are three, they generally go either to their homes or to the South coast resorts or to the continent. In my first vacation I went to Bournemouth and

in some other vacations I went to Torquay, South Sea and Brighton. All these places are organised for pleasure, and team with pleasure-seekers. Charabancs ply about in all directions and every week-end increases the gay pleasure-seeking crowd. As a relief from the dull drab life of London or Oxford, it is excellent. But a long stay at one of these coastal pleasure resorts will not be good from any point of view. Many people in England go to these places for a change, and benefit immensely. There are beautiful gardens, marine walks, hill-scenery etc. in almost every one of these pleasure resorts, and boarding houses, hotels and lodgings, of all varieties are enormous in number.

From Bournemouth I went to Christ Church and the New Forest. The former has an interesting old church dating from Edward the Confessor's time. The New Forest has some magnificent oaks, but it is no forest at all in the sense that we understand that word in India. It is a splendid wood, more like a plantation in Nilambur than a forest on the Ghauts. I visited the place where William Rufus was killed. All through my walk in the New Forest I remembered Marryatt's Children of the New Forest. From Torquay I visited Dartmoor, that wide rolling desolate tract with an abundance of heather. Dartmoor made a deep impression on me. The penal settlement in it is in entire keeping with its atmosphere of gloom and cheerlessness. From Southsea I sailed and had a close view of some war-ships anchoring at Portsmouth. There was a fair on at Southsea when I went, and some man was playing the part of Neptune. Fairs are numerous all over England, and are survivals of the Middle Ages. More merriment goes on than trade at these fairs now. There is a fair called St. Giles' Fair at Oxford. It lasts for two nights and attracts great crowds from all round. The peculiar feature of this fair is that girls try to daub young men with powder at night and are kissed, in return.

A return to Oxford from the vacation after a tour always finds the undergraduate fresh and ready to have another go at his studies. Though Oxford is called the home of forlorn causes, and is dubbed hopelessly conservative, this is rather a reputation derived from its past history than a description of the present. Reactionary Oxford gave women the same privileges as regards examinations and degrees whereas revolutionary Cambridge fought against it strenuously and some of its male undergraduates even created a riot when there was a proposal to extend these privileges to that University.

'Ragging' is still common enough among the undergraduates, and the victims are often the freshers. It is generally a harmless practical joke though occasionally, as when a foulmouthed slanderer was dipped in a pond at midnight and tarred and feathered, it exceeds the limits of frivolity.

There is an old-world courtsey in Oxford towards foreigners and especially Indians. One day myself and five Englishmen were attending a lecture on original documents on English History without the text books which we were expected to take with us. The lecturer saw this at once though we were plunged in our neighbours' books: calling all the five Englishmen by name, he asked them to go out of the class, as they had not brought the text books, but he did not ask me to do the same, though he knew that I too had no text book. If he had said "All who have not brought the text books may go out" I too would have gone out. Purposely, he called out the names. This lecturer did not know me at all then, and had treated me preferentially only because of my nationality. Needless to say, I learnt the lesson and never again was found without a text book. Again, when Bertrand Russel lectured under the auspices of the Majlis, the English undergraduates, a considerable section of whom hated him and his principles violently and wanted to prevent him from even coming to Oxford, did absolutely

nothing to disturb the meeting, but, when the same distinguished savant lectured under the auspices of the English undergraduates of the Labour party, the opponents entered in large numbers and created a 'huge disturbance ending in a free fight. Can we Indians honestly say that we pay as much consideration for foreigners whom we do not fear?

To quote two more instances of this quality: Once, on returning from the Majlis it was 11-30 p.m. and I had to bike  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles. On the way, a puncture occurred, and I was at a fix. Being a beginner in cycling, I could not manage to roll the cycle as the front wheel was flat. It was out of the question to carry it for  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles to my lodgings. An Englishman who was passing by saw my difficulty and most obligingly rolled it for 3 furlongs to St. John's College where I kept it at a friend's. Before I could return he had gone in order to save me from once more thanking him. Again, one day, when myself and an Indian friend were cycling in a country village near Oxford my friend fell off his bicycle and got some bruises. A lady near by took him to her house, put him to bed, dressed his wounds, gave him tea and offered me too some. She was unknown to us, and was by no means rich.

All this is not saying, however, that there is absolutely no colour prejudice in Oxford. There is very little of it, and that is generally rampant among a certain type of retired Anglo-Indians and their associates as also among people who had come under the influence of Mr. Horatio Bottomley. One day, a friend wanted lodgings. We saw a board advertising for lodgers in a boarding house in the centre of Oxford. On ringing the bell, the landlady looked out of the upstairs window, saw that we were coloured men, and sent her maid to say that the vacant room had been booked. She also came down herself and took away the board saying "I am sorry, sir, you are a day too late" and smiling a bewitching smile.

of innocence. We had our suspicions, however, and went round to the same place next day. As we had expected, the board had again been put up. We rang the bell. The poor lady, who was downstairs, and had never expected us, opened the door and was horrified to see us. "You see, sir, the other lodgers object to coloured gentlemen. It is not my fault" she said to us, and we left in high spirits at the success of our ruse. In the colleges also, Indians are not associated with freely by all the English under-graduates.

Would-be Government servants and missionaries, and budding labourites are most free. As I used to say to my friends "Soul-revolutionaries, no-revolutionaries, and world-revolutionaries take to Indians most." The others too make friends with Indians who are keen sportsmen. Sometimes, offence is taken where none is meant. Once, my landlady's girl, a child of ten, asked me what my country was. I said "India." "No; don't be silly" said she. "India is ours. Which is your country?" I felt like one stabbed, but kept quiet, realizing her ignorance. She triumphantly showed me a book where the lesson on India began with the words "India is ours"

Indeed, an appalling ignorance of India is found in Oxford, as in the rest of England and Europe. An elderly lady whose son-in-law, one Mr Brown, was in India, in the army, asked me "Of course you know Brown? He is in India, in Peshawar or Bombay." Little did this lady realize the size or population of India, or the vast gulf which divides the European and the Indian out in the East. On another occasion, a lady brought her album to me and said "Please write me down something in *Indian*."

She had evidently not heard of the 13 major languages of India. To oblige her, I wrote down a Sanskrit *śloka* which means "Ignorance of others" weakness is sometimes better than knowledge of them, for it creates no pride and no prejudice."

This ignorance is not only of India but of all coloured countries. A Negro friend of mine called Mr. J. had great difficulty in finding a lodging in Oxford. The shallow education of the landladies, and the cheap books they had read, had made them believe that all Negroes, especially those hailing from Africa, were cannibals, and the carefully-filed and pointed front teeth of my friend confirmed this idea. The fear of waking up one fine morning and finding themselves in his belly made them averse to entertaining him as a lodger. My friend was put out, and told me "These English treat you, heathens and pagans, better than they do us, fellow-Protestants" I laughed. Mr. J. always used to call Non-Christian Non-Muslims "heathens and pagans," like all converts to Christianity, but without meaning any offence. Finally, he got a hunchbacked land-lady to take him after charging an extra two shillings per week for discounting his black colour and as partial insurance against swallowing, the main insurance being of course, her hunchback which was expected to act as a *piece de resistance* should she be attempted to be gulped down the throat. As I myself thought that cannibals might still exist in the interior parts of Nigeria, from where Mr. J. came, I asked him "Are there any cannibals in Nigeria now?" "No" he replied. "I wish there were, to swallow all these white men up!"

There is an idea among some English people that all the Indians who go to England are Christians, half being sent out by the Government, and the other half by the missionaries! One day, an old Protestant lady asked me to what sect I belonged. "I am a Hindu" said I. "Glad you are not one of them Catholics" was the astounding reply. "Why?" I asked. "Because" said she, "a Hindu can be converted to Protestantism, but not a Catholic." Once every year, girl volunteers collect money for the foreign missions for converting the heathen. They give a rose and take whatever is put into the sealed box.

through the slit. Myself and an Indian Christian friend were walking along High street when a fair volunteer approached us and said "Money for the Heathen, please," jingling a sealed box three-fourths full of coins. My friend gave a shilling, and had a rose pinned to his coat by the fair volunteer. When she approached me and said "Money for the Heathen, please," I told her "I am a Heathen. Give me all the money", to the inexpressible merriment of all.

I used frequently to attend services in churches in England. One day, a person, who knew that I was a Hindu, approached me when I was sitting in a church, and said "I am glad you attend church." "I like to attend churches now and then" said I. "That is the first step" he added, smiling benevolently. "It is also the last" I replied, for I go to different churches every time, and always out of mere curiosity." On another occasion, when I was attending a church, a missionary, who had been out to India, delivered an outrageous lecture on the Hindus as an appeal for funds to convert them. "There are none so depraved as the Hindus. The depth of their villainy and depravity can never be imagined by one who has not seen them. And, yet, when they are reclaimed to Christ, none are better, gentler and saintlier. Many Hindus murder their girl babies, and many marry away their girls when they are one year old. The abominations of this race of heathens are unmentionable" said he. After the discourse, I introduced myself to the truthful messenger of Christ as a Hindu, to his manifest confusion. "I must apologize for wounding your feelings" said he, "but I was not aware of your presence." "Men of religion should speak only the truth" said I, "and you know that you spoke many lies and half-truths." Then I went away, leaving him gasping. The Oxford University allows Non-Christian Asiatics to offer Plato's *Phaedo* and the *Apology* in lieu of scripture, and nobler books cannot be prescribed.

Sometimes, the latent suspicion of the foreigner flares up suddenly even in Oxford. An irresponsible undergraduate sent some chocolates and powdered glass to the Vice-Chancellor in a spirit of devilry when a sensational case of arsenic poisoning in chocolates was being tried. At once there was a rumour that some subtle oriental poison had been sent by some Egyptian or Indian. Fortunately, the English undergraduate who had sent it generously owned up, and the affair ended in general laughter and merriment.

Of late, England has revised her laws regarding domicile, and now no coloured man can get English citizenship and the right to vote at parliamentary elections by birth or long residence as before. Still, all Oxford graduates have got a right to vote for the election of the member for the university, irrespective of colour or creed or nationality, and, whenever an election is on, I get the ballot paper by post, though, by the time I get it, the election will almost always be over. A significant commentary this on the liberal traditions of this ancient university and its scrupulous regard for the rights even of its humblest *alumni*.

The spirit of independence is fostered in Oxford even by the tutors and professors unlike in India where everybody seems to be anxious to smother any budding signs of independence or self-respect in a student. When I took a declaration form for taking out books from the Indian Institute Library to my tutor, he said indignantly "Mr. Ayyar, it is beneath your dignity to sign this declaration with a surety. I shall never sign it, and I hope you never will." I at once realized my error and returned the declaration form to the Institute. Another instance will also prove this. Myself and a friend were both under the same tutor and used to go to him at the same hour. I used to freely discuss with the tutor, and advance opinions quite contrary to his known opinions, whereas my friend used to

acquiesce in whatever he said, adding to me in private "Why reveal our real differences to him and irritate him?" At the end of the year, when we parted company with the tutor, he told me "Mr. Ayyar, I am glad to see that you are able to form your own opinions and defend them." Then, turning to my friend, he said "I am disappointed in you. You seem to be content with acquiescing in whatever I say. You must cultivate the habit of thinking independently." "I am independent" urged my friend. "I agreed with you only because I held the same opinions." "I hope not," was the reply. "If, week by week, on vastly different subjects, you agreed with me in all my opinions, the prospect is alarming." My friend kept silent. On coming out, he told me "I was wrong, and you were right. Hereafter I shall not be guided by the example of Indian tutors."

While at Oxford, I learnt cycling. The first attempts were, as usual, alarming by disappointing. I felt ashamed of falls, and my landlord, Mr. Rignall, must have groaned under my eleven stone weight in trying to keep me on the seat. Somehow I used to steer for the pavement or a fence or a gutter, I used to choose night time for my operations so that my falls might not be noticed by passers-by. "You can't learn to walk or bike without falls" said Mr. Rignall to me, and I lost a bit of my supersensitiveness thereafter, and, of course, picked up cycling correspondingly quicker. Even so, I had to take five one-hour lessons from Mr. Rignall, I offered him a sovereign as a present for his trouble, but he indignantly refused to accept it and was backed up by Mrs. Rignall. I felt somewhat ashamed at having made the offer when Mr. Rignall asked me "Would you have accepted it if you had been in my place, Mr. Ayyar?"

Never is a beginner an expert cyclist; I was no exception to this rule. Once, while going down Banbury road to my

lodgings in Victoria Road I suddenly stopped my cycle opposite Barclay's Bank since I had some business there. A clergyman was, unknown to me, coming on his cycle close behind me, and having not foreseen my stopping, bumped against my cycle and fell down. His clothes were slightly torn. He did not lose his temper, but simply said "You shouldn't stop in the middle like this without giving any warning or looking back." I apologized and he went away. Another time, I was cycling along the road pretty fast when a labourer came suddenly into the road from a side alley and cut across it. My cycle bumped against him. Both of us fell down. I said that I was sorry for the accident. He said "Never mind, sir, I am used to it," and a present of a shilling was thankfully declined.

At Oxford I had a flight in an aeroplane for the first time in my life. Huge crowds had gathered round the aeroplane which was a small one carrying only two passengers at a time. A lady got into the other seat. After making some most unmusical noises, the aeroplane rose from the ground in awkward circles. Soon it gathered speed and shot into the air to a height of about two furlongs and then flew round Oxford. We had a beautiful view of the town. The descent was quick, and most pleasant. When hovering in mid air, I remembered Trisanku, the king who was condemned to remain for ever between heaven and earth, and almost envied his fate. The aeroplane owner would have charged him countless millions. The ascent and descent resembled the experiences in a lift. I was proud of the fact that the first nation to conceive the idea of aerial vehicles was India. Even if we hold that it is not proved that the ancient Indians knew how to construct aeroplanes, it is proved that they did view aerial conveyances, as a possibility and to that extent deserved credit. It is also quite possible that they flew fast machines, using mercury vapour as power.

The Armistice Day and Guy Fawkes Day are celebrated

by the undergraduates, and much drinking and endless practical jokes and frolics are indulged in. Sometimes, these practical jokes are pretty serious, as when once some Cambridge undergraduates caught a policeman and put chilli powder into his eyes and were fined for it, or when some other undergraduates of the same University, indignant at the prospect of women getting equal privileges as regards degrees, attacked a girls' college and damaged the portico, but, in cooler moments, subscribed for its repair.

The dialect spoken by the Oxford country people is not standard English. It is by no means uncommon to hear landladies and others say "You was," "Us didn't know", etc. But, with the spread of compulsory education, Standard English is slowly spreading its tentacles and crushing out the dialects. The process is not yet complete. When in Bovey-Tracey, a village in Devonshire, with an English friend from London, I tried to converse with a labourer who talked the Devonshire dialect, but could make nothing of what he said. I asked my London friend what the labourer was saying, but he said with a shrug of his shoulders "His jargon is as unintelligible to me as to you." The case becomes even more glaring in Carnarvon and other Welsh parts of Wales. There are very few illiterate persons in England, thanks to the compulsory education. "The parent to the jail and the child to the school" principle, applied in Germany in the case of recalcitrant parents keeping children away from the school; has also worked wonders in England. In all my stay in England I saw only one illiterate person. I was in the train to Torquay. An old man of 65 got in at Bristol and sat near me. When I had finished my newspaper, I asked him, as is usual in England, "Would you like to have a look at it?" "No, sir, I doesn't know to read. Pity I was born long before them schools were started for the poor" was his pathetic reply.

India which, in the time of Asoka, was certainly the most literate country in the world, has now sunk to the lowest rung in the ladder, and counts a less percentage of literates than even Negro America.

I used to attend many public lectures. One was about birth control, and the prominent speakers were labourites. One speaker deplored the increase of unwanted children in the world, and, analysing the causes of the disturbing increase in births in several countries, said "In England, there are too many births because of the cry for white population to fill and guard the Empire; in France, for defence and Military reasons; in Germany, for the war of revenge; in Czecho-Slovakia, for self-preservation from the internal and external Germans; in Russia, because of the partiality to children extended by the Bolsheviks; in India, to gain merit and salvation; in China, to get titles after one's death; and in Wadai-Wadai, to have at least one left after kidnapping which is very common. When will the world come to its senses?" "They are all a set of Bolshies" said a woman neighbour to me. "They want us respectable people to be weak at the time of the social revolution, for which they are plotting, and, so say this in order that we may have few children to defend us." I was so taken in by the humour of the situation that I heartily agreed.

During my stay in Oxford I had the good fortune of being for the greater part of the period a lodger in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Rignall, very obliging and kind people, who tried their very best to make my life at Oxford happy, and gave me, so to speak, "a home from home." This perhaps accounts for my not falling a victim to home sickness like some of my friends. Of course, another reason was that I had many Indian friends from different provinces and we used to meet often at tea, and have a federated Dietetic India.

The Hindus and Muslims do not have any squabbles in England, but, even so, they do not meet often. I came across some interesting Muslims from the United Provinces and found them to be quite good fellows. One day, while talking about the costly ceremonies after death among the Indians, one of these told me with feeling "Mr. Ayyar, death is a great evil, but a greater evil comes after death, the relatives who eat up the substance. Their principle seems to be 'The man having gone, why leave his effects behind?'" This same Muslim friend was very credulous and took me to the St. Giles Fair to convince me of the truth of clairvoyance and astrology. His example, an unhappy one, was that a Negro could tell the year of any coin held in one's hand without looking at it. The Negro was really a clever fellow, and managed to give the dates of several coins to the great joy of my friend. Suddenly, I took a Travancore coin, with the year of issue in Malayalam figures, and asked the Negro to give the date. As I expected, he floundered, and I walked triumphantly out with my crest-fallen friend. But even my credulous friend was not deceived by "a giant rat" exhibited close by and viewable on a payment of three pence. We both saw it, and my friend exclaimed indignantly "This is no giant rat, it is a dwarf bandicoot. We have been swindled."

The Oxford undergraduates discuss politics freely at their meetings though few take an active part in politics. They have also a great sense of their duty towards their country. Before even conscription was enforced in the late great war, half the undergraduates had gone to the front as volunteers. In every college for males there is a worthy "Roll of Honour," of those of its alumni who fell fighting for their King and country. Ex-service men got shortened courses for their degrees. I said to one ex-service man, with a distinguished record in the war, "You must have had a glorious time fighting for

your country. "Not at all" replied he. "Treading on your fallen brother you have to crush out his expiring life with your feet, and fight on, filling up the gap. Oh, it is horrible. I don't believe I can go through it again." Conscientious objectors were excluded from competing for the Civil Service for five years after the conclusion of the war. This was in addition to the imprisonment they underwent during the war. When I pitied these, in a private conversation at Torquay in a boarding house, "Pity them!" burst out an old lady "What, my sons went to the front to defend these wretches who were making money all the time, and one of them died. What pity is due to these cowardly traitors?" That was the trend of feeling then; I respected her mother's heart and kept quiet. In Oxford there was an Officers' Training Corps, but it was not open to Indians, as an Indian Christian friend of mine found out on enquiry.

My life at Oxford was very pleasant. I used to go out every day to some country village or other and became thoroughly fascinated with the surrounding country side.

The meadows and parks of the town, the many quaint old houses, and the charming country round about constitute not the least of the attractions of Oxford. Lately, a society called the Oxford Preservation Society was started to preserve these amenities and to relieve congestion, and numerous people, from the Prince of Wales downwards, subscribed sums ranging from five thousand pounds to half a crown. This shows the affection of the people for the ancient university and their appreciation of some of its unique beauties. Every year, hundreds of Oxford old boys visit their colleges with their wives and children and show these to them with justifiable pride.

Oxford is eminently defensible, with the low hills all round commanding the plains below. I visited some historic castles.

famous in the civil war. One was near Banbury, and is a perfect example of the castles of Stuart times. Here Charles had a narrow escape from Cromwell who held a hasty consultation in a hall packed with soldiers. A fee of two shillings per visitor is charged by the present Lord Saye. The Duke of Marlborough's castle at Woodstock is also quite interesting, with a magnificent park which is open free to the public. The originals of the Magna Carta and the death warrant of Charles I. are preserved carefully in the British Museum, and I handled them with permission.

Oxford University reminded me of the old Indian Universities of Nalanda, Takshasila, Benares, Vikramasila, etc., and especially of Nalanda. They have very much in common. In teaching a vast variety of subjects by experts, in the fostering of free discussions, and bold speculation, in the encouragement of originality, in the production of great geniuses and savants, in imparting a broad culture with the necessary specialization, in laying emphasis on personal and constant contact between teacher and pupil, and in fostering independence and a thirst for learning, all were at one. They were also alike in the great defect that their education was more theoretical than practical. Oxford leaves the arts to be taught by new Universities like Birmingham, Manchester, etc., just as Nalanda left them to the caste guilds. But it has not got our neglect of history, foreign languages and research work, the hiding of discoveries, contempt of the Sudra and the depressed classes, and the slavish dependence on King and nobles for maintenance. It also teaches some more subjects like anthropology, geography, plaeontology, archaeology, etc. Indian scholars had to study even Chinese after going to China, and, though the great Buddhist missionaries easily mastered the language, it would have been a help had they learnt it before going there.

In Oxford, an important place is held by research work and rightly so. It is a shame that we in modern India neglected research work till recently. But Oxford has some defects which our ancient universities had not. The education is very costly, and beyond the reach of the poor, though scholarships have, to some extent, alleviated the evil in recent years. Thus the intelligent poor cannot afford an Oxford education. All our ancient universities placed the rich and the poor on an equal footing, though the demon of caste worked an equal quantity of mischief in the Hindu Universities. Again more attention is paid to the material side and less to the spiritual side, the goal aimed at being not salvation, but getting along in this world, and often not too scrupulous about the means. So also, much research work is undertaken merely for destructive purposes like the discovery of poison gas, guns with 30 miles range, bombing air ships, etc. Further, the principle "Europe runs the world and the white man is the lord of all" is taught, consciously or unconsciously, and racial arrogance, so dangerous to the future peace of the world, is fostered. National jealousies, too, often lead to a twisting of history by those who ought to know better.

The objects of an ideal education ought to be to make a man lead a healthy life, physically, mentally and morally, to make him suited for his occupation in life and thus fall into the scheme of things, to cast off false values and acquire true values, to create in him an insatiable thirst for truth and knowledge, to cultivate the faculty of correct thinking, discussion and expression, to choose right friends and associates, and to make him a valuable member of society and a servant of humanity by placing his knowledge, experience, reason, wealth and strength at the disposal of his deserving fellow-beings and for helping the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed, the wicked, the degraded and the depressed to get out of their miserable

state, and thus leave the world a shade better than he found it. Neither Oxford nor Nalanda nor Takshasila nor Benares has completely succeeded in doing all this to all its alumini, but that they have done so in the case of a good many, and have tried to do so in the case of all, is ample tribute to their utility, and sufficient justification for the love and reverence cherished toward them by a grateful humanity.

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## CHAPTER IX

### IN THE LAND OF EQUALITY

**E**VER since the momentary vision of France I had on my way to England, I had entertained an ardent desire to make a fuller acquaintance with that country which had appealed to me so strongly since my early student days. France, the land of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Montaigne and Diderot, of Napoleon and Jeanne D'Arc, of Danton and Robespierre, of Anatole, Bergson and Romain Roliand, the land which gave birth to the French Revolution and the strangely attractive but pathetically futile, phrase—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as an ideal to be reached by humanity, appealed to me as no other foreign country had. Two minor reasons urged me to make a pretty long stay in France. One was the necessity of improving my French. I had to offer French or German for the History Honours School at Oxford, and had chosen French as the more useful language. Even while at 21, Cromwell Road, Miss Beck and Mr. Knaster had urged me to study French.

There was a competent tutor who was an Englishman and used to charge five shillings per lesson if the tuition was given in his house at Hampstead or half a guinea if he were to come to 21, Cromwell Road, as I desired. This increased charge was made, as nearly two hours would be wasted in going to and fro, and, as the tutor took care to explain to me, I was getting 150% value for my money since I was getting fifteen shillings ten pence value for my ten shillings six pence. The thing, of course, was unimpeachable on mathematical grounds, as five into three gives fifteen, and ten pence was the railway fare to and fro, and 190 pence are slightly more than 150% of

126 pence. If anything, the gentleman had under-estimated my advantage. His only error, a pardonable one and one common to all financiers who dabble in currency notes, lay in assuming that the face value, of five shillings per lesson in this case, represented 100% value.

Three lessons at ten shillings six pence apiece made me change my mind. and I told my tutor that I would go over to his house for the lessons and pay five shillings. This I did at the risk of being regarded as a foolish customer who was wilfully foregoing his 51% unearned profits. The tutor agreed, but gave me 9 p. m. as my time. Perhaps a foolish customer deserved no more consideration. I used to go and return by the underground trains. For six days I went to Hampstead, and then abruptly stopped, after giving notice. The reason was curious. On my way to the underground station at Hampstead I had to pass a certain street. There, one night, I saw a man and woman, obviously lovers, in a compromising position on the pavement. As I passed them, the man swore at me in a threatening manner, and the girl giggled. I resolved never more to go out at nights and see such sights. Never afterwards did I take any tuition in French.

At Oxford, though one cheap tutor, Dr. Sapote, a Pole, who charged only half a crown per lesson, existed, I didn't engage him but studied French for myself, and made much more rapid progress than in my 150% or 100% value tuition days. Perhaps this was because the obsession, that I was paying too much, didn't exist, or perhaps it was because, instead of 50% profit, I was getting infinite profit, as I was paying nothing for what I learnt. In this way I passed the 'French unseen' in the History Previous. But my pronunciation left much to be desired, and nothing gives the correct pronunciation so quickly as talking the language with people whose mother-tongue it is. Hence, a powerful additional motive

to visit France. A third motive was, as I have already stated, to have a look at the battlefields of France and Belgium.

In July 1920 I had mastered enough French to get on with in France. On the advice of Miss Beck, I resolved to write to some respectable boarding house in Paris so that I might see France at her normal level, and not hectic France as is seen in the gay Paris hotels. These boarding houses require, from applicants for rooms, references as to character, status in life, etc. I had no difficulty in booking a room at Madame Villard's in Rue Kepler, Paris XVI, one of the best parts of that city.

Having gone through all the vexatious preliminaries incidental to taking out a Foreign Office endorsement for visiting France, Belgium and Switzerland and the Visas of the Consuls of those countries, I set out from London and reached Paris at about 7-30 a.m. after a stormy crossing of the Channel but without any incident worth noting. I took a taxi and reached 9, Rue Kepler at about 8 p.m. I rang the bell. A young woman came. "I am the gentleman who wired" said I, in French., Madame Villard, a genial old lady, aged about 60, came to receive me. She poured out a whole torrent of French. I was bewildered and could make nothing of it. I spoke in English. They didn't understand me well, though Mlle Lambertin, the assistant of Madame Villard, could make out the gist of what I said. "You no mention to-day," said she to me. I pleaded guilty, for my telegram was simply to reserve a room. "Is my room ready?" I asked. "Oui" (yes) said Madame Villard, and I went up to the second storey with Mlle Lambertin who showed me the room which was quite a decent bed-sitter. I told Madame Villard in bad French, "I do not eat meat or fish or anything which contains those ingredients." "Do you eat eggs?" asked she. "Yes" said I. "Do you like fruits?" asked Madame Villard. "Oh, immensely"

said I. "Any other thing you would like to mention?" asked she. "Yes" said I, "Please see that whatever frying is done for me is done in butter and that no lard is used." "It will be costly" said she. "I shall pay" I replied. "All right, then" said she.

I went down to dinner an hour afterwards. All the rest had eaten theirs. I sat alone and ate my dinner, which consisted of an omelette, boiled potatoes and cauliflower and fresh ripe grapes, in silence. Madame Villard took down my address in England. After dinner, she showed me how to lock the door and formally handed to me a key of the door leading into the street. "Monsieur," said she, "if you come before 10 p.m., we shall open the door when you ring. If you come later than that, I expect you not to ring but to open the door noiselessly and creep to your room. If you lose the key, ten francs are charged for supplying a new key. Again, I generally expect boarders to return home before midnight."

I rushed upstairs to my room in the second storey. There was not enough light to guide me. There were two rooms close to each other, and I opened the wrong room. A Swede was sitting there. He smiled and said, in perfect English, that my room was the next. I apologized and withdrew.

Tired to death, I slept peacefully till 7-30 a.m. when the maid woke me up and said "*Votre bain est pret*" (your bath is ready). I said "*Merci*" (Thanks) and went to bathe. A good bath is the best restorer of the vital energies, and I came back considerably refreshed. On my return I found my breakfast waiting for me. But, what a breakfast! Two rolls of bread, a little butter and a cup of coffee. I no longer wondered why the French had been beaten by the English at Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt.

Two of my friends called on me at 10 a.m., and I went

out with them. We proceeded to the Arc De Triomphe of the great Napoleon. Twelve beautiful avenues radiate from the triumphal arch at equal angles, and, so, the place where they join has been appropriately named *Etoile* (the star) since, conventionally, stars are shown like asterisks. The twelve avenues are Avenue De La Grande Armee, Avenue du bois de Boulogne, Avenue Victor Hugo, Avenue Kleber, Avenue D'Jena, Avenue Marceau, Avenue Des Champs Elysees, Avenue Friedland, Avenue Hoche, Avenue De Wagram, Avenue Mac Mahon and Avenue Carnot. It will be seen that many of them have the names of the battles and marshals of Napoleon, and a few of revolutionary generals like Carnot, poets like Victor Hugo and presidents of the Republic like Mac Mahon. We ascended the tower with the permission of the care-taker and had a magnificent view. Paris, beautiful Paris with its many graceful buildings and churches, broad roads, shady avenues, superb gardens and gay men and women, lay before us in all its grandeur, conscious of its own beauty. The master mind of Napoleon showed itself even in this arch, in this, central position. How many little things are done by great men which if done by little men would immortalize them for ever! The care-taker expected from us Napoleonic tips, and was, needless to say, disappointed.

From the Arc De Triomphe we proceeded to the Eiffel Tower, and, after paying two francs each, were taken to the top, though not to the very top, as that is impossible, and had a fine panorama of Paris, much more extensive than that from the Arc De Triomphe, but correspondingly less distinct. The view from the top was exactly like the bird's eye view I had from an aeroplane. Air France had an advertisement at the top, to the effect "It will be always like this when travelling by Air France." The Champ-de-Mars, so famous in the revolutionary days, and the Trocadero lie at the foot of

Eiffel Tower, and the Grande Roue (the great wheel), a gigantic wheel formerly used as a merry-go-round, is also close by, though abandoned. After taking some light refreshments, we climbed down in the lift and went our several ways, my friends to their hotel in the Rue De Province and I to my pension (boarding house). It was 2-15 when I reached my place. Their lunch was at 12-30. I had been told so even on the previous day, but, alas, human memory is frail, especially so in the excitement of seeing Eiffel Towers and triumphal arches. I have never been an advocate of vicarious punishment, and it seemed to me monstrous that, holding such opinions as I did, my stomach should be made to suffer for the fault, of my memory. "Mademoiselle," said I to Mlle Lambertin, "I am very tired. Be a good girl and fetch me my lunch." "As a special case, I shall" replied she, and brought the lunch to my room. Thereafter, whenever I was late for any meal I used to go to some restaurant rather than trouble Madame Villard and her establishment.

In the afternoon, I went round the Boulevards of Paris. For sheer beauty, Paris is unbeatable, and, so, has been rightly named the Queen of Cities. Frenchmen make all things beautiful, Englishmen make all things big and durable. Even the very vases on the mantel show this, French vases being frail dreamy little things of beauty, easily breakable, whereas English vases are strong four-square things strongly reminiscent of the earth of which they are made. Modern Paris is largely the work of Napoleon III. He laid out the fine Boulevards, not with the primary object of providing delightful promenades but to make barricades and street-fighting, so common before and so troublesome to the rulers, more difficult. Boulevard St. Germain, Boulevard Du Montparnasse, Boulevard D'Italie, Boulevard St. Denis and Boulevard Richard Le Noir are some typical Boulevards. Boulevard St. Denis,

with its lofty St. Denis gate, specially appealed to me. *Rues* or streets take off from these Boulevards, and are innumerable. Where boulevards meet or where several *rues* meet, we get a 'Place.' Place De L'Opera, Place D'Italie, Place De La Bastille are representative places. Representative Faubourgs (suburbs) are Faubourg St. Jacques and Faubourg St. Germain. 'Boulevards' originally meant battlements but now mean only broad walks lined on both sides by trees. Many of these walks have been constructed at the localities where the old battlements existed.

Paris has many superb parks and gardens. Jardin (garden) du Luxembourg, Jardin des Tuileries, Jardin du Palais Royal, Jardin d'Acclimatation (better known as the Bois de Boulogne), Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, Parc Monceau, and Parc de Montsouris are the principal ones. The beauty of these gardens is indescribable and certainly constitutes one of the main attractions of Paris. Every afternoon, and often in mornings too, gay crowds of men and women gather. In most gardens a band is in attendance, and coffee and sweets can be had. The Luxembourg garden is the best as a garden, but the Bois de Boulogne is the most impressive. As the names show clearly, many of these were the pleasure gardens of Kings and were made available for the people only by the Revolutions and the Republic.

I returned to my *pension* in time for dinner. At dinner I was introduced to all the other boarders, a league of nations comprising Peruvians, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Britons and Americans from the States. Driven from the chancellories and cabinets of Europe, scoffed at by the politicians of the world, the poor League of Nations appeared to me to have found a secure asylum in the dining room of Madame Villard. I expressed this to an English lady, who was on the staff of the Reparations commission, and she remarked laughingly "And India has got her own national as-

her direct representative here, unlike in the real League of Nations," a remark which was quite just. A Norwegian lady, to my right, whispered to me, in good English. "Don't you think we are awfully packed here? There seems to be scarcely space enough for us to move about." I said that even that was not without its advantages. "How so?" she demanded. "Because we cannot fall down and hurt ourselves, as there is no space to fall in," I replied. She laughed, and repeated the conversation to a Norwegian gentleman to her right, and he to his neighbour, till Mlle Lambertin heard about it, but charitably refrained from repeating it to Madame Villard who would certainly not have relished it. At dinner, one of the English ladies talked about the reforms India had got, adding "Self-Government may not succeed very well in India, as the people over there have not got that respect for law and order which they ought to have." "They ought to learn respect for law from us Americans" said a young American lady opposite to me. "They will take centuries before they do that" added she. I didn't quite like this. So I said, "Pardon me, Madam, if I appear to be impolite. But, if Americans have that much respect for law, as you say, how is it that you drink wine over here, when your country has gone dry?" There was a general titter all round, and the fair American coloured, said "I meant no offence." "Nor I either" said I. There the matter ended for the time being. From the next day onwards, she and her mother used to take water instead of wine. So, Americans, if they were typical representatives, were proved to have neither that respect for law nor that independence for which they are famed. One thing however pleased me. Both the Americans were entirely free from prejudice towards Indians, and did not show any resentment at my retort, and always behaved towards me most courteously.

After dinner, I went, in the underground, to the Bastille

where I saw great crowds and all kinds of entertainments, for the *Fete Nationale* (National Festival), the anniversary of the capture of the Bastille, was to come off on July 14th. The successful termination of the war had lent a new enthusiasm to the celebrations. Hundreds of people were singing the famous *La Marseillaise*, the national song of France. It is soul-stirring, and can never fail to inspire even hardened slaves with a love of freedom and liberty. I give below my own literal translation of it:—

Come, children of the Fatherland,  
 The day of glory has arrived !  
 Against us the wretched tyrants  
 Their bloody flag has raised,  
 Their bloody flag has raised !  
 Do you hear in the countryside  
 Their ferocious soldiers roar ?  
 They come to cut the throats of sons  
 Enfolded by our arms, and friends !  
 To arms, to arms, form your armies,  
 March on, march on, let th'impure blood  
 Of these villains manure our fields !  
 What does this horde of slaves desire,  
 Assembled against us in vain ?  
 For whom these ignoble trammels,  
 These furbished chains of long ago ?  
 Frenchmen, for us what an outrage,  
 What rage must it in us excite !  
 It's us these knaves dare to threaten  
 To bind once more in old bondage !  
 To arms, etc.

Tremble, tyrants, and you traitors,  
 Hated by one and all alike,  
 Tremble, your parricidal plans  
 Are at last getting their reward !  
 All want to fight you as soldiers ;  
 If our young heroes fall, don't fear,  
 France will soon produce new heroes !  
 To arms, etc.

Sacred love of Fatherland,  
 Give strength to our avenging arms !  
 Liberty, darling Liberty,  
 Fight with your defenders !  
 Under your flag, let Victory  
 Come rushing at your clarion call !  
 Let your expiring enemies  
 See your triumph and our glory !  
 To arms, etc.

I also give the most popular English rendering which will at once show what inspiration this song has for all lovers of liberty, and what changes are made in it due to it, just as Siva in the Tamil country has no moustaches, whereas he has a very war-like one in the Mahratta country:—

Ye sons of Frances, awake to glory,  
 Hark ! Hark ! what myriads round you rise !  
 Your children, wives and grandsires hoary ;  
 Behold their tears and hear their cries !  
 Behold their tears and hear their cries !

Shall hateful tyrants, mischief breeding,  
 With hireling hosts, a ruffian band,  
 Affright and desolate the land,  
 While peace and liberty lie bleeding?  
 To arms, to arms, ye brave!  
 Th'avenging sword unsheath;  
 March on, march on, all hearts, resolved on liberty  
 or death!

Now, now the dangerous storm is rolling,  
 Which treach'rous kings, confederate, raise;  
 The dogs of war, let loose, are howling,  
 And lo! our fields and cities blaze.  
 And shall we basely view the ruin,  
 While lawless force, with guilty stride,  
 Spreads desolation far and wide,  
 With crimes and blood his hands imbruing?  
 To arms, etc.

With luxury and pride surrounded,  
 The vile insatiate despots dare,  
 Their thirst of power and gold unbounded  
 To mete and vend the light and air;  
 Like beasts of burden they would load us,  
 Like gods, would bid their slaves adore;  
 But, man is man, and who is more?  
 Then, shall they longer lash and goad us?  
 To arms, etc,

Oh! Liberty! can man resign thee,  
Once having felt thy gen'rous flame?  
Can dungeons, bolts and bars confine thee  
Or whips thy noble spirit tame?  
Too long the world has wept, bewailing  
That Falsehood's dagger tyrants wield;  
But Freedom is our sword and shield,  
And all their arts are unavailing!  
To arms, etc.

Professional songstresses sang the song splendidly and were listened to with rapt attention by crowds whose members gave one franc and half franc notes. The Marseillaise, as sung by these, moved me profoundly. The girls seemed to forget themselves in their enthusiasm. The women of France are, in general, handsome by Nature, and consummate Art has embellished Nature's charms. Street dancing was found here and there even on the 11th night, though the acme was on the 14th.

The whole of the 12th I spent in seeing the principal churches of Paris. The best are Notre Dame De Paris, La Madeleine and Sacre-coeur of Montmartre. They are all of different types of architecture. Notre Dame is the most impressive, La. Madeleine the most graceful, and Sacre-coeur the most romantic. I spent a long time looking at each of these three. At Montmartre there is a funicular railway which carries passengers up the hill for a small fee. I had an excellent tea at Montmartre with plenty of nice cakes. Only, for drink I took coffee instead of tea. France has the best coffee and the worst tea in the world. The funniest thing about the French, as regards drinking coffee, is that a lot of them drink it without milk, and that a stranger must say

"coffee with milk" if he wants milk in the coffee. When going round to see churches, I saw also the Bank of France, the Exchange, the Hotel de Ville (Town Hall), the Palais de Justice (High Court), the Chamber of Commerce and the Palais de l' Elysee. The last is the residence of the President of the Republic and is closed to sight-seers. But I had a good look at the exterior. It is a fit residence for the President of a Republic. The Hotel De Ville is a magnificent building with considerable architectural merit and appealed to me more than the Town Hall of London. The Exchange too is an impressive building though without any special merit. This day I saw also the panorama of the eight bridges. The bridges of Paris are beautiful, in addition to being durable. The bridge of Jena and the bridge of Alexander III deserve special mention.

It was about 11 p.m. when I emerged out of the underground station, George V, and wanted to go to my boarding house. Losing my way, I accosted a Frenchman and asked him where Rue Kepler was. He was evidently absorbed in thought, for his reply, "Yes, I am a Frenchman" had no relevancy to my question. After vacantly staring at me for a minute it probably occurred to him that I might be wanting something, and, so, he asked "What is it you want, sir?" in French. I replied that I wanted to go to my room in 9, Rue Kepler. Thereupon he took me by the arm and led me to Rue Kepler, talking a lot in rapid colloquial French on the way, of all which I could gather only a word here and there. My philosopher friend shook hands with me vigorously and said in slow impressive tones "No, the Third Republic which survived the war will survive any catastrophe. Long live the Republic!" I said 'Amen' at which he again shook hands with me and declared that I was of the right sort. Then he abruptly left me and walked away.

A moment later, I trembled, at suddenly discovering that

I had forgotten my street key. To ring up Madame Villard would be to irritate that good lady. But that, I resolved, would be my last resort, for it was obviously out of the question to spend the night in the street or to go to a hotel. On going to the door of the boarding house I found it locked and an English girl standing opposite to it engaged in deep converse with an army officer. My first sensation was suspicion. There were groups of two all over the streets and I thought that these two also might be one such. I stood hesitating in the street. "You want to open the door?" asked the girl moving away from it. "Unfortunately, I have forgotten my key" said I. "What a silly boy!" said she, and, opening the door with her key, said "Enter, and mind the steps". I thanked her profusely and asked "Shall I shut the door?", "No, keep it open for me if you please," said she. I therefore, left it open, hurried upstairs, literally rolled into my bed, thoroughly exhausted, and, in two minutes, was plunged in sleep.

The next two days were completely taken up in seeing the Louvre. Of this peerless museum which contains the Venus of Milo, the Mona Lisa of Leonardo, the Madonna of Botticelli, the Christ bearing the Cross by Veronese, the Entombment of Titian, the old man and his grandson by Ghirlandajo, the sculptures of Angelo, and the immortal frescoes of Holbein, Gerard Dou and Hals, so much has been written by experts that any praise of mine would be as useless as an addition of a drop of water to the ocean, or a candle's light to the sun. Suffice to say, that at the sight of so much beauty, I was so moved that I wept tears of joy that I had been privileged to see all this, and of sorrow that no such museum existed in India, though abundant material existed.

On returning from the Louvre on the 14th evening, I wrote for permission to visit the Hotel de la Monnaie and the catacombs. Then, in the night, I went to see the National

Festival celebrations at the Bastille. Such tremendous enthusiasm I had never seen in my life. Men and women, utter strangers to one another, danced in the street in a mad frenzy, singing the Marseillaise. There were tremendous crowds. From the Place de la Bastille I went to the Place de la Concord, the scene of so much bloodshed in the days of the great Revolution, and saw equally frantic scenes there. Outside every cafe there was street dancing; I returned to my room at about midnight, after seeing Paris in her most emotional mood.

The next day I visited the principal cemeteries of Paris, the Pere-Lachaise, Montparnesse and Montmartre. There is nothing noteworthy about them except that old women sell wreaths near them so that mourners may buy some and put these flowery tokens of their grief with pious hands over the graves of their beloved.

On the 16th, a parcel containing a new suit arrived for me from London. This suit was ordered by me in time to be ready before I started for France but, owing to the sudden death of one of the near relatives of the tailor to whom the firm entrusted this work it could not be delivered to me in time. The firm promised to send it on to France to my address. What was my horror when I discovered that though I had been assured that personal effects were not liable to customs duty I had been charged no less than 14 francs as customs duty besides being mulcted of 5 francs 30 centimes for other alleged expenses. To make the whole thing perfectly ludicrous, the sum had been rounded off to 20 francs by adding 70 centimes "pourboire" (tip!). I would certainly have refused to pay the pourboire, but, as Madame Villard had paid the twenty francs and taken delivery of the parcel, I perforce had to reimburse her, tips and all. To my astonished query regarding the tip, Madame Villard said "Even the customs fellows must have a drink, monsieur." (Pourboire means literally 'to drink'.)

But not at my expense, madam," said I, amidst general laughter.

After breakfast, I went and spent an hour looking at the column of the Bastille. Though I could not endorse the extreme opinion that the capture of the Bastille was by far the greatest and best event in the history of the world, still I did feel that it was one of the great and good events in the world's history. From the Bastille I went to the school of Fine Arts, the museum of industry, and the Gobelins, and was profoundly interested in all that I saw in these three places, and especially the exquisite tapestries exhibited at the Gobelins. I also went to the Institut de France and the Hotel de Legion d'Honneur and saw everything there. It was a brilliant idea of Napoleon to have instituted the Legion d'Honneur with several grades. Bonapartists and anti-Bonapartists, soldiers, statesmen and scientists have all hankered after a legion of honour, and the honour has not been degraded by a too free distribution to unworthy persons.

I had received the card from the Prefecture of Police for visiting the catacombs, which are open, to visitors with cards, on the first and third Saturdays in a month. I was asked to wait with a candle and matches at Place Denfert-Rochereau, and did so. I found nearly a hundred and fifty others waiting likewise. At the precise hour indicated in the cards, two policemen came and took us into a subterranean passage, after making us light our candles. The door behind us, leading to the brilliant sunlight, was closed, and we were marched along long lanes lined with an unending series of human skeletons. Three hundred thousand human skeletons lighted up by a hundred and fifty dim candles must affect anyone. It did me at any rate. Not with fear, but with just that kind of serious pensiveness which we feel when we are near a deathbed or a deserted battlefield or a ruined building. The cold damp dead

odour of the place, with its myriads of grinning skulls, was in vivid contrast to the warm-blooded perspiring human beings cautiously moving about with assumed reverence and real fear, holding candles which were trembling in their unsteady hands, but led on by an insatiable curiosity to peep into every corner of this chamber of the dead and thus perchance penetrate into the mysteries beyond the grave. A group of English ladies were following me close, and one of them asked me "Don't you feel afraid?" "Afraid! Why? Dead men do no harm" said I. "Still, to think that we are only a yard removed from the dead, isn't it dreadful?" continued she, and her fair young features depicted the horror of her soul. "Madam," said I, "the wise man knows that life is only divided by a yard from death, not only inside the catacombs but also in the wider catacombs called the world." She added in slow accents, "I suppose you are right. But, excuse me for being rude, would you like, even after death, to be stacked like a piece of fire-wood here?" Her mother said, "Elsie, what questions you ask!" in a tone of reprobation. "Never mind, madam," said I, "it is a perfectly natural and harmless question. Well, Miss," I said turning to her daughter, "I don't suppose I should like it. Fortunately, there is no danger of such a dreadful catastrophe overtaking me. As soon as I die, my body will be burnt to ashes by reverent hands if, as I hope, I die in the land of my birth, and the bones will be thrown into some sacred river which will transport them to the boundless seas." "How horrid!" said Elsie's mother. "Not so horrid as this" said Elsie. "See how ugly these skeletons look!" Then I understood why Elsie preferred burning to exhibition of her skeleton. Even her handsome features would look ugly as a skeleton, but there would be no such danger if fire consumed a beautiful body and reduced it to nothing. "Can you think of any use of piling up these skeletons like this?"

asked Elsie. "Well, yes," I replied, "if a man comes here every day, he will lose all fear of death." "You seem to have no fear even at the very outset" said she. "Oh, that is because, you know, there is no real danger of death here" said I, and all laughed. The ice having been broken, we lost the mock respect and foolish awe and freely commented on the peculiarities of particular skeletons. Even Elsie's mother became eloquent. "What a perfectly horrid man this must have been" she said, pointing to a most deformed skull with all other bones gone. "Or woman" I added. "Don't be silly, it never could have been a woman" said Elsie, and all the five ladies emphatically backed her up. Defeated by six votes to one, I bowed my head low to the tyranny of the majority, and looked with real fear two days when women's votes would be six times more numerous than men's. Doubtless, woman-made laws will be as harsh, tyrannical and one-sided as man-made laws, and men suffragettes might have to rise up in revolt and will, in all probability, receive less considerate treatment than women suffragettes did.

There were some elucidating inscriptions pinned to many skulls. "It is sometimes better to die than to live," "He who is born must die one day," "Death is the end of all suffering" and "Death is the door leading to everlasting life" were some of the best.

Towards the end of our visit our guides became most communicative and told us how these skeletons had been excavated from several over-crowded churchyards and cemeteries and stacked here under the orders of Napoleon III. Finally, after we had reviewed all the skeletons and inhaled enough air of death to make us proof against death for at least one month we emerged out of the subterranean passages into God's sunlight and felt an immense relief in breathing the pure air so different from the damp stuffy air of death we

had breathed so long. Handsome tips were paid to the guides by one and all. Then I said good-bye to the English ladies who insisted on shaking hands with me. "We have had a rare sight, don't you think so?" asked Elsie. "Of course," said I, "and, incidentally, that is another use of the catacombs, to give a rare sight to visitors who will thus have something to talk about." All laughed and we parted shouting out "Au Revoir" (till we meet again!), the elegant French equivalent for "good-bye."

I went to Versailles on Monday in a tram from the Louvre. It is a curious thing, in France, as elsewhere, that sometimes if you ask two people about a certain place you will be told with the same cocksureness to follow two directly opposite directions. This was my unfortunate experience. Though the Swedish gentleman and Mademoiselle Lambertin had told me that it was from Louvre that I should take the tram I must needs ask a man in the train. He said "Gare de Lyon." If he had gone out before the Louvre underground station was reached, I would have got down at the Louvre, but as he was still in the train I couldn't, consistent with decency, walk out. So I remained. At the Gare de Lyon I asked for the tram to Versailles and was asked to go to the Louvre. "Good Heavens!" said I "I come from that same place." "The more trouble for you, sir" replied the railway official, "This is the station for Marseilles." "Ah," said I "that explains it." "What explains it?" asked the mystified Frenchman. "This similarity in sound between Marseilles and Verseilles" said I and hurried back to the Louvre whence I took the tram to Versailles.

The way was pleassnt, the fare light, the comrades agreeable, and, in an hour, I found myself in Versailles, the scene of so many famous treaties which have sealed the fates of nations. The chateau was just in front of the tram terminus, and in

I walked without any further ceremony. In the courtyard, on both sides, were figures of men who had made themselves and France great, Conde, Turenne, Suffrein, L'Hopital, to name only a few. The interior of the chateau was all that could be desired. Busts of almost all the worthies from the time of Clovis down to our own days, grand statues of Napoleon and Louis XIV, wonderful pictures of all the battles in which France had a part from the famous battle of Tolobosta, where Clovis became a Christian, till the battle of 1840 in Algiers, everything of any note in the history of France, was duly found there. Proud Moreau, strangled Pichegru, honest Carnot, able Cambaceres and the marshals of Napoleon, all were there. The men who had guillotined one another were standing side by side. Richelieu, with his frank militarism and Mazarin, with his Italian cunning, both were there.

In a corner, all by herself, with no companion, as if to show that she has no equal in the History of France, stands Jeanne D'Arc, the Maid of Orleans. Oh, such a face! So full of the innocence and charm of youth, the simple belief of childhood and the supreme confidence which arises out of faith! How could her butchers have mustered up courage to burn her? But there is no knowing how degenerate the best natures become in a mad national hatred. There are plenty of pictures of Napoleon sold at the chateau, but none of Jeanne. Even France has apparently only lip homage for the great Saint, and prefers to worship the selfish autocrat, who thrust her yoke by brute force on unwilling nations, to the pure-hearted virgin who delivered her soil from the heel of the foreigner. The moral is not encouraging for the future peace or liberty of humanity.

I went to the chamber where the Tribune sat in the days of Napoleon, and, with a touch of human weakness, sat in the front row. All the others also, with that sympathetic reaction common to most human beings, did the same.

The gardens of Versailles are wonderful, and the unique fountains, of which there are very many, some being as much as 40 feet high, were all in full play. A gay crowd of men and women was present, wandering from fountain to fountain, and hearing an exquisite band near the chateau. I doubt whether anything but Royalty could have created such a thing of beauty as Versailles with its haunting chateau, gardens and fountains, but I am certain that Democracy alone could have made full use of it by throwing it open to one and all. The famous Hall of Mirrors at Versailles is a splendid hall with mirrors on all sides, but I was not particularly struck by anything artistic in the construction of the hall itself. Here, many world-important treaties have been signed, and it must have been a difficult thing for diplomatists to dissimulate their real feelings for a long time; any exhibitions of real feelings, even to oneself, would have been instantly visible to opposing diplomats through the mirrors." As the guide told us "Sirs, no other place in the world has seen so much self-control and deception." The old diplomacy with its dark methods, is, perhaps, dying, though not so fast as its opponents would have us believe, but the new diplomacy with its changed maxims and shibboleths, has methods no less dark, though outwardly more humane. As an old Frenchman told me, *apropos* this, "Monsieur, the cockroach has shed its skin, but it is still the cockroach, and will develop another skin very like the old in course of time, and has shed its old skin simply because it has become useless, and not owing to any moral reformation."

On my return from Versailles, after spending a most delightful day, I wrote a letter to M. Charles Baron, Depute Des Basses Alpes, for a ticket to attend the sessions of the Chamber of Deputies. A ticket from a member is required for attending the sessions of the Senate or the Chamber of

Deputies. I knew no member of either house, and yet wanted to visit both the houses. I looked up the proceedings of the Chamber of Députés in "Le Temps" (The Times of Paris) and found that M. Charles Baron, had been called to order thrice by the president at a single sitting. "That is the man for me" said I to myself. "These irrepressible enthusiasts are always responsive to generous emotions," and straightway sent the letter. I wrote that I was an Indian student desirous of attending a session of the Chamber of Deputies but knew no member personally, though I had read about him, and, so, would be obliged if he would send me a ticket. In India, of course, such a letter would have had no effect. False pride and an undue sense of one's own importance are so common. But, as I expected, the very next day I got not one but two tickets with M. Charles Baron's compliments. Such is the civility in the land of equality. Immensely delighted, I asked an Indian friend to accompany me, and we both went to the Chamber of Deputies on the next convenient day.

This Chamber of Deputies is about the most lively assembly that I have ever seen. Even after the President has taken his chair, which he does somewhat ceremoniously, being ushered in by an usher girl with a sword who cries "M. Le President," the members continue to cluster together in small groups, chatting, laughing and making gestures. The members are most of them elderly men with a large preponderance of bald heads; yet, they behave like school boys before the class begins. The president rises and reads something at a terrific speed. The talk and the laughter go on, just the same, among the members. The president stamps his feet, raps the cane on the table, and rings the bell. Some ushers cry out "Silence, messieurs, s'il vous plait" (Silence sirs, if you please), "Silence, messieurs, je vous prie" (Silence sirs, I pray you") thrice a minute. But the members are generally

neither pleased to keep silence; nor are they amenable to prayers. So, this hubbub continues. The president sits down finally and calls upon a member to speak. As if to revenge himself, he now speaks to others and pays not the slightest heed to the member. The member thunders on, as only Frenchmen can do. Six men from the right cry "Tres-bien" (Well said!) and six from the left shout out "Rubbish!" Four or five stand up and try to speak at the same time. They address one another, speak all at a time, and there is a terrible confusion. Such is the liberty in this assembly. Liberty, equality and fraternity are fully present since there is nothing to choose between member and member or member and president. But eloquence is very common, and the members are all attention to an orator who can sweep them off their feet by a fervid appeal to their emotions. Brilliant repartees are frequent. To a superficial observer, an Indian Home Rule meeting is very order itself compared with this assembly of the French people. But soon, very soon, the observer will come to know that the confusion in the Chamber of Deputies arises from the obvious sincerity of conviction of the individual members who all mean business unlike the dreamers who used to abound at Indian Home Rule meetings.

The next day I went with a friend to the Hotel de la Monnaie or mint. After seeing all the up-to-date instruments for finding out the genuineness and correct weight of coins we went into the work-shops and observed the various processes in the minting of coins with evident interest. What struck us forcibly was the entire absence of gold and silver. Copper and bronze and nickel, nothing but these. In this connection I must note that all over Paris I found in that tour silver coins but rarely and gold coins not at all. The usual thing was the one franc and half franc note. An ingenious scientist once calculated that there would be, on the average, a million and

five hundred thousand tiny carriers of disease in each one-franc note.

In the night I went with two friends to see the Folies-Bergiere which was running for several weeks and drawing crowded houses and which some people told us was well worth seeing. The scene in which the star of Paris came in a basket and distributed flowers was loudly applauded and was not without its grace. The concluding scene was in keeping with the whole show. Three apparently naked women stood in the background amidst the wholly undeserved, but thunderous, applause of an infatuated audience. The show was calculated to undermine morality. Touts also moved stealthily among the audience advertising the unfortunate white slaves who had engaged them. I was thoroughly disgusted with the performance, and told Madame Villard that France ought to be ashamed of patronizing such shows. "Monsieur," said that lady, "were there many Frenchmen there?" "No," said I, "Most of the spectators were foreigners." "Then, why blame Frenchmen?" asked she justly. "The show is run for foreigners and is paid for by foreigners."

I wrote to M. Leon Bourgeois, the President of the Senate, for a ticket to attend the sessions of that body. The very next post brought me two tickets with M. Leon Bourgeois' best compliments. Oh, how I wish that we Indians could acquire this absolute spirit of equality prevalent in France! England is pre-eminently the land of liberty, France pre-eminently the land of equality, and the land of fraternity is yet to come. In England, the liberty of the subject is raised to a very high pedestal. It is the country of the *habeas corpus*. But it has no ideal or practice of equality, as France after the Revolutions. In England a Duke or a Marquis is a being apart, the blue blood is something esteemed more highly than the common red blood. France is the land of

*lettres de cachet* and *droit administratif*, and is, in spite of all its boast, most certainly not a land of liberty, in the sense England is. But, for equality, no land can beat France. Her dummy dukes, marquises and barons are regarded as equals of the common fry, and indeed, address themselves as "M. Le Baron....," "M. Le Duc...." (Mr, Baron so and so, Mr. Duke so and so). Prime ministers and Presidents are equals of the people. No doubt, some French statesmen do sometimes speak with assumed contempt of the "Canaille" (mob), but this is only a pose, and, so far as it is real, is only a negation of fraternity and not of equality. Of course, there is much liberty and fraternity also in France, but her speciality is equality.

I took an Indian friend, and both of us went and seated ourselves comfortably in the best seats facing the president's chair. M. Leon Bourgeois was also announced ceremoniously and he and M. Poincare came together and both of them looked up at us and nodded smilingly. How flattered we felt and how much at home by this simple human greeting! How impossible it is for strangers of no consequence, like us, to obtain such civilities from Englishmen or Indians of the same status! The members of the Senate are much older than their brethren in the Chamber, and few are near the minimum fixed by law. Many are 55 and above. Bald heads are appallingly common, and coughs of incessant recurrence. Owing to the comparatively less vitality of the members, the session is less disturbed, but even these old men can kick up a row and behave like school-boys when excited. Perhaps, this irrepressible bubbling of even old Frenchmen is the result of their keeping their enthusiasm unimpaired. Many old men in France and Germany led armies and won battles at an age when those few Indian old men of the same age who manage to live will be hobbling on sticks if not lying in bed. Every Frenchman can make a soldier, as indeed every Englishman and

German. The hot blood in them is not cooled by philosophy, or frozen by cowardice, as in India. It did me good to see some black faces in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. These members were from Senegal, Algeria and Pondicherry all of which have a right to send members. When will India get such a right with regard to the Mother of Parliaments? Till she gets that right, Indian debates in the House of Commons are bound to be dull, ill-informed and useless. Indian princes may be allowed to elect some members to the House of Lords; and the Council of State, the Legislative Assembly and the India Government allowed to elect and nominate some members to the House of Commons. Nothing will bring England and India closer than this. The plan need continue only till India becomes as self-governing a dominion as Canada or Australia.

The next day I heard from my landlady, to my great surprise, that two of my friends had called at the boarding house at about 11-30 p.m. on the previous night and insisted on ringing the bell despite the worthy lady's remonstrances. Finally, she had made them desist by peeping out of the window in her night dress and telling them that I was out. My concern was not about the inconvenience caused to Madame Villard, but because I feared that it might be my friends come to cancel our proposed trip to Fontainebleau. With serious misgivings I dressed and, after informing Mlle Lambertin that I wouldn't be in for lunch, went to the hotel of my two friends. I found that they were not the disturbers of the previous night's peace and that they were as eager to go to Fontainebleau as ever. So, we went to Gare De Lyon and took the 10-55 train. After a most pleasant and uneventful run for about an hour and a half we reached the place. With our accustomed alacrity we boarded the first tram we met and flew to the chateau. Getting down at a neat cafe-

restaurant we alighted and prepared to take our lunch, acting on my principle "A man without food is like a ship without ballast." The lunch was really good, and the price only seven francs including the half price of wine charged for water. It is an almost universal practice in French restaurants to charge half the price of a glass of common red wine for water. Once, when I indignantly asked a manager why he had charged me for water he replied "Monsieur, that is the custom in Paris. We get 50% profits out of wine. Simply because you drink water, and insult our national beverage, are we to lose this profit also? After all, the trouble in giving water and wine is just the same."

After an enviable repast we started for the chateau which was close by and waited for the guide. For every chateau, museum and sight-seeing place in France there are official guides who explain everything. In addition, almost every day, Cook's guides may also be found firing away in English to their English party of tourists. To those who cannot understand French, Cook's guides are a boon. As soon as the guide came, we went round the palace. We saw the splendid rooms of Francis I, Napoleon, Louis XIV and Madame De Maintenon, the courtyard where Napoleon had bid his historic farewell to his old guard, the famous King's Fine, the magnificent wood, and wonderful gardens, and the big carps in the pond. We didn't even omit a ludicrous Chinese museum. After seeing everything, we returned to the station, and I had a nap in the return train. At the Gare De Lyon all three of us got down and parted company in high spirits, after having enjoyed the fine outing and got the best worth of the twenty-five francs which each of us had spent.

On the 24th July I had to go to the Prefecture of Police to get my Carte D'Identite (identity card) which any foreign sojourner was bound to take out within fifteen days after arrival

in France. Three small photographs were required. I stepped into a photographer's which had advertised on a board that photos would be taken for the Carte D'Identite and three copies delivered within thirty minutes, for five francs. A young lady was the photographer. Two gentlemen and a lady were waiting in the room, reading some of the numerous newspapers strewn on the table. "This way, monsieur" said the girl, and took me to a side room where her old father arranged all the preliminaries in a minute. "Now, monsieur, don't look so grave, lest the gentlemen of the Police should credit you with sinister intentions against the liberty of France or the safety of the republic. Do put on a smile" said the lady, and I smiled at her remarks. "Clic-clac" went the camera, and two photos had been taken. "Thank you monsieur, you looked so charming" said the girl and directed me to the hall. "Be looking at some of these silly newspapers while I get the copies ready" said she. I learnt from the three persons already there that the fair photographer had used the same words to each one of them. "Perhaps, they are her patent phrases" said I. "And rather more effective than most patent medicines" said one of the gentlemen. "Oh, how we do feel flattered when she says that we look so charming, though we know that it is all nonsense." "Well, do we know that?" asked the lady. "Er—no, how silly of me" said the gentleman at seeing his wife's ire. Most Englishmen will utter any lie to please a lady.

Soon my comrades got their photos. The two gentlemen were well pleased with theirs while the lady declared "What a hideous thing she has made me look!" Her husband pacified her saying "What else can you expect, dearest, from these take and give photos? There is hardly time to touch up." I got my copies in a few minutes more. The photos were quite good. I took the copies and paid the photographer. "Monsieur," she said, "how unreasonable these English women

are. I tried to make the face of that lady nice, but it simply wouldn't." She shrugged her shoulders, and I left.

The conciergerie is a fine building overlooking the Seine. I admired it for some time and then went to the office of the Prefect of Police. I got a form filled up and was given the number 162 and directed to a big room swarming with foreigners waiting for their turn to enter a hall where some twelve girl clerks were seated issuing Cartes D' Identite. These girls were chatting and laughing and proceeding with their work in a horribly leisurely fashion. After waiting for two hours, I found that only number 37 had got in. Some policemen had formed a cordon and were holding back the impatient unfortunates who wanted to get in. They were admitting persons as the girl clerks became disengaged, but there was no queue system, as in England, and the admissions were certainly not in strict order. It is remarkable that France, which originated the jury and queue systems, has not been able to make a thorough success of them while England which borrowed them from her has so assimilated them that the world regards her erroneously as the originator. It is like a kind foster-father being regarded as the real father of a child abandoned by its natural father.

I was at first willing to await my turn. But finding that progress was slow, and that a gentleman with a number later than mine had been admitted, I gently pushed my way through the crowd to the police line. There, when I was trying to persuade a policeman to let me through, on the triple grounds of my not having taken my meals, having an engagement with a friend in the afternoon, and having no other Indians to talk to in that room, a Greek on my left burst out "I, with number 53, have not yet been let in, and you, with No. 162 want to go in. What justice is this?" "You represent a petty little nation of five millions, which joined the Allies in the war

half-heartedly and at a very late stage, whereas I represent a mighty nation of 320 millions which rushed its troops to the rescue of France as soon as the Germans crossed the Frontier" said I. The French policeman said "Bravo!" and let me in with that sense of humour so marked in France.

I went in and was directed to a pert little girl, aged about 20, at one end of the hall. As soon as the porter took me to her, she said smilingly, "Hullo, an Indian! Very good." She asked me my name and surname. It is notorious that no Tamil Brahmin has got a surname. We Tamils, in general, have got initials representing the village name and father's name, and full names representing our personal and caste name. At Oxford when the difficulty cropped up I gave "Ayyar" as surname, and "A. S. Panchapakesa" as name, The ridiculous girl clerk at Paris, however, insisted on writing down my "Nom" (Name) as "Iyer" and "prenoms" (surnames) as "Aiyam S. P."! My protests were of no avail. "You say you are called M. Iyer. Well, what one is called by is his name" she said emphatically. Then my date of birth, names of father and mother and their dates and places of birth, and the name of my village, were duly taken down. Afterwards my profession was noted down as "Student." When she asked me what my nationality was I said that it was "Indian." She laughed and said, "Simple soul, there is no such thing as an Indian nation. There is British India, French India, Dutch India and Portuguese India. There is no Indian India, Your nationality is Britannique (British)" and wrote down "Britannique" against nationality. Her remarks stung me to the quick. Had we, the children of the oldest surviving civilization in the world, no right to a separate nationality, and were we bound to remain camp followers of four other nations for ever? She saw the pained expression on my face and said "Cheer up, monsieur, you too will become a nation, one day, if you have the will." Last

came the most ridiculous part of the performance. There was a column entitled "State of family—married, bachelor, widow or divorced." I gave the reply as "married." The girl laughed outrageously and said, "You married! You are only a boy! Have you got a photo of your wife? How old is she?" "Twelve" I replied to the infinite merriment of my questioner and her neighbours. "Twelve! Don't talk nonsense" said the girl. "How can a girl of twelve live with you?" "Our marriage is spiritual, and not physical" said I. "Oh, you mean you have got a wife in Heaven like the Father in Heaven?" said she laughing, "No" said I. "We Indians marry girls before puberty, but live with them only after they become sixteen or seventeen." "Then what will happen if you run away with a French girl?" she asked. "I am not likely to run away with any girl, least of all with a French girl" said I. "You are rude" she declared. I kept quiet. "Well, I see now that what you mean by your marriage is only a betrothal. So, you are a bachelor, after all." And, forthwith, she wrote "celibataire" (bachelor). I protested that I was married and, so, the correct statement should be entered in the identity card as I was liable for inaccurate statements found therein. "If you gave them, not otherwise" said she. "I shall tell the Prefect" said I. "Do" said she, "Will he guillotine me?" She asked me for a reference in England and another in France. I was at a fix, but finally gave the names of Doctor Arnold and Madame Villard! "Any names will do. It is a mere formality," said the girl. "Now, monsieur, you may go. And, pray don't have any undeserved contempt for France which is any day better than your England." I thanked her and left. It was 2 P. M. then.

I went to a restaurant, took my lunch, and went to see the "L'Hotel Des Invalides", the repository of the last mortal remains of Napoleon. The entrance to this magnificent building

from the Esplanade gives one a striking view of the whole. The dome of the Invalides is specially imposing. The triumphal battery containing captured Algerian, Russian, Dutch, Prussian, Venetian, Austrian and Wurtemberg cannon is quite worthy of even a military nation like the French. The Court of Honour, with its fine statue of Napoleon by Seurre, is splendid. Then there is the Soldiers' Church exhibiting 219 flags captured from the enemy. The chair of the Church of St. Louis is also worth a visit. The principal thing, however, in the Hotel Des Invalides is the tomb of Napoleon. The doors leading to the 'Chapelle Napoleon' are of bronze got by melting cannon captured at Austerlitz. Above the doors are written the ever-famous words of Napoleon in his will, "I desire that my remains should repose on the banks of the Seine in the midst of the French people whom I loved so much." The tomb of Napoleon has no inscription; governor Hudson insisted, in his pettiness, that only the word 'Bonaparte' should be engraved on the tombstones, and, to this horrid mutilation of the Emperor's many titles, his friends, Generals Bertrand and Montholon, did not agree, and preferred to leave the three slabs of marble uninscribed. To the right of the tomb-stone is a cast of Napoleon's head by Antommarchi. To the left is a crown gifted by the city of Cherbourg in 1841 when the Emperor's remains were brought in triumphal procession from St. Helena to that port. Round the sarcophagus of Napoleon are twelve statues by Pradier representing the campaigns of the Emperor. Fifty-four flags captured at Austerlitz are grouped round the sarcophagus. With unerring instinct, the French nation has pitched upon Austerlitz as Napoleon's most brilliant victory. Besides Napoleon, the remains of Marshals Turenne, Duroc and Bertrand, Engineer Vauban and Napoleon's brothers, Jerome and Joseph, rest under the dome which is 107 metres high and was constructed in 1706. There is also quite an interesting museum called the

"Museum of the Army" in the Invalides exhibiting the arms and armours used in war at different periods.

In the night I went with some Indian friends to the Opera and witnessed a splendid performance of Faust. The Opera House is a fine structure and the shows therein are run by the French Republic which makes a decent profit. The actors and actresses played their parts excellently, and we had a very enjoyable time. The parts of Mephistopheles, Faust and Margaret were played to perfection. All of us Indians deplored that we had not such an Opera House in India.

The remaining few days I spent in seeing the museums of the Trocadero, the Trianon, the Musee de Cluny, the Luxembourg, the Palais Royal, the Tuileries, the Musee Carnavalet, the grand palais and the petit palais and the National Archives. All these abound in Napoleonic relics and, to a lesser extent, the relics of the days of Louis XIV. The palace of Josephine struck me as particularly interesting.

I visited the Sorbonne, the headquarters of the University of Paris, and was introduced to some professors by a kind French friend. The quarter of Paris inhabited by students is called the Latin quarter. There were about 400 Chinese students when I went to Paris but only about 15 Indian students many of whom were from Pondicherry and Chandranagore. French degrees are not popular with British Indian students partly because of the language difficulty but mainly because French degrees are not passports to fat jobs as English ones. The Sorbonne is an impressive building. Its historical associations made me wander to every room, much to the inconvenience of my friends who were forced to walk much more than they wanted.

My visit to Musee Guimet was also very pleasant. I saw there a splendid collection of oriental paintings, pictures, photos, curios, etc., much superior to anything I had seen in

England. The people there also seemed to know much about Hindu civilization and its wide ramifications in the East and spoke admiringly of the great Hindus of old. This is the difference between England, on the one hand, and France and Germany on the other. In England, Indians are almost always treated politely, but they always feel that they are regarded as having no culture and civilization of their own. In France and Germany, many cultured people know something about the great civilization of India.

The Musee Grevin is the Paris counterpart of Madame Tassaud's in London, and it is a delight to visit it. Some stirring war scenes are depicted, like the king of the Belgians inspecting a trench during the siege of Antwerp, M. Clemenceau and the marshals Foch and Petain meeting at the front, and the rapturous welcome of the French troops in Alsace-Lorraine after the reconquest. A most ridiculous item was the ex-Kaiser sitting in a cage like a convict. This was called 'Expiation.' The figures of the great French Revolution were given due prominence. Louis XVI, his son, the ill-fated Dauphin, and his sister, as prisoners in the Temple, formed one impressive tableaux. Louis XVI in the tower, Marie Antoinette in the conciergerie and Louis XVII as a prisoner in the Temple were subjects of separate tableaux. There is no doubt that the heart of France has been moved by the fate of the unlucky Louis XVII. Indeed, his figure as prisoner, sleeping in a dungeon, with rats all round him eating the scanty food placed for him on a miserable plate, is very pathetic and such as to move the worst enemy of Royalty to compassion. Danton, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Bailly, Lafayette, Mirabeau, Marat, Charlotte Corday Hebert, Fouquier Tinville, Jures, Legarde, and Madame Roland are all shown, true to life; and a sitting of the revolutionary tribunal is also vividly depicted. The persecution of the early Christians, their subterranean

life in the Catacombs, an evening at Malmaison, the home of Napoleon's wife Josephine, Napoleon on his death-bed at St. Helena, and Javanese maidens dancing before King Sisowath of Cambodia are other notable tableaux. Another remarkable thing in this museum is the palace of mirages where, for the payment of a franc (then three annas), one could go into a room and see it transformed in five minutes successively into a temple of Brahma, an enchanted forest, and a feast at the Alhambra. This marvellous illusion is created by a complicated and eminently dexterous arrangement of revolving mirrors which have cost the museum more than five thousand pounds.

Before leaving Paris, I paid a visit to the Pantheon where sleep in peace Voltaire and Rousseau, among others. The greatest rationalist and the greatest apostle of liberty are both entombed there. Rousseau who wrote the burning sentence. "Man was born free, and is everywhere in chains" specially appealed to me though a reading of his "Social Contract" had convinced me that he had advocated liberty and democracy only for white men living in countries in the temperate zone. Scholars have proved that the famous sentence quoted above is sheer nonsense and that man is born not free but as a helpless being entirely dependent on others. But it is the kind of nonsense which goes straight to the heart unlike the dull doctrines of these scholars devoid of emotion and enthusiasm. The motto at the entrance to the Pantheon is befitting that great mausoleum and its august sleepers. It is "Vivre libre ou mourir" (Live free or die!). After rendering obeisance at the tombs of Voltaire and Rousseau, both apostles of liberty in their own way, I returned to my boarding house in a highly contemplative mood.

The next day I had a bath in the Seine. Myself and a Danish friend went together. A middle-aged woman was in charge of the bath. We hired two bathing suits, which, unlike

in England, consisted of mere *langouti*-like garments, for a franc apiece, put them on, kept our clothes in the custody of the woman and plunged into the river. It was cold, but vigorous swimming warmed me up. After fifteen minutes' swimming I returned to Rue Kepler with the Dane. On the way, we met a French scholar, a friend of the Dane, who asked me many things about India and the ancient Hindu civilization. Finally, he asked me, "Do you know why you Indians are treated differently from the Negroes?" I thought this a somewhat insulting question as even the very thought of treating Indians like Negroes was revolting. Still, knowing that this gentleman had no colour prejudice, I asked him why. "Because" said he, "Indians have still something they can call their own, their dress, their alphabets, their languages, their religions, their music, their foods, whereas the poor Negroes are merely third-rate imitators of the West all along the line. If and when Indians lose all the distinctive traits of their nation, and become slavish imitators of the West, which God forbid, they too will be treated just as Negroes are treated now."

In a few days, I left Paris for an extensive tour in the battlefields in the north-east of France, I saw the Marne and the Somme and the historic towns of Valenciennes, Mons and Rheims. When surveying the battlefield of the Marne, a Frenchman told me with warmth, "If this field had been lost, Paris, beautiful Paris, the creation of centuries, would have been sacked by the Hun beyond all recognition." At Valenciennes, where the French army was cut by the onrushing Germans, an old Frenchwoman who was selling small loaves, told me, "Monsieur, my heart broke at this disaster. A son of mine died here, and the French army was very near a rout." Still, the old lady had heart enough to sell small loaves! At Mons the British were forced to make their ever-famous retreat. A

most remarkable thing in this retreat was the nervous breakdown of several soldiers who took part in it and performed the march all right but dropped down dead, like moths, at the end of the wearisome and continuous march. The famous cathedral at Rheims was partially damaged by the war, but more through the inevitable destruction of war than through any deliberate vandalism on the part of the Germans.

The north-east of France and the south-west of Belgium were literally ploughed up with trenches and the holes made by cannon and tanks. Many abandoned and useless cannon and tanks were still lying on the ground, and there were also a lot of supposed live shells about when I went. There were posters warning visitors not to touch the shells lying about. No one who has not seen the havoc wrought by the war in the fertile regions of north-east France and south-west Belgium can understand the post-war hatred of Germans in those parts. Fields which were noted for the yield of record crops were torn up and deprived of their soil so much so that they could regain their normal fertility only in ten or twelve years. The clearance of the debris of the war materials alone required a lot of money. All the trees were destroyed, and left with naked stumps riddled with nails and sharpnells. Most of the buildings had been destroyed. As one Frenchman told me, "And we had not even the consolation of invading and sacking any portion of Germany, like this, owing to their cunning conclusion of the armistice before we had time to march on Berlin."

The trenches were most interesting. There were still complete trenches visible when I went to the battlefields. The ordinary trench is a damp dingy place very properly named a "dug-out." How the soldiers managed to live in these dug-outs for days together was a marvel to me. Sand bags were heaped on the side of the trenches for the soldiers

to take cover when shot at. There were some comparatively comfortable trenches constructed by the Germans for their officers. Some of the officers were said to have brought their wives and lived with them in these. On the whole, I found the German trenches to be better constructed, many being with concrete, and more comfortable than the Allied ones, perhaps because the Germans had more time to construct them in. The last great war, so far as the western front was concerned, was largely one of trench warfare. Forts played a great part, no doubt, as is evidenced by the famous sieges of Liege, Antwerp and Verdun, but success in trench warfare was the deciding factor. When I expressed my disappointment with the historic fortress of Lille, so celebrated in Louis XIV's days, after seeing it, since it was far below my expectations in strength, a Frenchman retorted, "Forts were strong in Louis XIV's time. Now trenches are more important than forts."

The famous Hindenburg lines impressed me very much. They were chosen by a first rate general in the full maturity of his powers. I saw Mount Kemmel, Hindenburg's watch-tower and important sectors of the lines. A number of other visitors were also surveying the Hindenburg lines with admiration and awe. Even in their shattered state they were terribly impressive. The countless abandoned cannon and tanks round about and the innumerable graves of friend and foe thickly clustered in the vicinity added to the impressiveness. One Swede told us that the Hindenburg lines were constructed even when the Germans were marching on Paris so as to form impregnable protective lines to fall back upon in case of retreat. Truly a wonderful foresight this! It has been aptly said that the first care of every wise general in an advance is to provide for his retreat. One rather exacting American, who was perhaps not willing to see anything great outside America, said, "The Hindenburg lines are, after all, not so redoubtable

as they made it out when the war was on." "Ha!" said a French captain, "You see them after they have been taken and destroyed. It is just like seeing the dead and decomposed body of a celebrated athlete and exclaiming 'After all, he was not so strong'." A roar of laughter greeted this just retort.

Soon the question 'Who won the war?' cropped up. "We Americans, of course" said the American not a bit discouraged by his previous discomfiture. "Without our men and money, the war would never have been won by the Allies." "We Frenchmen," said the French captain, "bore the brunt of the first fierce onset and turned the tide. Then, as usual, the Americans and others joined in." "The contemptible little army won the war" remarked an English gentleman with great impartiality, enforcing it with the remark "and that will be the verdict of history". "Without us Indians, I can't see how the Allies could have won the war" said I. "Was India one of the Allies?" asked the Englishman aforesaid with amused contempt. "I hope the future verdict of history will not be passed by persons so ignorant of facts like yourself" said I. "Certainly, the Italians won the war" said an Italian who by his looks, appeared to be a hotel-keeper. "Why all this unnecessary discussion?" said an Irishman from Southern Ireland. "All of us helped to win the war and won it," and all agreed.

At Ypres, where 150,000 Allies and an equal number of Germans had been killed, and every building wrecked, in the famous siege of that town, I was struck with the skill of both the contending armies, and exclaimed, "How creditable to the defenders that, though every building was shattered, they still were able to hold the town, and how creditable to the attackers that, though they never captured the town, they were able to smash every building within it! How wonderful is modern warfare!" "Sir," said an old Belgian, "but our city

was smashed between the two, and countless young men killed. I see nothing wonderful in this. If there is anything wonderful here, it is the way in which whole villages and towns are being rebuilt, and the terrible scars of war sought to be effaced by a kind of vast plastic surgery." I agreed, It was indeed delightful to see whole villages in north-eastern France being rebuilt. Even Ypres was being rebuilt, when I visited it. The famous mediaeval city was again slowly rising from its grave. Modern science made both the instant destruction and rapid reconstruction possible.

After seeing all these battlefields, I returned to England *via* Calais. I went round the little town of Calais and sat on a bench in the park, conversing with some citizens. Calais reminded me of Pondicherry, a little spot in a big country occupied for a long time by an alien nation and bound, by the very forces of history, to revert to the big country in course of time. The people of Picardy are very different from the Normans or the Parisians or the Alsatians or the Gascons, though all are French, and aggressively so. After some hours' talk and roaming about in the park I went to the seashore. It was a very clear day, and the chalk cliffs of Dover could be seen, with an effort, from a particular spot. I boarded the steamer at about 2 p.m., and soon, it began to sail. I had kept all my remaining money, namely, ten one-pound notes and a few one-franc pieces, in my purse which was in my inside coat pocket. I had bought the steamer ticket at about 10 a.m. which was the last occasion when I took out the purse. Seeing some oranges on sale on board the steamer, I wanted to take out my purse to buy some, and, to my horror, found, that it was not in my pocket. I searched for it in my suit case and elsewhere, but to no avail. Fortunately, the steamer ticket was in my waistcoat pocket. After it had been checked, I had kept it there for convenience. But the purse was gone.

Either it had fallen down in the park at Calais, or had been obligingly picked by some Picardy gentleman to whom I had been talking. The immediate problem was most pressing. Without any money, how was I to get to London from Dover? Was I to sell some of my things at Dover? There was not a single Oriental on board the ship to borrow from, and I hated to approach any white man, let alone the improbability of his complying with my request. So, I was most depressed and went and sat on my suit-case in a spirit of profound dejection. Many Englishmen who went past walking on the deck, enjoying the beautiful weather, glared at me with monocles and naked eyes, but none spoke a word. A Russian, with that instinct peculiar to Orientals and semi-Orientals, came to me and said in English "Fine weather." "Yes" I responded feebly. "Feeling sea-sick?" he queried. "No" said I. "Then? tell me everything" he said in such a sympathetic voice that I told him the whole trouble. "Pooh! is that all? Here, take a loan of five pounds and welcome" said he, taking a five-pound note. I said that I wanted a loan of only one pound, and promised to return it as soon as I reached London. "Oh, don't worry about it" said he. "I must return it" said I, and took down his address in London. Then, all care having gone, he and I walked briskly round the deck chatting and laughing, to the great astonishment of the very Englishmen who had glared at me with monocles and naked eyes. "Inexplicable Orientals" must have been their comment.

I learnt from my Russian friend that he was an emigre and a bitter Anti-Bolshevik, and that he had run away from Russia because of his fear of being done to death there. "They have robbed me of all my property" said he. "Still you seem to have a good bit left" said I laughing. "Well, what is this compared to what was mine?" he asked, and I could very well believe him. When taking of Lenin and

Trotsky, he used to wax violent. "The first is a fanatic who wants to set fire to the whole world merely to test his theory. The second is content that there be a fire so that he may pull some logs out of it" he said. "Tell me," I pressed him, "do you believe that the Czar's regime was good?" "On the whole, no, but for us, yes" said he. "Do the Bolsheviki communalize women, as alleged?" I asked. "No," said he, "that is a lie. Russian women are too good for that kind of thing." I asked him what he thought of Kerensky. "A good man, but weak, terribly weak; will come to no good" was his reply. About the Versailles treaty he was bitter. "Poland and Bessarabia were unjustly taken from us, and Constantinople unjustly withheld from us, one of the most faithful allies" he declared. "It is the Bolsheviki who have lost" said I. "No, it is Russia" he declared passionately. "Who will restore these three to a sane Russia when the Bolsheviki have become but a faded, though horrid, memory?" he demanded passionately. "No, no, whoever rules Russia and demands the restoration of these three has my active sympathy. They may rob me as they like, if they protect my country from robbery." "Has not Poland a right to nationality?" I asked. "Has not India a right to nationality? Has not Ireland? Has not Egypt? Has not Korea? Has not Tripoli? Has not Algeria? Has not the Congo? Have not the Philippines? And yet, did the Treaty of Versailles provide for the separation of any of these?" he asked with bitterness. "How do you say that Constantinople ought to be restored to you? It was never yours" said I. "It was given to us by a secret treaty," said he, "and, so, I am right in saying that it ought to be restored to us." "When will you return to Russia?" I asked. "When the damned Bolsheviki are gone, and a Bourgeois republic, on the model of France, is established" he replied.

Soon, the ship reached Dover and we boarded a train. We parted at Victoria, shaking hands with one another and hoping to meet again. I went straight to Shakespeare Hut, the Y.M.C.A. Indian hostel, and borrowed a pound from a friend and sent a postal order to the Russian friend. He called at the hostel specially to thank me. We had a lunch and a long talk, and then we parted, never to meet again.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE I.C.S. EXAMINATION AND AFTER

ON my return to London from France, I began to prepare seriously for the I.C.S. open competition examination which was to come off in August 1921. I had less than a year before me and had, therefore to look sharp. Though sitting for the I.C.S. examination was one of the objects for which I had gone to England, no serious steps had been taken by me till August 1920 to prepare for it. I had been too much immersed in sight-seeing and Oxford life to have much time to do anything else. Of course, my study for the Modern History School at Oxford was in a way useful for the I.C.S. examination also since it covered part of the history subjects I intended to take for the I.C.S.

The first thing I did after reaching Oxford and settling down was to choose once and for all the subjects I wanted to take for the I.C.S. I was to be among the first batch to appear for the examination under the new regulations which had thoroughly modernized the old system. Consequently, nobody had any definite idea as to the exact nature of the examination. But like every uncertainty, this too gave as much confidence as it took away. It is notorious that certainty takes away as much confidence as it gives. But for the uncertainty of war, few countries will wage wars with eagerness; and few soldiers will go to fight if death was not uncertain. If safe return or death were certain for all who take part in them, there will not be that much attraction for wars as in the present state of uncertainty. This is then the true psychology of war, its uncertainty, which fascinates millions by the appeal

to their gambling spirit. Man, primitive or civilized, has always had a fatal fascination for gambling, the supreme game of chance. Montecarlo, with its roulets, is only the concretization of the nebulous gambling spirit inherent in man.

The compulsory subjects in the new scheme were an Essay, English, Present Day, Every-day Science, Auxiliary language and *viva voce*. The Essay and English required no special reading or training. Nor could speedy reading or training improve the chances in the *viva voce* which, though it carried 300 out of the 800 marks allotted for the compulsory subjects, was the most delightfully uncertain of the subjects and the thing allowing of only prolonged training and preparation. There was a general impression abroad that personal appearance and correct accent would go a long way towards impressing the examiners in *viva voce*, and many aspirants deliberately cultivated an affected accent and even laugh, and took to the most fashionable dress besides going in for daily shaves. Of course, all this helped them somewhat when the ordeal did come, but not to the extent they anticipated. Some turned out to be veritable jackdaws in peacock's feathers, and perhaps, the sudden disillusionment of the examiners was not to their advantage. But, dress, appearance, and accent did help able people.

Present Day was a paper on Modern political, social and economic questions and required a little acquaintance with the leading newspapers and journals. Every-day Science was to us, History students of the Madras University with its too early specialization, something of a nightmare. How were we suddenly to master Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Physiology, Geology, Astronomy and kindred sciences, we whose education had proceeded on the assumption that there would never be any necessity for us to be acquainted with them? But we had to master them. To neglect a subject carrying 100 marks

meant taking away many chances of our getting in. I resolved to study Physics, Botany, Physiology, Geology and Astronomy and bought popular books dealing with them. This study alone absorbed as much time as the study of history. For history was a familiar field where I was sure of my ground, whereas the sciences, owing to the defective education of the Madras University, were a huge morass where I had a job to obtain a foot-hold.

A mere smattering would be of no use for the I.C.S. for two reasons. The first was that there was what is called deduction for superficial knowledge. From the total number of marks obtained by a candidate one-fifth of the maximum will be deducted and the remainder multiplied by  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Thus, if a man gets 21 out of 100, his final marks will be  $(21-20) \times \frac{3}{4}$  or  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , that is to say, 1. Those who get 100 will get as final marks 100,  $(100-20) \times \frac{3}{4}$  being still 100. Thus the original differences in marks will increase by moderation. There is no custom of giving minus marks. So, if a man gets 8 at first he will get in moderation not  $-\frac{12}{4} = -3$  or  $-15$  but merely 0. This system of deduction is based on a sound principle. Almost any educated man knows something about common questions, but nothing deep. Thus, if asked about the sun, any man will say that it rises in the morning in the east, and sets in the evening in the west, that it gives us light and heat, and that it is essential for cultivation. These are true, and, so, it will be unjust to give this man zero. He must get, say 5, marks out of one hundred. But to give credit to such superficial knowledge in an examination of the standard of the I.C.S. will be ridiculous. So, the deduction for superficial knowledge comes in, and reduces this 5, or, indeed, any mark below 21, to 0. As such superficial knowledge is sure to be mixed up with deeper knowledge up till the standard of the maximum, the principle is applied throughout. The second reason was that

success in the I.C.S. examination went by relative merit; the deeper one's knowledge and the greater his marks the greater his chances of success. By a careful choice of books and by attentive reading I finally managed to secure an adequate knowledge of the sciences above named.

The auxiliary language had to be a modern European language. Indians were, however, allowed to offer, instead, Physical or Social Anthropology. But either of these could be given also as *extra numerum*. Physical Anthropology required a certificate of training in a University and was moreover, with its practical tests, not a field where a novice could hope to score high marks. Social Anthropology had, therefore, to be reserved for the *extra numerum* subject. In an examination where passes depend on the relative number of marks obtained, it is obvious that no candidate will willingly avoid taking an *extra numerum* subject though it may not be strictly obligatory. Hence I reserved Social Anthropology as *extra numerum* subject, and took French as auxiliary language.

As regards the optionals, I took the whole of British History, European History from 1494 to 1914, and English Private Law. The last comprised the laws of real and personal property, contracts and torts. All the three optionals together carried 1,000 marks, and the *extra numerum* subject 100 marks. Thus the maximum number of marks for the I.C.S. examination was 1,900.

My principle was to devote six hours, neither more nor less, every day to my studies. My lodgings, in Victoria Road, in the midst of beautiful country, close to the lovely Cherwell, were ideal for undisturbed study. It was for this reason, as also because of the fresh home-grown vegetables procurable there, that I had shifted my lodgings thither from Chalfont Road before going to France.

What a mental strain it had been to me to give the week's

notice to my landlady in Chalfont Road! My Indian sentiment made me strongly averse to telling persons under whose roof I had lived for six months that I wanted to go away. A feeling that I would thereby be breaking the rules of hospitality was working unconsciously within me. Though I was paying £3-10-0 per week, still I felt as if I was under an obligation of hospitality. My Muslim friend, Mr. R., learnt about my difficulty, and, in characteristic Muslim fashion, declared, "This mawkish sentiment is, at bottom, a weakness. You must fight it out. I have changed four landladies in the course of four months. I don't see why you should be so silly about this." He promised to come the next day and be present at the momentous announcement. That night I was restless. But my landlady, by her tactlessness, made my task easy. It was the end of term. She said that from the next term onwards I should pay £3-15-0 per week, as several persons were offering her that amount. This commercialism on her part uprooted all my sentimental objections, and I said at once, "Please take a week's notice. I am going to leave." This took her by surprise, and she attributed it entirely to her increased demand. "Oh, well," said she, "I didn't mean that you should leave. I am content to receive £3-10-0 from you, as heretofore, if you are unwilling to pay more." "No, no, that is my final notice," I declared. "All right, then, I take it," said she, "but I can't understand your sudden resolution" and she left. I rushed to Mr. R. and told him, "I have crossed the Rubicon." He shook hands with me vigorously and said, "Well-done, old boy, that is the way to do it."

For the next one week I felt as if I was in an enemy country. To remain in rooms after you have given notice is a peculiar situation understandable only by those who have experienced it. Of course, men like Mr. R. may even delight in such situations, but to the normal man they are simply

dreadful. I made it unnecessarily gloomier. At meal times I was taciturn and glum. The girls who were bringing the meals noticed this. The oldest among them told me, "Look here, Mr. Ayyar, why do you look as if you are offended? What have we to do with your remaining or leaving? That is between mother and you. Why put on such a gloomy face?" I relaxed a little, realizing the justice of her remark. But I did not completely become myself again. The next day I returned from the Examination schools after having seen that I had passed in the History Previous with distinction. As soon as I entered Chalfont Road I became gloomy again. My landlady's third daughter came to my room and asked me, "What about your results, Mr. Ayyar? Passed, I hope?" "Yes," I said, "with distinction." "Oh, I am so glad," said she and left, leaving me wondering as to why she should be so happy at the success of one who was leaving her house for another. We Indians set more store by family friendships and quarrels. In India the whole family would have become cold and hostile as soon as I had given notice, and I, with my joint family training, expected it. But, fortunately, the English have advanced beyond that stage, and perhaps were never in that stage. So my expectations were, happily, not fulfilled. But I never felt completely at ease till I had shifted bag and baggage to Victoria Road.

The one year which elapsed between my return from France and the I.C.S. examination passed speedily. Oxford life was very pleasant. I used very often to go and read in the Bodleian. During the Shakespeare festival I went with a few friends to Stratford-on-Avon in a char-a-banc in order to see the house where Shakespeare was born. Shakespeare has always been a favourite with English-educated Indians and has a warm corner in their affections along with Wordsworth and Shelley. That is perhaps because Shakespeare is universal.

in his appeal unlike Milton whom I consider to be the most typical English poet. Milton has never been popular among Indian students and has been read in part only because selections from his works are prescribed by the Universities as text-books and thus forced down the throats of unwilling readers. Simply to satisfy the examiners, and get through the many-teethed examination machines unhurt, students repeat the pious phrase that Milton is the second greatest English poet. Left to themselves they would prefer to give Wordsworth or Shelley that place. Even Indian examiners are privately of that opinion, but thinking that the Englishmen at the head want Milton to be given the second place, they conceal their real opinions and even penalise students who depart from the supposed authorized views. To such a length has slavish mentality advanced in India. If to-morrow India were to get self-government and rule her own destinies, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Coleridge will still continue to be read with admiration by Indian students, but all copies of Milton's works will be either thrown away or relegated to the topmost shelves. The affection for Shakespeare is genuine. In fact, one of our college professors, himself an Englishman of much experience, used to say that Indian students evince more enthusiasm for Shakespeare and enter into his spirit better than English students of the same age.

Our hearts leapt within us as we saw picturesque Stratford on the banks of the slow-gliding Avon. There was a crowd as it was Shakespeare festival. I was filled with the deepest emotion when I saw the room where Shakespeare was born. "Here Shakespeare was born" I said to myself. "It is a thousand pities that no Asoka raised an everlasting pillar on this spot with the inscription 'Here the blessed one was born.'" All over the room, and indeed the house, people have scribbled their names in every possible place either with the object of

leaving on record their pilgrimage thither or, what is more probable, moved with a desire to perpetuate their names by attaching them to the house where the great immortal was born, in the spirit of the proverb "Hitch thy waggon to a star." There are some famous poets, novelists and prose-writers among these who did this childish scribbling. Now it is strictly forbidden to scribble or to carry away any piece of the house as a memento of the visit. Indeed, but for the latter prohibition, the entire house would have disappeared long ago by mere removal of small bits; such is the crowd visiting the place every day from all corners of the world. Even as it was, an American gentleman was prowling about with a view to take a bit off when he got half a chance, but a caretaker, suspecting his intention, politely jostled him out on the pretext that more people were coming in, and, so, all those who had seen should please walk out. The yankee came out and told me in a whisper "Gee, that guy isn't so simple as he looks," thus clearly revealing his nefarious designs. We went to Anne Hathaway's Cottage. Poor Anne Hathaway, the neglected wife of the immortal poet, had our full sympathy. But that virtuous woman's house is preserved and visited only because of her faithless husband. Such is the irony of history.

After this we proceeded to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, which was recently burnt down, and witnessed a performance of "As you like it!" The acting was under the direct supervision of the great Shakespearian critic, Sir Sidney Lee, and was, needless to say, superb. We returned to Oxford after a late lunch.

I felt the cold of the winter of 1920 a little more than I did that of 1919. Many other Indians also had the same experience. "What, according to you, is the reason for this strange phenomenon?" asked a friend of mine. I said half-humorously, "The Indian heat stored up in our system was

exhausted last winter. Now we have to go without that adventitious aid." My favourite device to combat the cold was an everlasting fire at home and brisk walks in the afternoon. One day, when ice was lying here and there and there was a thick snowfall, I took my accustomed walk and, as usual, opened the door on my return and stepped into the corridor. No sooner had I done so than my right foot jerked and I fell prostrate, to the great merriment of all. Some ice had formed on my heels, and when the right heel came in contact with the smooth, slippery floor it had jerked causing me to fall. Thereafter I took care to scrape the ice off my heels before venturing indoors.

Another funny thing in England is that since all the trees become naked in winter, being deciduous, the only green thing being some ever-green creepers and shrubs, few English people who have not gone abroad or studied in a University will believe an Indian when he tells them that most of the trees in India are ever-green. "Go on," said an old English lady to me one day. "We are not so unlearned as to believe such fibs. What next? Do the people of India also live for ever?" And most of the listeners were on her side. These pious people take England as the standard to go by. Of course, they are ready enough to believe that there are great monsters in India, that cobras abound everywhere, that men are viler than the cobras, that human sacrifices are still not unknown, that girl babies are murdered as soon as they are born, that the heat is terrific and the climate execrable, and that leprosy, plague, cholera, and venereal disease divide between them the whole population of India except the English garrison therein. Hence the popularity of morbid books relating to our country like the recent "Mother India". But these people of England who hold such ridiculous beliefs do so only because of ignorance, and not from wicked design as Indians are only too ready to believe.

The comic side of these ridiculous beliefs is seen in the widely held maxim "India is a land where flowers have no smell, fruits no taste, and women no smiles." This of the land which is the home of the jasmine and the champak, the mango the plantain, the jack and the lime, and women with the most spiritual smiles in the world! At least the last item can be forgiven, as respectable Indian ladies never smile at strangers, and in Northern India even cover their faces, and as Englishmen never are allowed, in general, access to high class Indian homes and so cannot pierce through the veil of unreality. But the belief about the flowers and fruits is so absurd, especially after countless generations of Englishmen have come and gorged themselves on them. I have only one explanation for this. In the early days of the East India company, the servants of the Company were most anxious that other Englishmen should not come to India and share the pagodas with them. But the home Englishmen, envious of the supposed untold wealth of Ind, were clamouring, in Parliament and outside, for the abolition of the company's monopoly. Obviously, it was to the Company's interest to depict India in the most unattractive colours possible so that, by this campaign of lies, the ardour of many monopoly-breakers might be cooled. Hence the stories of India's smell-less flowers and tasteless fruits, and the blood-curdling accounts about the cobras, human sacrifices, diseases, etc. When in 1813 the Company's trade monopoly was abolished, the propoganda was intensified, as the India Government certainly did not want an invasion of Britons of all types and as, the legal obstacle having gone, the only remedy was to scare them away by fearsome stories. Much the same kind of stories are told to-day by a certain independent Asiatic state apprehensive of foreigners and desirous of keeping them away. In this campaign of frightening, the East India Company found a powerful auxiliary in the Christian missionary

who, anxious to collect funds in Britain for the conversion of the Heathen in India, was only too willing to countersign and underline the stories of venereal disease, child murder and human sacrifices. After the Crown took over India the real facts began to filter through, but the lies of centuries had struck deep roots which could not be cut by the paper knives of these feeble truths. As for Indians, with the suicidal genius so characteristic of decadent Hinduism, they did not care to counter these lies, with the consequence that they still hold the field.

One day, an Englishman obsessed with these lies told me, "How many of England's sons come to a premature grave by serving in your pestilential climate!" I said, "I say, have a look at our Civil Lists, and see how heavy the list of pensioned English officers is. Surely, the climate which enables them, despite their meat and drink habits, to work for 35 years, and then live in England in retirement for 20 to 30 years cannot be so pestilential as you imagine." Some days later after referring to the Civil List, he recognized that I was right. "Still, India is the land of tears for them, being the land of their exile" he added. "So too is England the land of tears for me, being the land of my exile" I replied. "In both cases, the exile is voluntary and chosen after mature deliberation. So no pity need be wasted on either." "But I don't see you in tears" he said. "Nor are Englishmen in India in tears if you will only go and see them there" said I laughing.

The fact is that the climate of India is, on the whole, better than that of England. We need only few clothes and simple meals, and get free baths in our rivers and tanks. So, India's poor are not troubled with the anxieties of coal for the fire and money for the thick clothes and even baths. Again, in the heat of summer, we can take refuge, if need be, in the cool heights of our hills. In England, there is

no such nature's safety-valve from cold. For, the question of an Indian school-boy to me whether there are not deep hollows in England where people can take refuge from the cold of winter, just as we have hills to resort to in summer, must be answered in the negative. Whatever else India is ashamed of she has no need to be ashamed of Nature's gifts. This beautiful country with its sublime mountains and rivers, glaciers and lakes, hills and dales, trees, flowers and fruits and its excellent climate need not fear comparison with any other country, for Mother India is certainly the most dowered daughter of Grandmother Nature.

The months sped on rapidly. In June 1921 I received intimation that my *viva voce* was to be on July 5th. The written examination was to be in August. Some persons thought that the intention in thus making the *viva voce* precede the written examination was to weed out those found unfit at the *viva*. But that was not the idea. Perhaps the intention was merely to get the students at their best before the strain and the worries of the written examination had tired them out and brought about mental fag.

The day after I got the above communication I returned to my rooms, after playing tennis, and felt feverish. After half an hour, the fever increased, and I went to bed. This was my first sickness in England. That night I took only a cup of hot lemonade. I had hoped that sleep would take away the fever. The next morning, however, the fever had increased, and there was pain in the throat. A competent doctor was called. He examined my throat and was of opinion that it was diphtheria, a disease for which municipal treatment with segregation for forty days was compulsory at Oxford. That would mean, of course, that I could not sit for the I.C.S. examination that year, a terrible blow for one who had gone to England for no other purpose but this. No doubt, there

would remain the second chance in 1922, but, in any case, one chance would be lost, and one year's more stay in England necessitated with its waste of time, money and energy. It was a prospect which would have driven any man in my position to despair. To my own utter surprise now, I was not crushed by the prospect, but took the news stoically. Perhaps, for the only moment in my life till now, I resigned myself entirely into the hands of God and said to myself, "He knows all. Nothing that He wills can be ultimately injurious to me." My landlady and the doctor saw me plunged in thought. The landlady had told the doctor about the examination and the impossibility of sitting for it if this were diphtheria. So, he said sympathetically to me, "I am sorry for you; you may not be able to sit for the examination. Don't worry over-much about it, as it may affect your health." "I don't worry at all," I replied. "Who can resist the dictates of Him above? What is ordained must come about." The doctor went away, taking some stains from the throat in order to examine them in his laboratory and see whether it was really diphtheria or merely tonsillitis. He promised to call in the evening and let me know finally as to what it was, adding that if it were diphtheria he would instruct the municipal ambulance car to come round. Downstairs he told my landlady, as I learnt afterwards, "I am sorry for the young man. Still it is remarkable how his fatalism helps him. Even a superstition has its advantages." A non-Christian's belief in the immutability of God's decrees is fatalism whereas the same belief in a Christian will be implicit surrender to God! In the evening the worthy doctor came and declared that the thing was mere tonsillitis and could be cured in five or six days. I was full of joy at this news. In six days I was thoroughly cured of the sickness, which the doctor declared I had caught in the tennis courts. Then, as directed by the doctor, I left for Torquay for ten days, for a change to recoup my health.

The climate of Torquay did me good. In the refreshing breeze of Torquay I quickly recovered my lost health and spirits. I was also taking a vegetable tonic. Daily I used to bathe in the sea twice. There were separate bathing places for men and women and a third bathing place for mixed bathing. The first two were not at all frequented, and the third place alone was crowded. There were small sheds for dressing and undressing and leaving one's clothes. The rent was six pence per bath. About a hundred yards from the beach was a raft. The more enterprising bathers of both sexes used to swim to it and jump from it. I too did so. To my utter surprise I found that most English people jumped head foremost, whereas most Indians, including myself, jump feet foremost. The advantage in our way is that there is no risk of the head being dashed against rocks, and the time taken to rise to the surface is less, as the spring of the feet, on striking the floor, makes the rising-up much quicker. My English fellow-bathers were as much surprised at my mode of jumping as I was at theirs, but, learning my reasons, soon took to my method as being easier, more efficient and less risky. After some jumping we did some diving and submarine swimming in which I defeated them. All this made them think that I was an expert in these matters, and, soon, a man calling himself a swimming-race organizer asked me to become with him a co-organizer, a thing which I discreetly declined.

In Torquay I could do no reading. The holiday atmosphere of the place was not conducive to study. Besides, the doctor had asked me not to do any reading but to take complete rest. In view of the nearness of the examinations and the thoroughly incomplete nature of my preparations it seemed to me now and then while at Torquay that my position was not far different from that of Nero who played the lute while Rome was on fire. Still, as I believe in implicitly following doctors in matters of

health, just as I follow barbers in matters of hair-dressing, I obeyed the worthy doctor's injunctions to the letter.

At the end of the holidays I found that my ears had become blocked, and, so, as soon as I returned to Oxford, I repaired to the doctor. He told me that the trouble was caused by surf-bathing on which subject he gave me a long lecture to which I willingly listened as it might come in handy either during the *viva* or in the papers on Everyday Science or Present Day. A more tedious and altogether unpleasant business was to get the ears syringed for three or four days. Finally, some three days before the *viva*, my ears were normal again.

The fifth of July was the day fixed for my *viva*. On the fourth I left Oxford and went to London. I put up at Shakespeare Hut, the Y.M.C.A. Hostel in Keppel Street. When it was first started I had conscientious objections to reside there. I had never been an inmate of any missionary institution, and the Y.M.C.A., one of whose objects is proselytisation to Christianity, was regarded by me with suspicion especially as, at first, weekly lectures by an evangelist were part of the fixtures. But the poor man of religion fared ill with the crowds of heathens, and, heckled with all kinds of questions, resolved to give up the attempt for the moment and await a more favourable opportunity. This worthy man's abstinence gained some new converts to the Y.M.C.A. hostel. Cromwell Road offered no Indian dishes, and the hotels supplying them charged exorbitant rates. Shakespeare Hut was the only place in London where vegetarians could get Indian vegetarian dishes cheap. Rooms too were cheap. They were called cubicles from their geometrical shape. There were cubicles for one and cubicles for two. The single cubicles were so small that one wit said that a tall man would have to lie diagonally in order to stretch himself at full length. Single cubicles cost

a little more than a half share in a double cubicle, but were worth the price. The furniture in the cubicles was Spartan in its simplicity, and invitations to sit on one's trunks and suit cases, for lack of chairs, were by no means uncommon. This defect in furnishing was, to some extent, made up for by the decent furnishing of the drawing room and library where friends could be received without the aid of trunks and suit cases. The chief attractions of Shakespeare Hut were the meals and the baths. The luxurious shower baths of the hut still make me wish to be there, though I know that the hut has been dismantled, and that, where Indians alone were to be found then, no Indians will be seen now. The multiple attractions of Shakespeare Hut made me surrender, and I became in due course a regular inmate of that institution. The wardens and officers were all Christians, but it is due to them to say that they never discriminated against the heathens who flourished and grew fat under their beneficent rule. There was a gymnasium in Shakespeare Hut where all kinds of games, including jujutsu, were played.

Life in the hostel was very pleasant, so pleasant indeed that many Indians were content to pass their English existence there without caring to know the real England outside. Though the original founders of the hostel reserved a certain proportion of seats for English and Colonial students, there were, in practice, no such students. The reasons were two. All the available seats were required by Indians, and they succeeded in it. Again, few Englishmen or Colonials sought admission to this hostel with its Indian atmosphere and exotic meals. Hence the hostel was purely a little India beyond the seas. Many Indians manfully struggled to induce the inmates of the hostel to mix freely with English people outside. It is easy to preach, difficult to practise. These very apostles were seen by me daily coming to the hostel though, to save their faces,

they began the preaching at the end. One day, I asked a very prominent exponent of this view "Why don't you try to devote some evenings to England instead of devoting them all to little India?" He coloured and said "Young man, that is the very lesson I want to teach all of you." "Why not teach by example?" I put in. "Forsooth!" was the ingenious reply. "How are you to see me mixing with English people in the evenings when you never stir out of this place? Why, for aught I know, you people may even think that I am sleeping in my room in the evenings when I am not here." I laughed. He had saved his face and was disposed to be good-humoured. He made a great many enquiries about me and, on parting, adjured me not to confine myself to the hostel but to mix with Englishmen freely. He saw no absurdity in this. Such is the force of habit.

The fifth of July was a bright day. I woke up at 5-30 a.m. and took a beautiful shower bath. Just when I was about to come out, I heard a piercing cry from the next bath room and rushed to the door of that room. Four or five others had also come there. Presently, the door flung open and a new arrival rushed out yelling. "Damn this Christian hostel! Damn these shower baths! I am scalded!" To our infinite amusement, we saw that the poor man had only turned on the hot water tap, and not the cold water one also, with the result that he had got the boiling water ejected on him in full force! The steaming fluid was still pouring down, for the terrified bather had taken to a precipitate flight without taking care to turn the tap off. We soon explained to him that his baptism of fire was not due to the Christian atmosphere of the place but to his own ignorance of elementary principles. We demonstrated to him also that if both the hot and cold water taps were turned on and adjusted to one's taste no bath could be more ideal or enjoyable. Our lectures were wasted on him. He

sought refuge in the ordinary cistern baths and could never be persuaded to take to shower baths again. As he was an ardent Home-Ruler, we used to tell him afterwards, in joke, "Home Rule cannot be won by people who dread shower baths" to his great fury and our infinite merriment.

After taking a good breakfast, I proceeded to Burlington Gardens for the Viva Voce. Mine was fixed at 10-25 a.m. As my name 'Ayyar' began with the first letter of the alphabet, I was the second person to undergo the ordeal, the first being a Bombay gentleman called Mr. Amin. So I had to go in without any the least notion of what would be the nature of the test. I went in with a light heart as I had never fared badly in talking.

When I entered the room, the five examiners looked at me critically. So, dress and general appearance perhaps mattered something, after all. The Chairman asked me to sit down on a chair opposite the table, and facing the row of my questioners. Then one by one the examiners tackled me. The first asked me general questions. "Which is your province?" "Madras." "A Brhmin, I suppose?" "Yes." "What do you think about the caste system?" "It was a very useful institution in days of yore, helping specialization of work, caste brotherhood, mutual aid and public institutions and making for national dignity and racial purity. In later times, however, these benefits have almost come to vanishing point, and the original evils of the system caste rivalry, stagnation, denial of opportunity to the deserving, lack of unity, weakness in the face of the common enemy, deterioration in the standard of the very arts the castes were intended to foster, false pride, racial arrogance and the appalling outcaste system have increased so much so that a united Indian nation cannot be envisaged without at least the partial destruction of the caste system and its excrescence, the outcaste system." "How do you say that

the caste system ever made for national dignity?" "Because the proudest conquerors, Muslim or British, found that there were some citadels which they could not capture even from the abject conquered population, free entrance into high caste homes and intermarriage with high caste women, for instance. Their arrogant contempt for the conquered population was met by an equally arrogant contempt of the conquered for the conquerors in social matters. This, in the early days of conquest, undoubtedly helped to uphold national dignity." "What do you think of the outcaste system?" "It is a curse of the most unmitigated description and deep stain on the fair face of Hinduism." "What do you think of Mr. Gandhi? I want your frank opinion." "I do not agree with many of his political or economic principles, but I do feel that he is the noblest Indian alive and one of the noblest of men., "You think so?" "Yes." "What is the secret of his hold on Indians?" "It is simply this. He is the one man among India's 315 millions who has no axe of his own to grind, not even a golden axe. This the masses know and, therefore, worship him. Doubtless, his ascetic life, simple dress, unrestrained manners and boundless tolerance have also helped." "Which of his services to the country do you appreciate most?" "His burning appeals for the abolition of untouchability and for intercommunal unity." "Don't you think there is something inconsistent between his professions and practice as regards the railways and telegraphs? A man who condemns them still uses them more than perhaps any other Indian. How do you explain this?" "He simply says that they are neither necessary for, nor an indication of, spiritual greatness; he never condemns their use so far as I have been able to make out." "Don't you think his spinning wheel propoganda is bound to fail? "Yes, with the intelligentia. But agriculturists, who have four months of enforced unemployment every year,

may take to the spinning wheel with great profit. "Oh, that may be true."

Another examiner began to put his questions. "Do you think that India is more spiritual than England?" "It all depends on what you mean by 'spiritual.' If a greater number of spiritual giants in a country makes it more spiritual, certainly India is more spiritual than England since she has produced a Buddha, a Mahavira, a Chaitanya and a Tulsi Das, a record which England cannot equal. But if we take into consideration, as we certainly must, the treatment meted out to the lowest classes in the land, England is more spiritual, as she has no unseeables, unapproachables and untouchables, unlike India, and thus is nearer to God than India. If Mr. Lloyd George were to ask common labourers to move a hundred yards away on the score of pollution and enforce this by beating, as many a high caste Hindu does in Malabar to this day, he will be shot dead, and I am afraid no twelve men in England will find them guilty of murder. Lastly, if by spiritual is meant pre-occupation with gods, devils and other super-physical beings for obtaining material benefits in this and in the next world, India is more spiritual."

A third began. "You have taken up history, Do you think that there is a movement towards a world state?" "No, but there is a movement towards a federation of the State of the world which really matter." "What are the dangers which this federation has to encounter?" "The independent States kept out of it, the independent states which have chosen not to enter it, the dependent States not allowed within it, the petty independent States within it, the dependent States within it, the races which are not States and are perforce excluded from it, and the war spirit inherent in certain races."

Another began. "I see you have taken up law. Your

Hindu Penal Law was pretty barbarous, wasn't it?" "Yes, but nothing compared to Anglo-Saxon Law." "The Brahman was immune from hanging and must have had a good time." "Yes, so too woman. But the records do not show that either Brahmins or women took to murder as a trade as we should expect from this defect in the law. Even now in Travancore and other orthodox Hindu States, Brahmins and women continue to enjoy the immunity, I myself saw a Brahmin who had killed four persons, including two tender babes, escape the gallows and suffer mere imprisonment for life instead. As for women, however, rarely are they hanged even in England. So, the real difference here is that our law said what your convention brings about in a round-about way." "But how free your law-givers were with capital sentences!" "I don't think that they would have compared unfavourably with any of their contemporaries. Indeed, till Peel's reforms, a thief or pick-pocket stealing above a shilling had a more gruesome fate in England than his brother in India." "I suppose so" said the examiner laughingly. "Well, good morning," and I left.

The examiners were absolutely without any prejudice. They never penalized opinion, as my marks showed. But they were insistent that the opinions should be grounded on reasons. Two of my Mahratta friends were questioned as to who was the greater, Tilak or Gokhale, and the man who upheld Tilak got the higher marks. Of course, this was not because of his opinion and might perhaps have been due entirely to his other answers, but the example will serve to show that the examiners were above all prejudice. As Englishmen, it is certain that they must have regarded Tilak as more or less of an enemy compared with the genial Moderate, Gokhale, but still they didn't import their prejudice into the marking. Much of the prestige of the I.C.S. examination depends on the scrupulous impartiality and meticulous fairness of the examiners. One

Indian candidate, when asked what he thought about the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, replied that they were unsatisfactory, disappointing and illusory. Asked to point out the unsatisfactory, disappointing and illusory features, he confessed that he had not read the Act. "And you want to be an Indian Civil Servant—a Judge or a Magistrate—you who presume to deliver a judgment without knowing the facts!" was the crushing retort. A sprightly friend of mine actually sang a song to the examiners to illustrate his statement that his vernacular (Gujarathi) was very musical, and didn't fare any the worse for it.

The written examinations commenced on the 1st of August and dragged on for many days. About 150 had put in their names, some 70 Europeans and 80 Indians and Ceyloneses. But only 113 sat for all the papers they had offered. The rest, despairing of success, by the way in which they had fared in the earlier papers, dropped out of the show informally.

At last, even the examinations ended. The horrible monotony of the period was relieved a little by the lively atmosphere of Shakespeare Hut, which I had made my headquarters for the whole period. From the very outset I had not liked one thing about Shakespeare Hut. That was the notice board which announced that it was a hostel for students from India and Ceylon. That this ridiculous little island, which was about the size of Mysore, and largely Indian, should claim a separate existence, nay, should actually be paraded as an equal of India, struck me as ludicrous. When I gave vent to my feelings, a Ceyloneser asked me defiantly "Why not? Legally, Ceylon is not India." "True," said I "Long live India and Ceylon, the eastern counterpart of England and the isle of Wight, or, to take a more precise legal analogy, England and the Isle of Man!" All the Indians roared with merriment at the discomfiture of the Ceyloneses. Particularly uproarious

was a Bengali friend. The Ceylonese said to him, "I will be even with you one day" and departed with ill-assumed dignity. Two days later, this Bengali friend casually said in conversation "The Bengali nation will not put up with such insults" referring to some government order or other appearing in the newspapers. At once the Ceylonese flared up "Ceylon is, any day, more of a country than the Bengalis a nation. What a delightful idea! The Bengali nation, the Behari nation, the C. P. nation, the U. P. nation, the Rajput nation, the Baluchi nation, the Madrasi nation, the Bombay nation, the Berari nation, the Punjabi nation, the Kashmiri nation, the Cochin nation, the Nizam nation, the Assam nation, the Travancore nation, the Mysore nation, the Bahawalpur nation, the Tinnevely nation, and the Indian nation! Is there anything more ridiculous than this congeries of nations?" All the listeners roared with merriment. The poor Bengali was crushed. The Ceylonese shook hands with me and said "Let us be chums again. You have laughed impartially at me and at him."

More than six weeks elapsed between the commencement of the examinations and the announcement of the results. At last the results were announced. I found that I had passed, as I had expected. Sixteen candidates were notified to be selected. Five Indians and eleven Europeans would have got in if the first sixteen had been selected. But those were days when Non-Co-operation was at its height. So, many Europeans preferred the colonies to India. Hence thirteen Indians and three Europeans were finally selected. We were all medically examined which meant parting with two guineas apiece for fifteen minutes' scrutiny of our physical system.

After selection we had to spend one year in England studying the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Evidence Act, Hindu and Muhammadan Law,

Indian History, the vernacular of the province to which we were posted, and Riding. At the end of the year there would be the Final Examination, and after that we would be able at last to return to the land of our birth. For this one year the government paid us a stipend of three hundred and fifty pounds after our executing a bond with one surety, who must be a government official in India or a resident of England, to refund the money in case we failed to pass the final examination, or, having passed, failed to sign the covenant. I had no friend or relative in government service who would be likely to execute the bond. And which Englishman would care to be a surety for a stranger like me? I mentioned my embarrassment casually to Mr. Baker, the Censor of the Non-Collegiate Delegacy. To my astonishment he took the bond from me and signed it. I blurted out my thanks. "Oh, no, this is nothing" he said to me and soon sent me out of the room to escape more thanks. This overwhelming kindness on his part towards an alien coming from 6000 miles away, and known only slightly to him, literally staggered me. I thought what a pity it was that men of Mr. Baker's type did not go out to India in any large numbers. If they did, Indo-British relations will be much sweeter than now.

There were lectures at the Indian Institute on all the subjects prescribed for the I.C.S. Final Examination except Riding. The lectures on the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Evidence Act were by Sir E. J. Trevelyan, a retired High Court Judge, and were interesting and instructive. He used to classify Indian witnesses into 'liars, damned liars and experts,' a classification which is not entirely unjust. Of course, there are more "experts" in England than in India. He also related a funny story of how, boiling with righteous indignation, at a diabolical murder of the most brutal type, proved to the hilt by the prosecution, he was about to

pronounce the judgement, sentencing the accused to be hanged by the neck till he was dead, when there was a bustle in court and the alleged murdered girl entered as live as ever! The same gentleman lectured on Hindu and Muhammadan Law, but with less effect on us, Indians. Still, even here, we got our fair share of laughter. He used to pronounce "Bandhus" (relatives of a particular variety) like 'Bantus,' and we Hindus knew that the former were as destructive of property and as hostile as the latter. The Indian History lectures fell flat on those of us who had taken History as our optionals for our B.A. degree examinations. The standard was low, and the treatment none too lively. But the lectures on Tamil and Telugu beat everything else. The Civil Service Commissioners had declared that Malayalam was my mother-tongue and that I might take Tamil. I knew neither to read nor to write Tamil till then, though in Malabar we used to talk a jargon of Tamil mixed with Sanskrit and Malayalam words innumerable. So I had to learn to read and write Tamil in England under an Englishman! It must be said that the readers in South Indian Vernaculars at the Oxford University are by no means so well versed in their subjects as the other lecturers and readers. The consequence was that I found the class of the Tamil reader, with its charge of five guineas per term, so useless in the second term that I ceased attending it in the third term and thus saved five guineas. My friend in the Telugu class did the same.

The Riding lessons were more strenuous. Our test was a stiff one including jumping three feet, trotting without stirrups, cantering and saddling and bridling. At Oxford I took some lessons which were not of great use. The real lessons which made me a good rider were given by Captain Barry of Woolwich Arsenal at a rate cheaper than that at Oxford. We had three examinations in all in riding, and I got off creditably in all of them.

While I was studying for the I.C.S. Final Examination, I had also to study for the final examination of the History Honours School at Oxford. In June, the latter examination was over, and in September the former. These two represented the last examinations I had to appear in England prior to returning home. I had resolved to visit Belgium and Germany in the interval between the I.C.S. Final Examination and the signing of the Covenant. So, when the last paper of the I.C.S. Final Examination had been answered, and the riding test was over, I threw all the books into my giant pinewood case, took a tracing of the map of Germany and Belgium and soon settled my plan of touring. Three days more saw me with my familiar suit cases on the boat bound for Ostend.

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## CHAPTER XI

### IN BELGIUM AND GERMANY.

THE journey from Dover to Ostend was very pleasant. The sea was calm and the weather beautiful. Ostend is a picturesque port and is somewhat busier than Calais. I had little trouble with the Customs people. As soon as the customs officer saw me, he said in French 'You need not open all these cases. What do they contain?' 'Mere clothes and books' said I. 'I can take the word of an ally. We Belgians shall never forget the splendid response made by India to our appeal for help. You may pass, Sir,' said he, and I went, thanking him for his kind words, and pleased at this generous recognition of India's services. This gratitude was expressed all over Belgium, and many little acts of courtesy were rendered to Indian tourists. The tourist will, however, discover soon that, among Belgians themselves, there is no love lost between the French-speaking Walloons and the Flemish-speaking Flamands. The racial distinction has always existed, and the currency notes contain inscriptions in both the languages. Even in physical appearance the two races differ, the Walloons resembling the French, and the Flamands the Dutch. The natural animosity was considerably acerbated by the action of many Flamonds in supporting the Germans during their occupation of the country. The Walloons resented this lack of patriotism, and, when Belgium recovered its independence, put many Flamands into prison. Now and then, the other party used to make huge demonstrations for their release. When we remember that Belgium was one of the worst sufferers in the Great War, we can easily understand, and forgive the vindictive conduct of the W'oons,

I boarded the train for Brussels. The train was one of those delivered by Germans as part of the indemnity, and was superb in its equipment. The country between Ostend and Brussels was flat and uninteresting but thickly populated and well cultivated. The ancient towns of Ghent and Bruges presented an old-world and picturesque appearance from the train. Brussels was reached at nightfall. I found two hotels full up and a third one prohibitive in its charges. A Belgian gentleman directed me to a hotel where the charges were moderate, and the accommodation was quite good according to him. The accommodation was quite good, but my suspicions were roused by seeing a number of persons drinking at the bar. I wondered whether this was a hotel like the one mentioned in 'The Cloister and the Hearth.' The locality was a comparatively lonely one, and not unsuited for robberies and murders. It was, however, late in the night, and I did not know where else to go. So, I resolved to brave it. A big burly woman showed me the room after taking me up two flights of steps. The smell of liquor about her was not calculated to allay my fears. The stairs were also dark, since the electric lights were insufficient in number. After seeing the room, and putting my luggage there, I came down and had a lean dinner of bread, butter, potatoes, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and lemonade. Then I wanted to go to a theatre or cinema. I found a long queue waiting outside the principal theatre, and so, returned, especially as I felt sleepy.

Going up to my room, I undressed and tried to lock the door from inside. I discovered, to my horror, that the lock was thoroughly out of repair, and, so, rang up the landlady and asked her about it. 'It has been so for years' said she, and nobody has worried. There are no robbers here.' I had perforce to be content with this most unsatisfactory reply, and make what arrangements I could for winding off midnight.

attempts. I adopted my patent device. Shutting the door, I leaned my umbrella against it. On the top of the umbrella I put my hat and railbag. On the top of all this I put my soap-box. Any person unlawfully hankering after my goods, and opening the door at midnight, would, of course, bring the whole structure rattling down, and wake me up. After finishing the barricading, I went to bed, putting out the light, and fell asleep. I was woke up by the sound of my things falling down. In great trepidation I got up from bed, sure that some thieves or robbers in the way of the hotel-keeper were entering my room. To my shame and surprise, I found that it was only the landlady with the hot water and that it was broad morning. The good woman was frightened at the terrific noise and asked me what all that was. 'Oh, nothing; I had kept a few things there. That's all. You need nor worry,' said I. 'Monsieur,' said the woman, 'I have not kept a hotel for all these years without learning a thing or two. That was your burglanguard. Very ingenious.' And the woman laughed outrageously. All that day the customers of the hotel were regaled with this story while they had their drop.

I spent that day in seeing Brussels. It is a nice town with a number of fine buildings. The High Court, the King's Palace, the Town Hall, the Corporation Houses, the Exchange, and the Church of St. Gudule with its Chair of Truth, are some of the finest. The Chair of Truth is a fine representation of the driving-out of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and was presented to the church by a prosperous merchant of Antwerp. Other interesting monuments are the statues of Egmont and Horne, the Congress Column, the Anspach Memorial and the Manneken-Pis. The Park is also a splendid one, and is usually lighted after seven. On the whole, Brussels is quite a nice capital for a small country like Belgium.

Leaving Brussels, I went to Liege and saw the historic

fort which put up such a heroic defence during the Great war and gave much valuable preparation time for the Allies. The country near Liege is very pretty and continues to be so till the German frontier. From Liege I went to Cologne passing the famous city of Aix-La-Chapelle or Aachen, which is the frontier town of Germany, though, at the time I went, it was within the occupied area. Cologne was reached in the evening. At Aachen I had met a Jew and an Algerian Muslim and made friends with them. They told me that they knew of an excellent and cheap hotel. So I accompanied them and secured a good room for two hundred marks a day, or six pence at the then rate of exchange. Excellent vegetarian meals were to be had for a similar sum though there was hardly any variety. After dinner we went to a good théâtre and witnessed an interesting opera. The songs and scenes were better than in England though the acting was inferior.

One of the delights of Cologne is the Rhine. Cologne was occupied by the British, and there were hosts of Englishmen about. The English were not unpopular among the Germans, and there was free social intercourse between the two races. This was in remarkable contrast to the bitter animosity between the French and the Germans. Perhaps, the difference was due to the fact that the English employed no coloured troops in the occupied zone and had not annexed any portion of the old German Empire. In the area occupied by the British, life was normal; in the area occupied by the French, there was an absence of mirth among the Germans who almost appeared as if they were in mourning. Thus, while Cologne was rolling in mirth, adjoining Coblenz was full of gloom except among the garrison of occupation and the foreign merry-makers. Even these latter were comparatively few, as nobody likes to spend his holidays in an air of gloom. All the restaurants of Cologne were full and were open till

a late hour. The taverns and gambling dens were also having a roaring trade.

It struck me as strange that a defeated nation should be so merry. I questioned a German of some culture. He replied, 'It helps to drown our sorrow. Besides, we work all day, and want some recreation during the night. Further, there is no incentive to save, as all savings will ultimately be absorbed either by a war, or by the reparations committee, or by the Bolsheviks.' Much the same reasons were given to me at Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden. The whole of Germany was characterised by reckless drinking and gambling at this period. One of the most glorious things about Cologne is its splendid Cathedral. When I saw it in the evening, with the rays of the setting sun falling on it and a host of doves hovering about it, I felt a strange exaltation of heart as no wireless or aeroplane can ever produce. Some of the products of the Middle Ages are unrivalled by anything in the same line produced by the modern world.

I went up the Rhine to Wiesbaden. The journey was most pleasant. The scenery on both sides was enchanting. The steamer in which I travelled was a fairly big one, and the Rhine was in places like a lagoon. The waters of the Rhine are delightfully blue, and the river is broad and deep, with fertile lands on both banks. Some of the most picturesque castles in Europe are on the banks of this great river. Rhinestein is a characteristic specimen. The ruins of Gutenfels, with the present village below the hill, are also quite interesting. Loreley is another beauty spot. Coblenz and Bonn were other interesting places on the banks of the river. At both these places there are handsome bridges for which the Rhine is famous. The bridge at the ancient university town of Bonn is specially pretty. Towards evening we reached Wiesbaden.

Wiesbaden a pleasure-resort, and is also noted for its

mineral waters. I went with some friends to the mineral water well and took a glassfull. The taste was most horrible, and, but for my early training in drinking castor oil, I would never have been able to drink it. I sincerely pitied the many rheumatic elderly gentlemen sitting round in a ring and drinking the untoothsome fluid with the resigned air of sacrificial sheep. But, for this discomfort, they get ample compensation in the many pleasures of the gay city. The theatres, dancing halls, music halls, taverns, restaurants and gambling dens of Wiesbaden are among the best in Germany.

From Wiesbaden I proceeded to Berlin. The exchange was so favourable that a first-class ticket cost me only twelve annas, though, in the ridiculously depreciated German currency, the fare of four hundred and fifty marks would have sounded high and even prohibitive. A German teacher, travelling in the second class, told me with feeling, 'Things are so bad here that soon only foreigners and Jews can live in comfort in Germany. The Fatherland is in a very bad plight, but, doubtless, it will revive as it did after Jena.' 'Do you like the Ex-Kaiser?' I asked 'He had many defects, but his reign till 1914 was the most glorious period in Germany's long history' was the reply. 'Don't you think that he should not have dragged Germany into the Great War?' I asked. 'Yes, it was a bad mistake' he replied, 'he and we counted on victory, and our calculations went wrong. We have paid the penalty since, and are still paying it.' He became so melancholy that I left the corridor and returned to my compartment. After some time he came to me and said 'Forgive me, Sir, for my agitation. I feel the downfall of my Fatherland keenly. Why should it have come in my time? The "Deutschland Uber Alles," which I loved to hear before the war, I detest now. Talks of a glory which has departed are specially painful. The famous song about the Rhine I have forbidden in my house

as it makes me burst into impotent tears. In all these dark clouds, my only consolation is that the Fatherland has preserved its unity so far despite the awful calamities which have befallen it and the repeated attempts of our most inveterate enemy." Again he became moody and said, 'Farewell, I shall be miserable for the rest of the journey, and do not desire to make you too miserable.' He was a veritable picture of pure misery as he left me. I arrived at Berlin in the evening and went in a taxi to Lindenstrasse where I had arranged with a German family for my stay.

I found Herr and Frau N. waiting for me. There were four members in the family, husband, wife, daughter, and mother-in-law, the last meaning, as usually in western countries, the wife's mother. After the formal greetings were over, we had our tea. Then we went out for a stroll, leaving Frau N. to do the cooking. She got an elaborate statement from me as to what I would eat and would not eat, and, with German thoroughness, wrote it all down in what she called her cooking diary. I knew no German, and she knew no English or French. So my Jew friend had to interpret my French into German. I was to pay two thousand marks per day for lodging and boarding; as a pound was equal to ten thousand marks then, I didn't mind paying this sum, though it was undoubtedly high compared with the prevailing rates elsewhere in Berlin. Of course, the Jew told me that I was getting the cheapest terms imaginable though I had every reason to believe that he was to pay much less. One day, I asked him point blank about this. 'Oh,' said he, 'supposing I pay only fifteen hundred per day, it is because I have no dietary scruples like you, and do not cause extra trouble in cooking. Besides, I am an old customer, and Germans always make allowances for that.' I did the best thing possible under the circumstances, and made the payments directly to Frau N. though my friend

wanted me to pay through him and was apparently disappointed at my neglect to accept his services. I must say, however, that the lodging and boarding I got were as good as could be desired.

Our stroll in the evening was very short. We went to the Royal Theatre and bought tickets. All foreigners, meaning by that term all who were not German or Austrian subjects, were charged five times the fare. The reason alleged was the favourable exchange; but, as some foreign countries were also having adverse exchanges, I was not convinced. Of course, the reason was not entirely frivolous as, even with the increased rates, the Englishman or Indian or American was paying a lesser fraction of his income than the German. This is very often forgotten by the indignant foreigner.

The dinner was enjoyable, and I ate heartily of the simple vegetable dishes cooked for me. Frau N. was very anxious to know whether the cooking was all right, and urged me to eat more. 'You pay me a large sum, and it will be a shame if you were starved' said she. 'Don't fear I know to take care of myself' said I. 'That you undoubtedly do' said my Jew friend, and I thanked him for the compliment. After dinner we went to the theatre and enjoyed a very fine performance. One thing which astonished me was that chocolates containing cognac were publicly being sold in the theatre during the interval, and that German young men were buying these and giving them to their lady friends who were swallowing them greedily. On my expressing my astonishment, Frau N. said, 'What is good for men is good for women too. I myself wouldn't care to marry a man who couldn't stand a drop or two.' I kept quiet, but prayed to God that India might be spared the advance in civilization represented by these sentiments.

For the next two weeks I was busy seeing everything that

was of importance in Berlin. The city of the Hohenzollerns is indeed a remarkable one though it cannot be compared with London for size or Paris for beauty. Berlin has consciously imitated Paris, but has always been behind its model. This is only to be expected, as Paris is largely a creation of the peculiar genius of France which is totally different from that of Germany. Still, the imitation has not been without benefit, as many of the beautiful things in Berlin are its direct result. Some of the finest buildings in the city are the palaces of Emperor William I, the Ex-Kaiser and the Ex-Crown Prince, the Chancellor's residence, the Imperial Diet, the University, the Polytechnic Institute, the Academy of Arts and Music, the Royal Theatre and Opera, the Berlin Museum, the National Gallery, the new Town Hall, the Royal Mausoleum, the Emperor William Memorial Church, the Cathedral, the Church of St. Hedwiga, the Market, the Brandenburg Museum, the Emperor Frederick Museum, and the Arsenal. The palaces of Berlin are stately and comfortable buildings but nothing comparable in beauty or splendour to Versailles or Fontainebleau or even the Tuileries. This is perhaps natural when we remember the poverty of Prussia and the late rise of the German Empire.

The University is a most progressive one and yields to no other in the quality of its professors and its contribution to knowledge. When I was visiting the University, an elderly gentleman approached me, and, after ascertaining that I was an Indian, requested me to explain a certain passage in the *Isopanishad* of which he had a copy in his hand. I told him that I knew no Sanskrit, and, so, could not comply with his request. 'Perhaps, you are a Muslim or Christian' said he. 'No, I am a Hindu' I replied. 'Then perhaps you belong to those castes which are prohibited from reading the Vedas,' said he. 'Oh, no, I am a Brahmin' said I. 'A Brahmin, and not know the Vedas! Impossible. I know the real reason.

## AN INDIAN IN WESTERN EUROPE

He unwilling to explain the sacred scriptures to a Non-Hindu like me,' said he. I assured him that he was mistaken and that I, like millions of Brahmins, did not know any Sanskrit. 'What a tragedy!' said he, 'Young man, get rid of this ignorance of your sacred lore. Even now it is not too late to begin.' It was this admonition of a Non-Hindu which made me study Sanskrit seriously in my leisure moments and be able to read and understand the Bhagavad-Gita which has been a constant solace to me ever afterwards. It is remarkable that there is provision for the study of Sanskrit in every University in Germany unlike in England where even Oxford and Cambridge started it only recently. One powerful aid to research in Germany is the enlightened selfishness of the manufacturers which makes them employ research workers who advance the cause of knowledge while at the same time making some important discoveries in applied chemistry to the profit of their employers. This is an unheard-of-thing in India where big merchants are content to import the manufactures of other countries. It is absolutely certain that till Indian commercial magnates follow the German example neither research work nor manufactures will make much headway in this unfortunate country.

The Polytechnic School impressed me even more than the University. Tears came into my eyes when I saw the splendid provision made for technical education there as contrasted with the paucity of such provision in my own presidency of Madras which is more populous than Prussia, of whose many institutions that at Berlin was only one. When I saw the Polytechnic Institute and the Royal Theatre and Opera House, I regretted that the State in India had not gone in largely for such activities. We in India are born in the tradition that the State can and should take part in all such things. No Indian will ever see anything objectionable or undesirable in the

dels made of Plaster of Paris. It is greatly to be desired that every presidency in India there should be such a museum.

educative value of these museums cannot be exaggerated. In them, simple directions should be given at the bottom of each case showing its causes and the ways of prevention.

In the one I saw at Berlin there was a small fee for admission in order to cover the maintenance charges, and children under sixteen were not being admitted. These rules also can, to our advantage, be copied in India.

Undoubtedly the most beautiful avenue in Berlin is the Unter den Linden with the famous Brandenburg Gate. Another pleasant walk is the Victory Avenue with the statue of Emperor William I, called by the Germans William the Great. Some squares like Wilhelm Platz, Nollendorf Platz, Potsdamer Platz, and Belle-Alliance Platz are also impressive. The Roland fountain, the Hubertus fountain and the waterfall in Victoria Park are worth visiting. Berlin has a great many handsome statues. The principal are those of Luther, the Great Elector, Frederick the Great, the Emperor William I, Frederick-William III, Queen Louise, Frederick III, Bismarck, Moltke, Roon, Goethe, Wagner, Lessing and Schiller. The Hohenzollerns are still popular in Germany with all classes though the Republic has also its own adherents. The Republic came in days of defeat and humiliation, and had no record of national victory or glory to match the Empire's. The column of Victory was being largely resorted to when I was there. Photos of the imperial family were in demand even among the working classes. There was, of course, little craze for the Kaiser among the Socialists. After I visited the Ex-Kaiser's palace, which was freely open to the public, I pointed out to Herr N. how Herr Ebert, the President of the Republic, had no soldiers guarding his palace whereas the Ex-Kaiser had twelve. 'Who in all Germany will think it worthwhile to kill him,' he asked, 'especially when other mechanics

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can replace him at a moment's notice?' Such was the average German monarchist's contempt for people of humble origin.

All the time I was in Berlin the mark was falling rapidly. It was 10,000 to the pound when I reached the city; the next day it was 11,000; two days later, it was 12,000; in ten days more it was 13,000; and there it stood till I left Germany. I suffered some loss by having changed fifty pounds at 10,000 on the exchanger's assuring me that there would be a rapid rise thereafter. I discovered too late that it was a ruse played by the cunning fellow to induce me to change more pound notes than I had intended. Things were cheap in Germany for me owing to the abnormal fall of the mark and the favourable exchange I enjoyed by the rise of the Rupee. I bought an excellent Ika Tropical Camera for less than half its price in England.

From Berlin I went to Leipzig and thence to Dresden. At Leipzig the noteworthy buildings are the Federal Court, the University, the new Town Hall, the Railway Station, and the monument erected to commemorate the victory at Leipzig in 1813. The last is an elaborate thing with many impressive sculptures and is quite worthy of the great battle. Augustusplatz with the theatre, university and other noble structures presents a good appearance. Konigsplatz too is a fine square. At Leipzig I wanted to attend a musical performance, but gave up the idea on the ticket-seller's demanding eight times the usual fare instead of five times as at Berlin. I may mention here that at the time of my visit to Germany British subjects were popular in Prussia, neither popular nor unpopular in Saxony, and very unpopular in Bavaria. Indeed, there was much difficulty in getting visas to go to Munich where provincialism was becoming a disease. Even Prussians, were discriminated against in Munich in those days, as having sent Bavarians to greater slaughter. Those few Indians who got visas found it impossible to stay long owing to mob violence.

A friend of mine had to be rescued from the insulting jeers and possible violence of the mob by a Roman Catholic missionary who was once in India. This Indian told me that the Bavarians used to tell him, 'You ruined us during the war by fighting against us; we shall not allow you to ruin us during the peace by eating up our substance and buying the best things in Germany at ridiculously low prices, taking advantage of the iniquitous exchange.'

Dresden is a more beautiful town than either Berlin or Leipzig and is the capital of Saxony. As soon as I had put my things in a hotel and taken my lunch, I rushed to the world-renowned picture gallery and feasted my eyes on the famous paintings there. In the night I went to the equally celebrated Opera House, and, after paying eight times the usual fare, witnessed the very best opera that I have ever seen. The next day I saw some rare pieces of Dresden china and bought some. The delicate beauty of these is something unique.

That night when I was walking along the brilliantly lighted streets I heard a chorus of voices cry out 'Hullo, Ayyar!' and turning round saw four Bengali friends from England. They forced me to go to their hotel and sit with them far into the night sipping coffee and talking of India and things Indian. 'I dream of a day when the least of our district headquarters will be equal to Dresden in beauty,' said one. 'It is an ambitious dream, difficult of realization' said I. 'Is anything impossible for a united and free India?' he asked with sudden warmth. 'Nothing' replied the rest of us, all together.

After I had finished Dresden I returned to Berlin and spent a few more days there, seeing Potsdam, Brandenburg and other surrounding places. Potsdam is a lovely place without, however, any of the surpassing beauty of Versailles. I was struck by the utter common-placeness of Brandenburg,

the place where, centuries ago, the hard-headed Great Elector laid the foundations of the greatness of Prussia. Poor Brandenburg, it did not even give its name to the glorious structure it helped to build.

At the time of my visit to Germany there was great bitterness between the Monarchists and Republicans, and especially the Socialists. Brandenburg was, needless to say, staunchly monarchist. Brandenburgers would never admit either Germany's war-guilt or the superiority of the Republic over the Empire. 'None but a fool will say that a single nation was responsible for the late war. Of course, it is the easiest thing in the world to lay the war-guilt at the door of the vanquished; and there this scapegoat responsibility will remain till the vanquished is strong enough to defeat his former vanquisher and thus convince the virtuous historian that the real cause of both the wars is the most recently defeated party' said an indignant lady to me. 'The pity is that some of our own countrymen, those damned Bolsheviks, miscalled Socialists, should be eager to plead guilty to this monstrous charge. They are the most unpatriotic curs that I have ever seen' she added. And yet I doubt whether any people were so docile in times of revolution as the German Socialists she so vehemently condemned. In fact, so determined were the Socialists not to give trouble to the infant Republic that they put up with many insults and indignities from the Monarchists rather than start another revolution and open the flood-gates of Bolshevism.

One day I was talking with a labourer belonging to the Left, and he told me 'After all, Germany is our country too. Will we bring about our own ruin by dragging our Fatherland into the mire?' What reforms we want we shall get by the approved constitutional methods. Of course, there are wild men among us as among all parties, The only thing is that

we condemn the Junkers for bringing about this ruinous war, and they do not like it.' 'Would you have condemned them if they had won?' I asked. 'Certainly not' said he, 'if a speculation succeeds, all applaud; if it fails, all condemn. That is the way of the world, and I follow it.'

Those were days when the German poorer classes suffered many hardships. I found a group of ragged children with rickety bones in one of the slums. Owing to the depreciation of the mark many people who were well-to-do before the war were reduced to beggary. A person who had 80,000 marks was a rich man in pre-war days; but when the mark came to 13,000 per pound he was among the poorest. I pitied the professors and other middle class gentry who had become paupers like this. I pitied even more the poor peasants and labourers who were robbed of their hard-earned savings by this iniquitous freak of the exchange. To add to the havoc wrought by this mysterious demon, I was told that the Republic also went on printing currency notes night and day and inflicting them on a world already surfeited with them. The mother-in-law of Herr N. told me 'Currency-note printing is the most thriving industry of Germany now; soon, the cost of the paper and printing will exceed the value of the notes, and then the accursed thing will have to stop.'

A week after my return to Berlin, I took the train for Calais. At the frontier of unoccupied Germany there was the German customs examination. I had no difficulty at all. Indeed, the German officer was very cordial and did not even ransack my goods. With French subjects he was reputed to be severe. In those days, an export certificate costing in many cases more than the article itself had to be got and produced at the frontier for all new articles. So it was that I had written my name on the new articles I had purchased and had also begun to use them. New articles without the

certificates were liable to be forfeited at the frontier and very generally were so confiscated. An unfortunate Bengali gentleman, whose Mongoloid look and excellent French caused him to be suspected to be an Annamese, had his new camera confiscated as he had no certificate. A sturdy brown Mahratta, who could be recognized at a glance as an Indian, escaped scot-free though he was in the same predicament. On reaching Calais, I took the earliest boat to London and from there the first non-stop train to Oxford. To my landlady's query 'How are the Germans?', I replied, 'Very much like the British,' an answer which astonished, and slightly irritated her, but was, none the less, true.

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## CHAPTER XII

### HOME AGAIN

THREE days after my return to Oxford, the results of the I.C.S. Final Examination were announced; they were not awaited in anxiety by anybody, as, usually, everyone takes care to study enough to pass, and consequently, failures are almost unknown. Their only importance was that, as soon as they were published, preparations for returning home could be begun in dead earnest. The moment I had finished reading them, I began packing. The longing to return to the land of my birth possessed me. England and things English seemed to have an air of unreality, like the railway stations a passenger passes on the way to his destination. 'Soon, very soon, I shall be in the land of the burning sun, pouring rain and naked babies,' I said to my landlady. 'And England with its dense fogs, constant drizzles and disciplined children will become a fading memory.' 'Will you welcome the change?' she asked. 'As well as a cobra welcomes milk' I replied. 'You prefer your savagery to our wisdom?' she queried. 'I do,' said I, 'and I hope every Indian worth his salt does.'

In a few days, there was the inevitable medical examination with its toll of two guineas. Then, on the thirty-first of October, I signed the covenant at the India Office. Nothing more remained except to book my passage. The authorities informed me that, as no berths were available by earlier boats, they had booked my passage by a steamer sailing on the 17th November from London. I told them that passages by earlier boats could be secured if earnest efforts were made, and

wrung from them a promise to pay for a first class by an earlier boat if I succeeded in securing one. As luck would have it, just as I stepped into Cook's, the people there had received intimation of the cancellation of three first class passages which had been provisionally booked by the *Caledonia* which was to sail from London on the 10th. I at once got a lower berth booked for myself; and two friends cornered the other berths. I resolved to sail from London so that I might see the Bay of Biscay and Gibraltar.

On the 10th, when I boarded the steamer at London, my mood was just the opposite of the one which had possessed me at Bombay when I boarded the *Nellore*. I had been full of anxiety then; I was free from all care now. Instead of brooding melancholy, my face shone with mirth. Two friends who had come to see me off, and who were destined to sail only on the seventeenth, looked sad when they saw me departing, leaving them to vegetate in England for seven days more, and I heartily sympathized with them in their misery. It was not without a certain regret, however, that I saw even the shores of England fading away on the horizon. I felt the kind of regret that we feel on finishing a good novel, a desire to read it again after some time. I determined to revisit the country later in life.

The journey home was not exciting. The Bay of Biscay was very calm despite my anticipations; off Brest there was a breeze, but it never developed to anything more; and the ship reached Gibraltar without even a squall. Gibraltar presented a picturesque appearance from the sea. I landed, and had a look round the tiny colony. The signal station, the Admiralty pier, the moorish market, the harbour, Rosia Bay, Catalan Bay, the Spanish Lines, Europa pass, and the barracks, were all interesting in their own way. The view from the south, looking across the Mediterranean to Ceuta in Africa, is 'specially

impressive. The African coast line was clearly visible. Wellington's monument, with the statue of the great soldier and two big guns below, is also worth seeing.

I found a number of Sindhi curio-dealers in this place. How they prosper on this rock is a mystery ; but that they do prosper is clear enough. Indeed, it was said that they thrive so well that the administration restricted their shops to twelve. One of them insisted on giving me tea 'in memory of Bharat' as he said. He had his wife with him and it was wonderful to see this lady living alone, a sared island in a sea of gowns. I wondered how curios could be so numerous as to be sold by a score of shops, day in and day out. I suppose that when the stock is exhausted, other articles are got or *made*.

The next port of call was Marseilles. Here the ship anchored for two days, awaiting the overland passengers. I spent the time profitably in seeing the great colonial exhibition which was going on then. All the colonies of France were represented worthily. Algeria, Tunis, Morocco, Equatorial Africa, West Africa, Indo-China, the self-governing colonies, and Madagascar, had their own splendid palaces ; and each of these palaces contained all things for which the country was celebrated, cultural as well as commercial. It was an imposing display of the colonial splendour of France and the immense potentialities of these colonies. Each palace was in the best architecture of the colony concerned, and the characteristic products of that colony were being sold by its natives some of whom were in their picturesque native dress. Hence, an outsider could get a vivid impression of life in those distant lands. An infinite and delightful variety was also ensured by this arrangement.

I was impressed considerably by all the palaces, but the thing which gripped me most was the Indo-Chinese

palace with an exquisite model of the famous temple of Angkor. When I saw this fairy-like shrine with its four towers and graceful body and the blue lake in front of it, memories of the days when Indians went across the black waters carrying their arts and religion to primitive people in far-off lands and so elevated these races that they became highly cultured and raised monuments of architecture as at Borobodur and Prambanam, surpassing in size even the monuments of the home-land, came to me, and I wondered how India had fallen so low, and why that unquenchable spirit of adventure, which coursed in the veins of our ancestors, did not descend to us. The sight of the Cambodians who were inside the palace selling small fancy things created in me the feeling of having rediscovered a long-lost brother. Strange to say, the Cambodian young man selling little ivory elephants reciprocated my feelings. I bought an elephant from him for the extraordinarily cheap price of two francs. He would not take the money, saying that it was a gift from a Kambhojan brother in memory of the golden services rendered to his country in days of old by Bharatavarsha and that, therefore, he must be permitted to pay for me. 'I shall accept the gift when Bharatavarsha remembers Kambhoja again' said I. 'Now I feel ashamed. The Bharatas have forgotten their brothers across the seas; and it is to the efforts of a foreigner that we owe even this meeting.' 'True;' said he, 'lashed by the waves of the struggle for existence, our boats, which were hooked, have drifted apart, and both of us have suffered untold misery. May the Tathagatha will our unity and happiness again!' 'Amen!' said I. 'We are a dying race' said he. 'Come to our aid before we die. The Khmers count on you.' I was deeply moved, and, as I walked away, cursed my university which had taught me a lot about Greek colonies, which have disappeared long since, and not a word

about our own still living Hindu colonies of Kambhoja, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Champa, Siam and Bali.

The Annamese present in the pavilion were Mongoloid in appearance and quite different from the almost Indian-looking Cambodians. They were very merry and had none of the typically Indian melancholy expression about them. Still, even their fancy goods clearly showed traces of Indian influence. 'Do you know that your country was in days of old the Indian colony of Champa?' I asked one of them. 'Yes,' he replied, 'the degraded Chams are the descendants of those colonists, and not we. We are conquerors in the land, just like the French.' I saw from this that French Indo-China had its own racial animosities, and was about to move away when the Annamese said 'Sir, don't be offended. We admire the Indians. They are a great race. The Chams do not really represent them. Was not the Tathagatha born in your country, and could any but the most civilized race have produced him?' I felt flattered and at the same time realized how great was India's debt to the Buddha and what a loss we suffered internationally when we expelled Buddhism from our shores. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons why India lost all touch with Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Annam, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Bali, China and Japan in mediaeval times was that she had, by her expulsion of Buddhism, severed the golden chain which had united her to those countries. It was a terrible price we paid for the triumph of New Hinduism. I have treasured that little ivory elephant I bought that day as a sacred reminder of my brethren across the seas, and have resolved one day to make a pilgrimage to the temple of Angkor and the lovely land of Kambhoja.

The Grand Palais, the palace of the minister of colonies, the palace of Marseilles and Provence, the central avenue, the entrance, the fountains, and the great tower of West

Africa, measuring 65 metres in height, were other noteworthy things to be seen at the exhibition. To be sure, the exhibition must have cost a great deal; but it was a case of money well-spent, and I believe the collections must have paid for all the expenses and left a decent margin. When will India have her colonial exhibition? The fact that she has no dependencies need not stand in her way as all her former colonies are sure to respond to an invitation on an equal footing.

The ship left Marseilles, and days seemed to drag on in spite of lively company on board. I took an active part in all the ship games, simply in order to while away time. In one of the games I became, by lot, the partner of an English lady, who was far and out the greatest expert at it, in a match which carried a handsome prize. I was sincerely sorry for her, as it would mean that she would certainly lose. When I expressed my sorrow to her, she said, 'Of course, it is rotten luck for me; still we have to take things as they come. So, please see that we do not lose at least the first round.' I was perfectly certain that our opponents, who were both good players, would easily defeat us, and I was correct. My generous partner said to me after the defeat 'We have put up a brave fight, anyhow.' A cheerful mind always sees the rosy side of life.

There was an elderly Indian gentleman with us who professed to believe that India should not be loved by Indians any more than other countries and was a strenuous opponent of protection. In spite of these opinions he was popular with the other Indians as we believed that he did not really mean all that he said. We were proved to be right in this when we saw that the first man who yearningly looked at the distant shores of the motherland, through a pair of powerful glasses, was he. Indeed, he would not lend the glasses to us for a long time, despite our earnest entreaties.

When I pointed out to him the inconsistency between his professions and practice, he laughed and asked 'And did you really believe that I was so depraved as all that? We get attached even to the ship in which we travel for a few days. How much more so to a land where we were born, and where the major portion of our life is spent? Only, I want that love to be pure, and not sullied by hatred of others.' 'Just like the love for one's mother, which does not prevent the love for one's wife or brother or sister or neighbour, is it?' I asked. 'You have got it correct' said he.

This gentleman told us that the worst cheats were the Egyptians who came on board at Port Said selling picture post-cards, and assured me that I would most certainly be cheated by them. I told him that his predictions were sure to go wrong. When we reached Port Said, I was careful to bargain to the utmost for three illustrated booklets depicting scenes of Cairo and Port Said and Egypt in general. I saw a man buying them at a shilling each, and succeeded, after infinite higgling, in getting them for nine pence each. I rushed to my friend with the enthusiasm of a school-boy and showed him my trophies. 'But I got them for six pence each' said he, showing three similar booklets. 'So, in two minutes he has sold at two different prices.' 'Three,' said I, 'for I saw a gentleman purchase them at a shilling each.' 'He was no gentleman at all, but a decoy to make you buy,' replied my friend, and, to my infinite chagrin, I found that he was right. 'You might have fared worse' said my friend encouragingly, 'I have seen many older men buy at the decoy's price.' I got down at Port Said, and ventured out alone. I bought some curios at a Sindhi's shop. With my eyes fully opened, I did not present much of a target to the Sindhi, and finally bought the articles for half the price offered by another. After the purchase was over, the Sindhi invited me to tea.

'What!' said I, 'you would not forego a penny more profit just now. Why do you want to lose a shilling now?' 'That was business; this is pleasure. Come along,' and he led me to the adjacent room and gave me a sumptuous tea. On my return to the ship, my elderly friend told me, as I expected, that I had been cheated of a shilling. 'Ah, but I got a tea worth eighteen pence free' said I. 'Oh, you are improving beyond recognition,' said he, 'I must also make good the loss of nine pence I caused you by not warning you. Come and have a lemonade at my expense,' and I accepted the reparation thus offered, after protesting that a lemonade cost only six pence.

At Aden, I alighted and went and saw the famous tanks. I also sent a wire to my brother at Bombay. Days now seemed to linger, like unwanted and unpropitiated Indian beggars. But, at last, one morning, our elderly friend shouted out 'Hollo, your precious motherland is in sight.' After great difficulty I managed to snatch the glasses from him and have a glance at the faint brown line with a small ridge above and three dots below, the last being, of course, the islands of Salsette, Bassein and Elephanta, and the ridge the Western Ghats. Wild ecstasy prevailed among the Indians. Only an exile can know the joy felt on returning to the motherland. Poets can rhetorically ask where the true man's fatherland is, and reply that it is the whole world, or universe: but this is as absurd as Plato's plan of claiming all babies as sons, and all old men as fathers. As Aristotle remarked, one would prefer to be the real tenth cousin of a man than his son after Plato's fashion. So too, a man will certainly prefer to have even the Sahara as his fatherland than claim the whole world or universe as his mongrel fatherland. Think of enthusing over Mars or Canopus or Antarctica and writing patriotic odes and sonnets to them! Of course, I do not say that

nationalism or patriotism should be made a fetish or religion, as some persons would have us do. It should be just like the love for one's mother, not excluding other loves, and, in fact, ennobling other loves.

Soon, Alexandra docks and the Taj Mahal Hotel were in sight. The gateway of India had not been put up then. An hour later, my foot was treading the sacred soil of my motherland, and a prayer of sincere thanksgiving went up spontaneously from my heart to the One in the All and the All in the One who had safely brought me back to the land of my ancestors. So eager was I to land that I fought for precedence in passport-checking and customs examination, and, finally, succeeded in landing first. Indeed, such was my haste that I missed my brothers, who had come to meet me, and rushed with all my things in a taxi to their residence. There was wild rejoicing at this meeting after three years of separation. In two days I left for my native place. I flew to see my wife. After the first rapturous greetings were over, she said to me 'Dearest, it must have been horrible for you to have remained in that dreadful country so long. Are you not glad to be back again, glad that the terrible nightmare is over?' 'It was no nightmare at all but a most delightful sojourn in a delightful country;' I replied, 'of course, I am glad to be back in my own native land and to see my beloved ones. One day, I may revisit dear England with my beloved.' Her eyes shone with pleasure, and she asked 'So you love England?' 'Yes, next to our own motherland' said I, and meant it.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### EUROPE REVISITED: THE INNS OF COURTS AND THE HIGH COURT

I visited Europe subsequently twice, once in 1932-33 and again in 1935-36. Both those visits were primarily intended for qualifying myself for the Bar. I had chosen the Judicial section of the Indian Civil Service, and had undergone Judicial training in India for 18 months, in 1930-1932, and had afterwards been posted as District and Sessions Judge. Deeming it essential to have English legal qualifications, and also an inside knowledge of the working of the Bench and the Bar in England, I resolved to go and qualify myself for the Bar.

Usually, a person will have to keep 12 terms before being called to the Bar. Each year has only four terms. That would mean three years. For a first class obtained at the preliminary examinations and the final examination, an exemption of two terms could be got. By reading in Chambers for one year, an exemption of another four terms could be got. There were also some rules framed by the Secretary of State for India for encouraging government servants to undertake legal studies in the British Isles. Briefly, the aid consisted in advancing the requisite fees and deposits, and in giving a prize of £ 25 for each first class obtained in the four subjects in Part I, and £ 50 for a first class in the final examination, besides a part recoupment of £ 75 for reading in Chambers for one year. I resolved to take full advantage of this aid.

I decided to take the Bar in two periods of ten months each. By doing so, I could get average pay leave for eight months

and study leave for two months in each period, and thus avoid study leave for two whole years, with the half-average-pay involved thereby, (and 12 sh. per day added thereto for study) and meet comfortably my expenses in England, and those of my family in India. Besides, I did not like to be separated from my wife and children for more than ten months at a time. Again, I liked to see the Western countries on two occasions, instead of once, in connection with these legal studies, especially as I had four free return first class passages and had not used any of them. Further, by taking leave in two periods, and adjusting the leave between the middle of September and the end of June, I could, by spending a few days on the Continent or in Ireland, escape paying the heavy English Income-tax of four to five shillings in the pound, which would be charged on any person keeping rooms for more than six months in England in the financial year, which ran from April 6th to April 6th for that purpose. Incidentally, there was a considerable saving in another way, since, in those days, income drawn abroad was not chargeable to Indian Income-Tax, the rule about the taxation on world-income being only recent.

In 1932-33, I performed both the outward and homeward journeys in an Italian steamer, S.S. "Gange." The Lloyd Triestino Line, to which this steamer belonged, was popular among Indians for a variety of reasons. First of all, the Italians were more like Indians in freely moving with people, known and unknown, and had none of the formality of the Anglo-Saxon race, or the bureaucratic red-tape of the P. and O. line. Again, you could get fresh water for the whole bath, instead of merely a bucket of fresh water and a bath-full of salt water, as in the P & O boats of those days. Further, there was a natural joy in travelling in ships owned by persons who did not claim to rule your country, and for that reason, put:

on superior airs, though wholly undeserved by individual merit, status, education or culture. It must also be mentioned here that, before Mussolini's ghastly adventure in Abyssinia, there was no trace of colour prejudice among the Italians, which cannot be said of the lower middle class Englishmen or Americans even today. No doubt, after the Abyssinian conquest, the Italians have swung to the other end of the pendulum, and have become crassly prejudiced against all dark and black races, for the time being. But, even that is only like the mire sticking to a person plunged in quagmire, and is no part of the epidermic equipment, as is the case with the Anglo-Saxons of the lower middle classes. Then again, the Italians loved to find pompous and euphemistic words to cheer up the unfortunates. Thus, the 'third class' was never called 'third class' by them, and was called 'the second economic', a thing which greatly cheered up many of my Indian friends who were going West for University studies. The food, too, was more agreeable to the Indians, especially the vegetarian section thereof, as the Italians did not consider vegetarians to be either monstrosities or cranks, though, of course, they, too, did not regard them as saints or as men of superior spirituality.

Even for the third visit to Europe, during 1935-36, I had booked only by an Italian boat, Comte Verde, but, due to the impending Italo-Abyssinian War, and the expectation that England might declare War on Italy in support of the brave Abyssinians, and due to my desire not to give the Italian aggressors the benefit of the profit from my booking, I changed over to the P. & O. boat "Naldera" at the eleventh hour.

I boarded S.S. "Gange" on 19-9-1932 at Bombay. The ship sailed 1½ hours after the scheduled time, thereby agreeing with the Indian view regarding punctuality, and upholding the principle "Man is the master of Time, and not its slave."

This unpunctuality did not matter much with the Italians as their ships have been famous for their unrivalled speed, whether in peace or in war, and, so, they could easily make up for lost time. S.S. "Gange" was scheduled to go to Venice, and I was looking forward to seeing the Queen of the Lagoons, and all North Italy, before proceeding to England through France. I had also intended to see South Italy on my return trip from Genoa. There was an arrangement by which all the heavy luggage of the passengers would be sent in a sealed waggon by train from Venice to London by the Lloyd Triestino Company, without any trouble from Customs, as the articles would not be allowed to be taken out during the journey. I shall describe in later chapters my experiences in Italy, France, Switzerland and Germany during these two subsequent visits to Europe.

On reaching England, on 5-10-1932, I put in an application to the Inner Temple, and got admitted forthwith. In England, the power to call to the Bar vests in the Council of Legal Education, elected by the four Inns of Courts, viz., Inner Temple, Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn, and Gray's Inn, all of which go back to the fourteenth century. The University has no control over this matter, lawyers and Judges themselves looking to the training and examination of the would-be recruits to the Bar and the Bench.

The name "The Temple" comes from the Knights Templars who constructed the famous "Round Church" in 1185 when they migrated to the Banks of the Thames from Holborn. After the dissolution of their Order in 1312, the Earl of Pembroke was given this property by Edward II. After the Earl's death, the Knights of St. John obtained this most desirable spot by the side of the river, and, in 1346, leased it but to the doctors and students of the law, who, with the well-known pertinacity of that ilk, have managed to cling on.

to the spot till to-day, and appear to be good for another thousand years.

Gray's Inn is in Holborn and has the unique distinction of having had the celebrated Francis Bacon on its rolls. It is, even to-day, noted for the solid learning of its pupils. The trees planted by Bacon are still there, along with his bust. Lincoln's Inn is in Chancery Lane, and was, till the construction of the High Courts, the headquarters of the Lord Chancellor, the supreme head of the department of Justice in England, and the man who used, for long, to draw twice the salary of the Prime Minister, as symbolic of the fact that, in England, Judges occupy a more dignified position than politicians. It is even now noted for its subtlety, characteristic of chancery and equity, unlike the solid learning for which Gray's Inn is noted. The Middle Temple has the oldest and finest dining hall of all the Inns, and is noted for the special patronage of the King, and the champagne served on gala occasions, instead of the port, claret etc., served in other Inns. Its reputation is for sociability and bonhomie. The Inner Temple has the reputation of being more aristocratic, and less open to foreigners, though that has worn thin in recent years. Among its distinguished *alumni* are Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, though the Mahatma's name has been struck off the rolls, owing to his convictions for defiance of laws.

The emblem of the Middle Temple is the Holy Lamb, and that of the Inner Temple Pegasus or the Flying Horse. A wag has remarked "The Lamb sets forth the *innocence*, and the horse the *expedition* of the Lawyers." Another funny thing may also be narrated here. Shakespeare, when requested by Lincoln's Inn and Middle Temple, to enact plays in those Inns for the Lawyers and Judges, enacted the *Comedy of Errors* in Lincoln's Inn, and the *Twelfth Night* or "What you

Will' in Middle Temple. The great master of psychology wanted, in Lincoln's Inn, to point out to the barristers the comedy of their erringly displaying lies for truths, when conducting their cases, and, to the Judges and lawyers assembled in the Middle Temple, the home truth that justice is, unfortunately, often what the Judges will, and not ideal justice.

One of the main things which a student has to do before being called to the Bar is to eat three dinners in the hall every term, if his name is on the rolls of Oxford or Cambridge or other English University, or six dinners, if his name is not on their rolls. These dinners, with the drinks served thereat, are responsible for the name "Inns of Courts." The Benchers, who will generally be High Court Judges or prominent King's Counsel, sit on the high benches, and the students in the body of the hall. The Benchers come in procession at 7 p.m., and all stand up, and Grace is said, and the dinner taken. Students have to be in dark dress, and have to wear the black robes supplied by the attendants. Anybody not present when the commencing Grace is said cannot count that dinner. Nor can anybody count a dinner if he leaves before the Benchers say the concluding Grace.

Of course, this insistence on dark clothes and dresses is part of the English conventionality in such matters, and does not work any hardship in that cold climate, where black clothes will keep people warm. My only regret is that in India, which is a hot country, the same black gowns and coats are insisted on for lawyers and judges. White men in a cold country wear black coats and gowns. Black men in a hot country ought, logically, to wear white coats and gowns.

Vegetarians, like me, had little difficulty in arranging for vegetarian dinners at any of the Inns. Mahatma Gandhi and other vegetarians had made the attendants familiar with this particular form of eccentricity. Excellent fruits and

vegetables and barley water used to be supplied to us. We were also much in request at tables, as we were teetotallers, and, so, the two bottles of wine supplied for every group of four could be divided between those who loved drink, and they could take our share, too. One day, it happened that none of the persons in our group of four took meat or drink. So, both the bottles were left unopened. But, the attendant who used to go round opening the corks begged us to allow him to open them, as unopened bottles of wine would go back to the Inn, while the contents of opened bottles would go to the attendants. So, though I demurred that we should have nothing to do with encouraging drink by attendants, a Sindhi vegetarian friend of mine said "Live and let live," and allowed him to open the corks of both the bottles, much to his glee.

One Maharatta Brahmin from Poona, who was a B.A., LL.B., told me "Mr. Ayyar, see how ridiculous the Bar rules and examinations are. In India, we get first class teaching, and here third class eating. How does one become fit for the Bench or the Bar by these dinners?" I told him "You are wrong. It is because in India we have no dinners together, and only sit at lectures together, that we are ruled by the English who have their dinners together. While shut up in our ten thousand inaccessible kitchens, the enemy will capture all our positions, if war comes, and we are all at the front. Besides, do not be too sure that the Bar exams are easy. Get a first class here, and prove that they are easy." My friend was not satisfied with my reply, but he avoided me after he failed in the preliminary examinations. Even a Madras second class B.L., and, indeed, an I.C.S. District Judge, failed in these examinations. though, of course, they attributed the failure, perhaps rightly, to other distractions, and lack of concentration on studies. I myself found that

if a person were to get a first class in the Bar exams, he had to put in at least four hours of steady work every day for four months. The fact, that, in olden days, failed Matrics from India went and became barristers and surprised their brighter classmates, who could become B.A., B.Ls. only later on, by setting up practice earlier, is no longer true. Perhaps because of the damage to prestige suffered by having such barristers in India, the Inns of Courts recently made a rule that none but Graduates from India should be admitted hereafter.

All the Inns of Courts possessed fine libraries. Lincoln's Inn and Inner Temple had got 70,000 volumes each, and the other two more than 50,000 volumes each. There were also first class common rooms in every Inn where the students could get refreshments, like cakes, buns, toasts, crumpets etc., and tea, or light drinks, in between their strenuous studies. The attendants there were trained persons who would not be allowed to show the slightest trace of colour prejudice. But they were self-respecting fellows, who had to be addressed by the students politely.

All the Inns had got beautiful gardens and lawns, where lawyers and students with over-heated heads could take strolls and get cool. All of them had also Chambers for lawyers, ranging from palatial rooms, leased out to the top ones, to comparatively poor rooms leased out to those at the bottom. The reading in Chambers consists in the student's going to a Barrister, to one of these Chambers, and devilling for him, and in the course of it, learning work in the raw. Contrary to what Indians may expect, students never get paid for this arduous job, but are expected to pay a hundred guineas to the Barrister for whom they devil, besides at least four guineas for his clerk. I decided to incur this expense for three reasons; firstly, I wanted the inside knowledge one gets

by such reading in Chambers; secondly, a subsidy of £ 75<sup>1</sup> was offered by the Secretary of State for India; and thirdly, there was a saving of four terms during which a mere stay in England would have cost me £ 500, let alone the worry of this unwanted stay.

There were many lady students in all the Inns. The law lectures are arranged in common by the Inns, and are held in one Inn or other, according to the lecturer's habit or convenience. So, from one lecture to another, batches of students will be hurrying with their bicycles, or on foot, along the narrow Chancery Lane or across the Bankruptcy Court which, appropriately enough, is entered into from Lincoln's Inn, where the Lord Chancellor used to sit before.

The Director of Legal Education in those days was Mr. Langdon, a beaming old man, who had his rooms in Lincoln's Inn and used to greet every student as a personal friend. He was specially fond of Indians. That is why the medal awarded for high distinction in Hindu and Muhammadan Law by an Indian gentleman has been named Langdon Medal. Mr. Langdon was not merely discussing law with us, but was discussing everything we wanted to discuss with him or he wanted to discuss with us. He reminded me of one of the old *Karanavans*<sup>1</sup> of Malabar by the simplicity of his ways and the beaming benevolence with which his face was suffused.

Even this reading in Chambers, I resolved to do in two periods of six months each. I took the permission of the Secretary of State for India and Mr. Langdon for this. I was told, however, by the High Commissioner's Office that I could not claim half of the £75 subsidy after reading for six months, but could claim the entire £75 only after completing the 12 months of reading in Chambers. Partly because of this,

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1. Managers of joint families; generally, the oldest male members.

I wanted to take Roman Law in Part I, besides Constitutional Law, Contracts and Torts, and Criminal Law, in order to get all the four prizes of £25 each from the Secretary of State. But, as I had passed the F.L. in Madras in the First Class in Roman Law, and had mentioned it in my correspondence, the Secretary of State advised me to apply for exemption from Roman Law under the rules, and to be done with it. So, I had to be satisfied with the remaining £75 which I duly collected, like the £50 for the Final examination, I was consoled about the Roman Law episode by unexpectedly getting £50 more from the Inner Temple for having secured a Certificate of Honour in the Final examination.

I read in the Chambers of Mr. Albert Crew in the 'Middle Temple' for two periods of six months each. He was recommended by Mr. Langdon, and was an average man, though he had written many books on law subjects. I discovered, during my reading in Chambers, that every brief sent to a Barrister by a Solicitor had to be marked with a fee. This is an excellent device to prevent under cutting, or cut-throat competition. The dual system in England, consisting of Solicitors and Barristers, has also got this advantage, that Barristers have only to conduct cases in Courts, and need not interview witnesses, and have not, therefore, the reputation of coaching false witnesses. But, of course, Solicitors interview the witnesses. The reputation of the Solicitors is certainly not as high as that of the Barristers, and certain official enquiries have revealed many cases of defalcation, just as numerous as the cases of misappropriation by lawyers disclosed from time to time in the Press of this country. The Inns of Courts have no control over Solicitors, but Barristers are supposed to be higher than Solicitors in status. The Solicitors' bills will stagger an Indian's imagination. Litigation and elections are even more costly in England than in India, and I do not think

that the dual system of Solicitors and Barristers is suited to a poor country like this, though there are obvious disadvantages in vakils combining in themselves the triple task of conveyancers, solicitors and barristers, let alone that of bankers.

During the reading in Chambers, I had often to attend the High Court in its various branches. I found the High Court of England having a very high prestige among the people, and the Judges fully deserving them. The cross-examination was never lengthy, and was always to the point. Arguments were brief, and informed. The Judge's remarks were equally helpful. The Judges were stern upholders of the people's rights against encroachments by the Executive. Indeed, Lord Hewart, who was Lord Chief Justice in those days, had even written a book "The New Despotism," attacking the legislative and judicial powers given to the Executive Officers by the numerous skeleton Acts passed by Parliament. Nor were the Judges afraid to put common-sense above law. In one famous case, a low crook had been convicted of having been in possession of bank note paper, and had appealed. It was urged on his behalf that fashionable ladies were in the habit of possessing some "Swank of England" five-pound notes, sold openly at two pence each, at parties, and of asking young men, who admired their looks, to change these five-pound notes, and, after obtaining the change, pointing out their folly and returning the money: 'Sw' in these fool-notes would be mistaken for 'B' in the Bank of England Notes by persons in a hurry, and, so, young men, fascinated by those ladies; would easily mistake them for genuine notes, especially as they would have no suspicion. But all this did not profit the crook. "It is the intention, the *mens rea*, which matters," said the Lord Chief Justice to the Barrister who addressed this argument. "The young lady merely meant *fun*. Your man meant *business*. Appeal dismissed; sentence confirmed."

I may add in this connection that it is delightful to see the confidence of the English people in Bank Notes, and their suspicion of any lowering of their values. Thus, a well-known comedian betted with his comrade, and, stationing himself in Trafalgar Square, one of the busiest localities of London, offered genuine Bank of England five-pound notes' for six pence each, relying on the fact that "Swank of England" notes were being sold for two pence each, and, yet, not one member of the crowd would buy them, even after scrutiny. In India, Marwaris, money-lenders, shroffs and others are sure to scientifically examine such notes, and buy them up in bundles at the cheap rate, buying genuine articles at far less than their real price being a weakness of these gentlemen.

The new Law Courts were built at a cost of a million pounds, strange to say, almost all of which were lapsed deposits in Chancery. That shows how rich a country England is compared with India where the deposits which really lapse are almost all of them below Rs. 5 each. Of course, this thing is also shown by the fact that England now spends 10 million pounds every day on this war, a sum which India cannot hope to spend every month.

There is no age limit for Judges in England. Justice Avory worked as Judge till he was 83; but, of course, he retained his full powers to the very end, and did not become either a dotard or a crank, as a man of that age would have in India. A cold climate perhaps preserves the brain intact, at an advanced age, like the mammoth preserved in Siberian ice.

The public are not admitted into the Court Halls, but are allowed to sit in the visitors' galleries. Students, however, are freely admitted into the Court Hall, and, especially, the I.C.S. probationers, and the High Court Judges have been known even to discuss with them during the hearing of a case. While the Lord Mayor of London is allowed to sit along

with the Recorder or the High Court Judge in the Old Bailey, by longstanding custom, he has now to gag his mouth for good while he is there, and can only open it when lunch is on, and he puts food into it, as also into the mouths of the Judges, when he cares to invite them, which is not unoften. At the Assizes also, the Mayors in the mofussil have got much the same privileges.

When the Justices of the Peace meet, one is reminded of the meetings of the Bench Courts and Debt Conciliation Boards in India, with this difference that some of the members in this country might have sound knowledge of the law, being retired officials, whereas that charge cannot be often successfully brought in England, where the Clerk of the Court is generally the reservoir of law, and the Justices the reservoir of common-sense.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### SOME THINGS WORTH RECOUNTING

ONE of the most noteworthy events which occurred during my second visit to England was the final illness and death of King George V, and his lying-in-state, the funeral procession, and the proclamation of the new King. This is so memorable that I must mention it at some length, especially as it is sure to interest Indians.

On the 20th of January 1936, the King's illness reached a crisis. At 9-25 p.m., a bulletin "The King's life is moving peacefully towards its close," was broadcast on the B.B.C. This message was repeated on the B.B.C. at 9-30 p.m., and, thereafter, at intervals of a quarter of an hour till midnight. Prayers were said for the King at midnight. Then, at 12-10 a.m., a most simple and dignified announcement was made of the King's death, which had occurred a few minutes before midnight. The greatest King of the world died in such a peaceful manner, and his death was announced in such an unostentatious way. It is one of the secrets of England's greatness, this great love and respect for the King, the subjects' self-respect, not conflicting with it.

The next day, I thought that, as an Emperor, beloved of his people, had died, there would be holidays for at least three days, and, at the minimum, for one day. So, I like several other Indians and foreigners, went somewhat late to the lectures at the Inns, expecting to see the notice about the exact number of holidays. What was our surprise when we found every shop open, business as usual, and the lectures in progress! But for the newspapers and the flags at half-mast,

one would not have known that the King was dead. When I asked an Englishman why at least a day's holiday had not been granted, he said "Why? The King is only like any other gentleman, in a matter like birth and death. We did not have a holiday for his birthday (this is quite true.) Why should we have a holiday for his death? Perhaps, we shall have a holiday for his funeral, as many of us would like to watch the procession, and pay our last homage." So, there it is. The King is like *any other gentleman* in England. That is why England is so happy. A petty Indian Prince, with hardly a square mile of territory, weighs himself against gold. King George, with 18 million and odd square miles, was content with a simple oak coffin.

On the 22nd, I saw the soldiers drawn up at St. James's palace, Charing Cross, and the Royal Exchange, and the intermediate route, for the King-at-Arms to go from St. James's Palace, after the proclamation of the accession of the new King by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the high Officers of State, to Charing Cross, Temple Bar and the Royal Exchange to make the same proclamation to the merchants and the industrial and commercial magnates, and the humbler commoners. The Lord Mayor had put up a silken thread across Temple Bar, barring progress. The King's messenger was challenged there, and, only when he showed the proper proclamation, was he allowed to go past after the Mayor's man's formally cutting the string. Hundreds of thousands watched this simple but impressive procession. In India, we spend much and get only the same result, as the people in England got at little expense. Of course, in the enormous crowd, not everything could be seen and heard clearly. They fired that day 62 guns, one for each of the 41 years of Edward VIII's life, and 21 for His Kingly dignity. On the 21st, they had fired 70 guns, one for each of King George's

mortal life. They did not fire the 21 extra guns that day, as the Kingly dignity had passed to his son! As King George's life had not passed to King Edward, the 70 were reserved for him.

On the 23rd, I saw, from King's Way, the procession carrying King George's corpse from Sandringham to Westminster for lying-in-state. The crowd was immense. The oak coffin was surmounted by the Imperial Crown and Standard. The bearers were all 6' 3" in height. The new King and his three brothers followed the coffin. It was a simple and touching ceremony, sons mourning for their father, and subjects for their King who was also a gentleman.

On the 26th, I had booked a seat for Kreisler's violin performance at the Albert Hall. That was postponed to the 29th March, owing to the King's death. So, I went to see the King's lying-in-state in Westminster Hall. At 3-30 p.m., I went and stood at the end of a queue two miles long, and, in places, 12 to 15 deep. There was regular jostling, though there was no disorder. Curiosity had as much part in assembling the enormous mob of four lakhs as grief and reverence. At 10-15 p.m., the queue was three miles long, and I was at last able to enter the hall, and see the dead monarch's coffin surmounted by the Imperial mantle and Crown and Standard and a gigantic Cross. Four guards, in their picturesque uniform, were standing statue-like, with bowed heads, at the four corners, and four spearmen were standing further away, and four other soldiers were in front. The whole thing was simple, though terribly impressive. It was said that, at one time in the night, the four sons of the King, unostentatiously and unknown to the public, mounted guard over their beloved father's corpse, taking the place of the usual guards, and were not recognised by the mob owing to the same uniform worn by them, and owing to their heads being bowed.

On the 28th, the great funeral procession took place. Seven kings walked four miles, from Westminster to Paddington, in that sunny drizzle. Several hundreds of thousands watched the procession; and a few saw it. Fabulous sums were paid for seats, some even paying 25 guineas per seat, or rather standing space, at windows. The vast majority could not see anything, because of the crowds. Several people who paid 1 to 5 guineas, at the end of Oxford and Cambridge terrace, for seats, could not even get to their seats in the stadium owing to the enormous crowd, which was as big as that at the Maghamela, at Prayag or Haridwar, or the Mahamakham at Kumbhakonam, or the Vaikunta Ekadesi at Srirangam, or the Lakshadwipam at Trivandrum. I saw the hopelessness of seeing anything, and so returned to my rooms, determined to see it on the screen, which I accordingly did, on the 1st February at Piccadily, in one of the best "New Theatres" there.

Five hundred persons were injured in a rush of the mob past the police cordon at the Marble Arch, and one even died. That day, 10,000 people fainted, and were rendered first aid. Truly a gigantic procession and record crowds, some thousands having slept on the pavement all night to get front places in the morning.

The people of England love their Kings dearly, but love processions as greatly as any Indian or other Oriental. Human nature is much the same all over the world. That day, I lost much of the shame I used to feel at the enormous crowds which assemble at the gorgeous Dasara processions of our Rajas, despite their own appalling poverty. As for the crowds which assemble at our religious processions, there is, of course, less cause for shame. "If a million people can follow a funeral procession, there is nothing wrong in a million following God's procession" was my reply to an atheist friend who had

complained about them. The King of Kings must always stand on a different footing from earthly Kings.

I heard many interesting stories about King George, who was highly popular with his people, and had died at the height of his popularity. Some of them are worth recounting here. One concerns our own country. When Mahatma Gandhi went to attend the Round Table Conference, and it was intended to invite him, along with the other delegates, to dine with the King, a prominent English politician told His Majesty that a semi-naked fakir should not be allowed to go up the steps of Buckingham palace with his loin cloth, and, so, should be left out of the invitation. The King, with his usual robust commonsense, said "Invite him, but let him at least come, in his loin cloth, as ladies will be present!" The Mahatma went, and was the most-sought-after man in the dinner, next to the King.

Another story was about the King's determination to grant the Irish Free State its freedom, despite the bitter opposition of Ulster backed by the Conservative Party and the other die-hards of England. The King's personal sympathies were, of course, with the Ulster ultra-loyalists. But, King George felt that he was the King of the Sinn-Feinners too, and must do them also justice. Though the officers of the Ulster regiments threw up their commissions, much to the sorrow of the King, he accepted them, and went ahead with the tenacity of a sailor, as he was once. Then, with characteristic magnanimity, he forgot the Ulstermen's action, and opened the First Ulster Parliament, and rejoiced their hearts; but, by his speech on that occasion, he endeared himself to the Southern Irishmen as much as he did to the Ulstermen.

Again, when the Ministers of the Irish Free State asked for the resignation of the Governor-General of Ireland, simply

to appoint their own nominee in his stead, King George quietly complied with their request, as it was constitutionally correct. Not a word did he utter when the Irish Free State abolished the King's veto and the right of appeal to the Privy Council by petition, and loudly proclaimed that Ireland was a republic, and was entitled to remain neutral in any war, as it has actually done now, interning even British airmen who accidentally land there while defending Ireland's shores.

This constitutional correctness of King George's attitude made him beloved even among socialists and anarchists. The first four years of his reign were as stormy and troubled as the last four years were peaceful. At the crisis caused by the Parliament Bill, in 1911, the King, much against his personal wishes, upheld the vote of the House of Commons, and made it clearly understood that he would create hundreds of Peers in order to get the bill passed in the House of Lords, if the Lords persisted in their opposition. Though such a creation would have meant the end of the institution of Peerage in England, King George had no hesitation. Seeing the King's firm attitude, the Lords of England gave way, and the Parliament Bill became the Parliament Act. Questioned, long afterwards, by Mr. Churchill as to which was his worse ordeal, this constitutional crisis or the Great War, His Majesty replied "For me, the most difficult was the constitutional crisis. In the War, we were all united. We should sink or swim together. But then, in my first year, half the nation was one way, and half the other."

When Lloyd George returned from Paris with the victorious Treaty of Versailles, King George, quite against all precedent, went to Victoria Station, and received him, and took him in his own carriage to Buckingham palace.

His gentlemanliness was perfect. I was told that once, he invited a Negro potentate to dinner. That worthy, not

knowing Western table manners, began to drink water from his finger-bowl. Seeing some of the other guests smiling in contempt, King George promptly drank some water from his own finger-bowl, and the smile, of course, stopped. Such a ready and understanding act to relieve his guest from embarrassment is rare to find.

King George's motto was always "Trust the people," and, so, he was popular with his people to the end. But, he had no illusions. He never attached too much importance to mere popularity, and considered that a King should behave with more dignity than a commoner. I was told that about his eldest son, Edward VIII, he used to remark "He is a very good ambassador of the Empire, and very popular. But, this must be toned down a bit when he becomes King." King Edward VIII did not believe in this principle, of a King acting differently from other men. The result was that he had to abdicate, for the majority of Englishmen agreed with King George, rather than with him, on this matter. But, despite this difference in temperament, the father could understand the son well. When Edward asked for the Prime Minister's permission to go to the Front in the Great War, stating, "My father has four sons; So, why should I be fettered?" nobody was more pleased than his father.

I may add that King Edward VIII, as Prince of Wales, came nearest to the description of "Prince Charming" possible in the twentieth century. As Prince of Wales, he visited India at a time of crisis, and yet won the esteem of even the advocates of Independence for India. At Madras he is said to have informally attended a typical Indian dinner and eaten with his hands from a plantain leaf like the rest. This may be mere legend, but is significant for all that. In his broadcast speech as King, on a famous occasion, he referred only to India by name, and not to any of the Dominions. Finally he,

abdicated an Empire for the love of a woman and Truth, brushing aside the suggestions for a morganatic marriage given by morally atrophied minds. He, too, was a gentleman like his father.

The Silver Jubilee of King George was celebrated all over the Empire with an enthusiasm not excelled even in the days of Queen Victoria, and his funeral procession was unique in the annals of the Rulers of England.

During these two visits to England, I visited Kingsley Hall, Muriel Lester's Social Reform Colony in the East End of London, and saw the very room occupied by Mahatma Gandhi, and the bed slept on by him. The poor people of that locality told me that Gandhiji used to go for his walk early in the morning, doing a brisk two miles, like a young man, and talking to kids and their parents on the way. Some of them told me "We like old man Gandhi. He was genuine. He never wore trousers here, despite the bitter cold. Nor did he eat our food. We can understand such a sincere man who is ready to suffer for his convictions." An old lady there told me that she had no tea to offer the Mahatma, and was embarrassed till he told her that, even if she had it, he would not drink it, as he did not believe in it. She added "I wish I too did not believe in it. Then, I, too, would not feel the want of it."

An English friend told me that a retired high official from India procured a goat with great trouble and sent it all the way from York to London for the Mahatma, but, that, owing to the journey, the animal, whose milking qualities have been small even at the outset, did not produce a drop of milk, despite strenuous efforts, and, so, was never presented to the Mahatma.

I heard another stirring story. That was this. A retired Governor from India went and told the Mahatma "You can't

expect us to go out of your country, seeing that we have invested there one thousand million pounds on railways, telegraphs, irrigation works etc." The Mahatma at first offered to abide by the decision of an arbitration tribunal, consisting of Indians and Englishmen with an American President. But, when the questioner insisted that that would not do, the Mahatma burst out "Take away your railways, telegraphs, and trains, aye, burst your dams and barrages, cut the trees and crops too, and carry away whatever can be moved and taken away, but leave our country and us thereafter, to work out our own destinies." His tone was so sincere, and the moral indignation so evident, and the other listeners so impressed, that the ex-governor edged away quietly.

During my subsequent visits to England, there were two suicides and homicides by Indians which considerably embarrassed the other Indians in the country. The first suicide was by a brilliant University student who had married a girl wife in India. He fell in love with a college girl in England, and, owing to the moral conflict thus generated in him, committed suicide in his rooms. For some time thereafter, people in that street would not rent out rooms to Indians, fearing that they might commit suicide, and leave their rooms compulsorily untenanted for at least six months. Even in England, people do not fall over one another in an eager attempt to rent out rooms with such associations.

The next case of suicide was that of an Indian belonging to a noble family. He contracted a certain loathsome disease, and was being treated with secret remedies which ate away his pocket money. He withstood all this, and was jolly, till he had a cable from his father about the settlement of his marriage with the daughter of a fellow-noble. Stung to the quick at this, and ashamed to tell his father his state of health, he hired a taxi, and committed suicide in it by

swallowing potassium cyanide. The result of this was that the taxi was detained with the police for two days for the necessary enquiries, and the Indians of that locality had some slight difficulty in hiring taxis for some days.

One of the cases of homicide was Dr. Ruxton's sensational murder of his wife and her maid. In a fit of jealousy at the conduct of his flighty wife, Dr. Ruxton seems to have killed her and then her devoted maid in order to hush up his first offence. He carried both the bodies several miles away in his car, chopped them into small pieces, and scattered them in a lonely glen. It speaks very much for the efficiency of the British Police that these offences were detected and successfully booked, though the evidence was wholly circumstantial, and though one of the experts examined about the skeletons declared that one was that of a man and the other of a woman, though, of course, both the victims were women. Unlike in India, this fatal error of the experts did not spoil the case. Dr. Ruxton was sentenced to be hanged. Many thousands had felt a real doubt about his guilt, owing to the circumstantial nature of the evidence, and his protest to the last that he was innocent. They had also some sympathy with him because his wife was really flighty, and they thought that marital jealousy was not only natural but desirable. No less than six thousand persons signed a petition for commuting his sentence to one of penal servitude. That was rejected, and he was hanged. After his hanging, the "News of the World" published an alleged confession said to be signed by him and sent to the paper before his death, for publication after his hanging, in which he confessed to the crimes, stating that he committed them in a fit of jealousy, and begging his friends to look after his children. It is, of course, impossible to say how far this confession represents the real truth.

The second case of homicide was somewhat curious. An Indian lascar made some money and became a hawker of goods. There are hundreds of such Indian hawkers all over England and Ireland, hawking Chinese Silk and Japanese goods and Indian curios, and eking out a precarious existence. This particular man fell in love with a beautiful working-class girl. Both of them had led a fast life before. The man did not mind it, and married her, adding that she was no worse than he, but said that they should thereafter be faithful to each other. They were very happy for two months after the marriage. Then, he went out on his hawking expeditions which kept him away from home for two months, and the woman, according to information conveyed by the neighbouring women to him on his return, had misconducted herself with a German commercial traveller. He forgave her that once, but asked her not to do it again, stating that it would be the end of her. She laughed, and kept quiet, and they lived happily again for another month. Once more, he went on his hawking expeditions. Once more, she was reported to have misbehaved with the same man. This time, he did not tell her anything, but, in the course of what appeared to be a friendly cuddling on a Sunday afternoon, witnessed by numerous grinning and giggling men and women of the neighbouring slums, he inflicted no less than 27 knife wounds on her, and killed her, and put her corpse on her bed, and escaped. Some hours thereafter, when her friends went to her house to chaff her on the episode, they found the door locked, and called in the police and opened it, and found the unfortunate woman dead. It is obvious that no black man can make good his escape in a white country like England, and that no white man can make good his escape in a black country like India. The man was arrested in a Liverpool boarding house, and brought to London. There, he made an attempt to escape from the Magistrate's Court,

when taken there for remand, but was, of course, caught. When finally put up for trial, he represented to the Court that he did not know English, and knew only Hindustani. Though the police expressed surprise at this, and argued that he had married an English wife, and ought to know English, the Judge remarked, in accordance with the grand principles of English Justice, "He is an accused. I believe his statement. What he means is that he may know to talk pidgin English but that he does not know the words used at a murder trial, like 'murder' and 'manslaughter,' which I doubt whether even the majority of Englishmen know with precision. Appoint a translator at three guineas per day," and one was appointed.

One of the commonest things which overtake Indians in England is the lunacy of lodgings. Often, you get what you consider a perfect place at the outset, but, by degrees, the perfection wears away, and the place appears threadbare and to be merely a snare from which you ought to escape. Thus, at first, I used to live in Lancaster Gate in a high class Club. The Kensington Gardens were hardly 100 yards away, and there was a fine cathedral opposite the Club. The food was vegetarian. There were delightful shower baths. The company was varied, and select. The atmosphere was cultured. There were only two defects. The first was that there was too much discussion, and so the place was not congenial for study for a man of my temperament who requires no persuasion to join in any discussion. The second was that the average age of the inmates was well above 40, and this made the place look like a preparatory school for the other world.

So, I tried once or twice to get other suitable lodgings, but always in West End, either in Lancaster Gate or Westbourne Terrace or in Bayswater, and never in Earls Court, Hampstead, Ealing and other localities, which appeared to me to be more

plebeian, though cheaper. During one of these experiments, I booked a beautiful furnished room with a piano and double bed in it. It is quite usual for people in London to take a double bed-room when they want more space than that afforded by a single bed room, as it is less expensive and more comfortable than a bed room and a sitting room. The terms were two guineas a week for bread and breakfast, and I paid a deposit of one pound, stating that I would occupy the room three days later when it was expected to be vacated by the then lodger. Returning to the club with the news, I was told by a Hindu friend that the locality, though fashionable, was not respectable. When a Muslim friend also confirmed it, I resolved to cancel the booking and take back what I could get. Both my friends cheerfully assured me that I would lose the whole pound, and might also perhaps be called upon to pay the balance of one pound and two shillings, I said "I don't think so. Even if that is to be so, I am prepared to lose the money than live in such a locality." The next morning, I went to the landlady, and told her about my having changed my mind, adding that she had given me neither food nor shelter, and had not taken away even the notice from the window about the vacant room, and should, therefore, take six shillings for the one day which had passed since my booking, and give me the remaining 14 shillings. She replied "I haven't a farthing with me. All my money is with the manager who is away. Will you call in the morning, and talk over the matter with him?" Acting on the principle that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, I said "Look here, you may take ten shillings, adding four more to cover your disappointment. Now, you can't urge any reason for not giving me the other ten shillings." That went home. She at once gave me ten shillings, thereby causing a miracle, for, she, who had not a farthing with her a minute ago, had

ten good shillings a moment later. The miracle was worth four shillings.

For some months after this abortive adventure, I clung on to the Club. But, Time, the great healer, is also the great disturber. The lodgings' hunt was resumed once more. I pitched upon a very fine room in another locality in the West End. The room was simply beautiful, and had three wardrobes, tables, shelves etc. besides four comfortable easy chairs and a settee. The street had two churches at either end, and was a beautiful one with broad pavements on either side, and the road in between. The Irish house-keeper was simply superb, and used to cook the tenderest beans, cauliflower and cabbage for me, and fry potatoes in real butter, and make me plum puddings and all sorts of fruit pies and tarts. I enjoyed my meals there immensely. The only thing which disturbed me was the gas fire which began to leak gas one morning, after a month's stay. The house-keeper's husband plugged the leak with a piece of wood. Still the gas leaked, and the unmistakable smell of escaping gas was in the atmosphere. Then I stopped it with vaseline, and phoned for the gasman. There was an hour's interval before he came. I kept on lighting up the vaseline from time to time to see if the gas was escaping. The gasman arrived in the middle of one of these operations. He laughed and asked me "Do you know anything about gas?" "No" said I "except that variety of gas which is called history." He set right the defect in no time, and left me happy, not even charging anything for the work, stating that it was the Gas Company's job to see that men like me were not gassed to death, and the company made to pay compensation to their heirs and dependants.

A week later, when I had become fond of my new room, an incident happened which made it inevitable for me to leave it. There was an Indian living in the top flat of the

same house. He was trading in silk. The house-keeper told me that she had not seen him go out except to public houses. He had married an English woman of the middle classes. As he was drinking often, there was trouble. One evening, he brought a man and woman to his room, and had dinner with them with curried chicken etc. There were the usual potatoes. Afterwards, the woman alleged that he struck her. There was profuse bleeding from her nose. The man with her brought a policeman. When the policeman went up, I felt uneasy about the character of the house. Finding a young lady from the opposite room also watching the policeman go up, I asked her "What kind of place is this? I say, do policemen come here like this?" "The policemen do not come for you or me. Then why should you worry?" was her sensible reply. "What do you do here?" I asked. "I am studying commercial subjects here," said she. She added that she was a Norwegian, and that she liked London immensely. "Everybody here lives his or her own life, and does not worry about others. That is much the best way. The greatest blessing is to be allowed to live one's own life in one's own way" said she. I think of this last sentence whenever I think of Norway and its present plight.

The Indian was soon taken out of the house by the policeman, and as he was drunk—I have always felt a great repugnance to approach people under the influence of drink—I did not accost him or ascertain what the matter was. In the magistrate's court, he said that the man and the girl had taken with them to his flat a bottle of gin which they had themselves bought, and had drunk all of it themselves to keep company with the chicken curry, not giving him even a drop, and had asked him to pay for it as they were his guests! He refused. The girl then called him "Son of a black bitch!" and he spat at her, and, was astonished to see, soon afterwards, this

bleeding which could never have been the result of any act of his. The magistrate released him on bail, and adjourned the case for the police to make enquiries about the antecedents of the two visitors. At the adjourned hearing, the police reported that the man and woman were both 'drunks,' that the woman was an old hand at petty blackmail, and that the man was her escort, wherever she went, and was helping to bring in the police on critical occasions. The police doctor reported that the bleeding was most probably due to vicarious menstruation, and that there was no bruise whatever on the spot of the nose said to have been hit. The Indian and his wife celebrated his acquittal with a wine party. His wife, who was a charming woman, said to me, on her way to the party, "Come and join us. Wine is not bad, like spirits, and does not intoxicate so quickly." When I told her that I had never touched a drop, and never would, she said "Ah, you are a good Indian, the second I have met. Several say that they do not drink, but accept one for courtesy, and the fall begins." She went up. Then her husband came down to my room and asked me to go and take at least a little chicken curry. "No" said I "I don't eat chicken." "Did you never eat eggs in this country?" asked he. "Yes" said I "But never chickens." "Don't be silly" said he, 'You ate eggs. So, why not chickens which come out of them?' obsessed with that curious logic which comes from drinking, and mental disorders. I replied "A thing being eaten does not mean that you can eat anything which comes out of it. Thus, I eat rice, but shall not dream of touching rice arrack which comes out of it. I eat sugarcane, but shall not go near rum which comes out of it. I eat graft mangoes, but not the beetles which come out of their stones." After this reply, he left. The day after this, I gave a week's notice, and, on its expiry, went back to the club, wiser and sadder.

I used to pay regular visits to the Indian Students' Hostel in Gower Street in order to meet new arrivals from India as well as other Indians. This hostel has been recently bombed and smashed by the Germans, killing one Indian and injuring others. The inmates took the bombing cheerfully, and have now migrated to another building. One of my attractions there was the fine Indian sweets and the excellent game of ping-pong which was always being played there. About the ping-pong itself, as about badminton, I had once a low opinion, considering them both to be pregnant ladies' games. But, even during my first visit to England, a famous Punjab player had taken offence at my description of ping-pong like this, and had told me "You can't even indicate the position of the ball when I play. So quick and skilled is the game." I said "Nonsense." He replied "Will you apologise, and revise your opinion, if you are not able to indicate its position correctly during any one of nine strokes?" I said "Certainly." To my bewilderment, when he began to play with another expert, and eight strokes were exchanged, the ball had gone to another place before I could locate its exact position. Fortunately for me, at the ninth stroke, it fell on the ground, and I replied "There it is!" and escaped without a verbal apology, though the nonsense had been knocked out of me. The same experience I had about badminton, when an American missionary lady, running a girls' school at Chittoor, asked me to join in a game of badminton, and all the girls laughed at my immobility and my missing even balls grazing my racket.

During one of my visits to the Indian Hostel, I had lent a pound to an Indian, with whom my acquaintance was limited, on the principle that when even a Russian had lent me a pound in need, that was the least that I should do for a brother Indian in need. He had promised to return it the very next week, and I had asked him not to be in a hurry.

He took my words literally, and showed no particular hurry at all. Then, one of my friends told me that that man was noted for not returning any loan, and was actually boasting about it, and throwing out challenges to his creditor friends to try to recover a farthing if they could. My friend added "Recover at least a shilling out of the pound you lent, and break his record. But it is hopeless." I took up the challenge, but soon found that neither cajolings, nor requests in solitude, or in company, had the least effect on the borrower who had thrown a veritable rhinoceros hide over his skin. My friend, much to my chagrin, was always asking me "Any luck, Mr. Ayyar? No wonder when you yourself cannot recover your dues, you, Judges, are unable to recover the dues of decree-holders for them." So, I took up the matter in earnest and carefully prepared a plan. I ceased making all requests for return of the loan, and began chumming with the borrower once more, as if there was no wall of debt between us. Then, one day, I casually invited him to have lunch with me. He agreed with alacrity. We had several kinds of fine dishes, including fresh strawberry and cream, and sundaes, and consumed between us eatables worth five shillings, quite a record for an Indian Hostel repast, considering that everything was comparatively cheap there. At the end of the meal, I told the cashier that my friend would pay for us both, and that the five shillings might be put to his account. My friend asked me indignantly "What? You invited me for the meal, and not I you." "That is so" said I, "I also mean that I should pay for both our meals, and only want the five shillings to be adjusted out of the one pound I lent you." He was neatly caught, and stood speechless with indignation. But, I had saved my reputation for ability with my friend who was watching the entire proceedings with relish. I never more accepted any challenge to recover dues from such hopeless persons.

On another visit to the Indian Hostel, I met an Indian astrologer who had contributed an article to an English paper stating that Mahatma Gandhi would die before the end of 1932. The man was boasting that he had predicted the victory of Hoover in the Presidential Elections, and that his predictions never went wrong. I told him "This is a mean thing for you to do, to predict the death of the greatest of India's sons." "But, I have to speak the truth," said he. "Truth!" said I, "Find out your own destiny, instead of worrying about others." Many Indians who had been made sad by his prediction asked me whether it was likely to come true. I said "Certainly not! This man can no more predict the date of Gandhiji's death than I can predict the date of the sun's extinction," and the words went home. Of course, Gandhiji did not die, as this man predicted, but, the next month, the man himself went to jail for having given a cheque on a bank to his landlady without having a balance in that Bank, and knowing that he had no balance, an offence in England.

On another occasion, I came across a son of Kerala who was anxious to break all records in flying, by performing a non-stop world flight. I asked him whether it was possible for him to do it. "Yes" he said "if the gods will it." "But, what about your own equipment?" I asked, "The gods help only those who help themselves," he replied, "Those favoured by the gods will be given by them the means to achieve what they want." I asked him "How to find out whether you are favoured by the gods?" He did not reply, but looked at me with a vacant stare, as if a new doubt had arisen in his mind. I did not know him well enough to pursue the matter further, having only met him that day in that casual crowd in the hostel. After my return to India, I saw in the papers that he had undertaken the world flight, after breaking a coconut to Ganesa, and

getting blessings from a Swami, and had crashed on the French coast. I pitied this brave man's fate, and perhaps, my last query to him might have occurred to him when he crashed. When a friend of mine told me, after seeing the news in the papers, that it was a rash and senseless thing for the man to do, I said "Too few Indians do such rash things for me to condemn it wholeheartedly."

One day, I went to the Derby races, just to have an idea of them. The bookies and the tote were as busy as ever, and the folk in the crowd were gay, well-dressed and crazy over the races. I watched the races from a good seat, and saw a Eurasian sitting near me bet freely in the first three races, and watch through his glasses and announce the winner loudly long before we could make out which horse it was. When the fourth race was over, he rose, and was walking away, without announcing the winner, when I asked him which horse had won, looking at the names of the horses in my "Race Guide." "I don't care which old horse wins" said he, "My money is exhausted, and my bet in this race is lost, like the rest. I don't have even enough left for a good drink." I asked him "Why do you want to celebrate your losses with a drink?", "Oh" said he "just to console myself. What about your bets? Any luck?" "No luck or ill-luck" said I. "for, I never bet, and never win or lose." "Then, why did you come here?" he asked me in wonder. "Just to see the old horses go," said I. "Like the sweetmeat shopkeeper watching his sweetmeats without eating them?" he asked. "No" said I. "Like a research worker in cholera watching cholera germs in other countries in order to tackle them, as they have spread to his country too," and he left with a puzzled expression on his features.

When in London, I went one day to the Bohemian restaurant in Soho to hear the band and see things for myself.

Soho is, of course, the centre of foreigners in London. You can see the strangest races in the world there, living cheek by jowl. I went into the restaurant, and sat at a table, and, at once, scores of eyes were peering at me. The waiter came and asked "What will you have sir? Beer? Claret? Port?" I said "Bring a glass of water," and he did. I drank it in peace, and went out after enjoying the band and leaving a tip of six pence for the waiter. A friend of mine, who heard of this episode from me, said "You are more Bohemian than the Bohemians. Fancy going to a restaurant and coming away after taking a glass of water!" I told him "I was not hungry, and it was not time for a meal or even tea. I do not drink, and, so, I have to do like this." He retorted "You could have at least taken mineral water or ginger." So, when I went to the Hungarian restaurant the next day, I utilised this knowledge, and ordered for a piece of cake and mineral water, and heard the beautiful strains of "The Blue Danube," and watched the Hungarian national dance. I asked a Hungarian there, who knew good English, "I say, are you at all related to the Huns?" "No" said he, "any more than the Germans are. Why, whatever made you think so?" I replied "The name of your country, Hungary, or Hun *Gadi*, or Hun *Cheri* means, in our South Indian languages, 'the abode of the Huns!'" "What! You have got the word "Gary! Are you Indians too speaking Ugrian dialects?" I replied "This word might have been taken over by the Aryans and Dravidians from some of the aboriginal inhabitants of India, like the Mundas, the Savaras, and the Aarons, who are supposed to be related to the races which speak the Ugrian dialects." He said after a moment's reflection, "Mind you, we shall not be ashamed if we are Huns. Attila, the Hun, was as great as Napoleon, the French Emperor, or Alexander of Macedon," "Even greater," said I "though that was partly due to the more thorough

nature of his methods." He laughed, and asked me to visit the Hungarian restaurant now and then.

I had a fancy to go to Russia, having been attracted by the fine illustrated pamphlets issued by the Russian embassy in London. I went into the Russian Intourist office, and asked the girl in charge of the enquiry department "Can a vegetarian live in comfort in Russia?" "Easily" said she, "Pay 30 pounds for a thirty days' tour, and we take you from London and bring you back here, after seeing everything in Russia." "But, will I starve and lose weight?" I asked. "Well" said she, "I make a sporting offer. We weigh you when you begin the tour and after you finish it. For every pound of weight lost, we give you a pound; for every pound of weight gained, you give us a pound." I told her that I could not give her a pound for any gain in weight, as I did not want to gain any weight. She said "All right. The other part of the contract remains. Now, book your passage." I said "I shall consider the matter," and went to the foreign office, and got an endorsement in my passport for going to Russia, U. S. A. and Turkey, by paying two shillings. But, as misfortune would have it, I had some trouble with my eyes, and, so, had to cancel the proposed Russian visit.

I heard some funny stories about Russia from my Indian friends. It seems one Indian went to that country, and wanted to buy roubles at 27 per pound, privately, though prohibited by law and punishable with the death penalty, instead of at the official rate of six roubles for a pound given by the U. S. S. R. Needless to say, the moment he had completed the transaction privately, and got 270 roubles for his ten pounds, the Cheka, the Russian secret police, came to know of it and arrested him. But, on discovering that his sole surplus money was one pound, and that his desire to visit all the places in Russia, with his scanty funds, had been responsible

for that act, they simply confiscated the 270 roubles, and sent him out.

Another story ran as follows. The Bolsheviks give a month's free travel coupon to teachers, workers and others. But these free coupon-holders were so many, and the trains so few, that few of them ever got into a train during their holidays. To favour the most deserving, a system was introduced by which special tickets exempted their holders from standing in the general queues. An English crack workman working for the Bolsheviks got such a special ticket. He went to a station to board a train and found a mile-long queue. He pitied those in it, and was walking ahead when they raised angry shouts and asked him to fall in at the end. "I have a special ticket, and am exempt from the general queue" said he. "So have we all" said they "this is a special queue."

I once took an English friend to a play. We sat in the five shillings six pence seats. My friend was a good pianist, and a person with some influence in the theatreland. He got two 12 sh. 6 d. complimentary tickets for a show another day. It is quite usual for such complimentary tickets to be distributed, rather freely, in the third and fourth weeks of a show, in order to give a delusive crowded appearance to the house, and attract the smaller fry, who would, of course, pay cash. The only thing obligatory on the complimentary ticket-holders was that they should wear evening dress, being in the dress circle. Both of us went in and took our seats. The play was none too good, as might be expected from such artificial crowds. During the interval, when I looked behind me, I saw in a five and six seat, a retired high official from India who had been noted for his superior airs while here. With pretended surprise, I said to him "Hullo, you in a five and six seat!" and he replied "You know how it is. We retired officials find England much costlier than India, and can't afford

such seats as you in active service can take." I replied "What nonsense! You think that I bought this ticket?" "What else?" said he. "See," said I, and showed him the complimentary ticket. He was dumbfounded. It never occurred to him for a moment that the Englishman sitting next to me might be my friend and might have given it to me. He asked me "How did you manage to get it?" "Don't you know? White men in a black country get complimentary tickets, as you must have got in India. Black men in a white country get complimentary tickets, as I have here. It is only the peculiarity of the skin that is responsible for the extra attention, and not any merit." He winced. "Come and have a cup of coffee," said I. "No, thanks", said he. I went and took a cup of coffee, and went back to my seat and found my friend's seat empty. He did not return even after the interval was over.

The bargain sales in London afforded as much amusement as ever. I bought a clock for a guinea at one of these sales, at Christmas. It was guaranteed for a year, but began to show erratic timing after a week. When I took the clock back to the seller, he told me "Oh, it is the freezing which is responsible for this." Then, I said to him "In summer, it will be the heating, I suppose?" "Well" said he "do you expect anything grand, in the way of clocks, for a guinea?"

At another shop, I bought a camel-hair dressing-gown for two guineas at a bargain sale. On going home, I discovered that it had two tiny moth-eaten holes in it. So, I returned it to the shop-keeper, and wanted to exchange it for another. He said "Choose any you like." Out of the remaining 27 gowns, he gave me to select from, I did not find a single one without holes, and became crest-fallen. "Shall I show you one from the stock?" said he "It will cost three guineas." "What!" said I, "I thought it was a clearance sale. Do you

keep good things in stock and sell only bad things at a bargain sale?" He said "I wish you were not quite so blunt, but, practically, it amounts to that." He brought the three-guineas dressing-gown, which was perfect, and exactly like the one I had bought, except for the absence of the holes. I paid the extra guinea, and walked off with the sound dressing-gown, thinking within myself "All that glitters is not gold, and honesty is of two grades, though rather ill-defined."

There was an Indian lady, the wife of a high official, who invited me to tea one day, and remarked in the course of it, that fixed prices and absolute honesty were universal in England among the merchants. I told her "Jump into a bus with me, and I shall disillusion you." We went to Piccadilly Circus, and I showed her a big goldsmith's shop with the blazing placards "All goods at this shop at half prices from to-day." I said "You know that gold is rising in price. Then, how does this honest man sell his gold wares at half prices from to-day? Did he treat his clients of yesterday, who paid him the full price, fairly? This is a sample of the universal honesty and fixed prices in this country you talked about." She laughed, and said "You cunning thing, you could have told me this, there itself, instead of wasting my time by dragging me here." I replied "Headstrong ladies like you have to see and believe. You will never *hear* and believe."

By way of contrast, I want to narrate here a very pleasing incident in London, showing high commercial principles. I bought a Ford Pen for two guineas from the Head Office at Holborn. The next day, it slipped from my hand, and the barrel was cracked. I went to the shop to buy another barrel, and applied to the lady who had sold the pen. She gave me a brand-new pen in exchange. "But I broke the barrel myself"

said I "It is not a defect in the making." "Still," said she "it ought not to have broken, the very next day, that way. That's all right."

I went to St. Albans one afternoon to see if the nudist colony, reputed to be there in a wood near the town, was really there, as asserted by some friends. At the compound gate of the alleged colony, a man asked me "Are you a member, sir?" I said "No." Then, he said "This is a private place, and you cannot enter, unless you are a member. We do not want people to come out of idle curiosity, to laugh at our principles." "I see," said I, "I simply wanted to know if in England also people are allowed to run nudist colonies." "Oh yes" said he, "so long as it is in a private place and is confined to members. Are'nt you allowed to be naked in your bath room?" Then I asked him "Do you think it is conducive to morals to allow people to go nude?" "Why not?" asked he, "Let me tell you, the main objection to nudism is from ugly men and women who look grand in clothes, but will look ridiculous without them."

On my return journey, I forgot my new umbrella in the train. Though there was the Railway Lost Property Department, I considered that only old umbrellas would be recovered, and not a new and costly umbrella, like mine. Still, I put in a card to the Lost Property Office, and, lo, got a call, and recovered my one-guinea umbrella, after paying one shilling for charges and charity.

One day, I went to Cardiff and met a stranded Muslim dascar there. He was unemployed then. He had married a Welsh woman. He had no less than six children, including two pairs of twins. He was getting an unemployment allowance of 40 sh. a week. I asked him how he was getting on. He said "You see me, sir. No job anywhere for me, though I am willing to go and work in any ship."<sup>6</sup> The children

were charming, and I gave them the entire parcel of banana sweets, which I had taken with me. Their mummy was even more pleased than their daddy at this present, and remarked "We would not have been in this hopeless state if we were in India," which remark was quite wrong, but which I did not care to correct, as any good impression of India is an asset in these days.

I was told by some friends that in Limehouse, Chinatown and Chatham Docks, in the East End, there were some people selling cocaine after dark, and that they were practically pursuing pedestrians for compelling them to purchase the deleterious stuff. Determined to verify this, I went one evening to Chinatown, and was walking along the street, when I found an ill-dressed man following me. I turned into a side street, and he too followed. I walked fast, and he walked fast. I stopped in front of a house, where an old lady was standing outside, and he stopped where he was, some yards behind. I got convinced that he was a queer customer, whether he was a cocaine man or not, and did not want to verify further, and, so, kept on chatting with the old lady till a bus came along. Then I boarded it and left for the West End without any more ado. Sometimes, it is safer to leave things without verification than to verify and get oneself landed in an awkward predicament.

While in London, I went to the performances of Kreisler and Paul Robeson. Kreisler is a perfect master of the Violin, and his three hours' performance passed off enchantingly. Paul Robeson sang his famous Negro spirituals, river songs etc. wonderfully. He has a fine voice, natural tone, and clear articulation, and is immensely popular with the British. He told some Indians, who were accusing him of currying favour with the Whites. "At any rate, I do not go and stay at any hotel where other negroes are not admitted, This is more than what some of your countrymen can say."

I went and saw the famous Bertram Mills Circus. There was the beautiful Spanish wire dance, five Carlos walking on a wire 40 feet high, the sea-lion band, the rocket train going at a speed of two hundred miles an hour, etc. But, the most interesting thing was the fire-walking by Khuda Baksh, near that place. This Muslim compatriot was walking with bare feet across glowing embers whose heat could be felt even twenty feet away. I had seen fire-walking at Palghat, and was not much impressed by it, as some of the fire-walkers were men of no character, who, by some contrivance, managed to come out unscathed, whereas many pious and respectable people would get severely burnt if they attempted the thing. Seeing Khuda Baksh walking unscathed some English doctors examined his feet before the next fire-walking, and satisfied themselves that he was not applying any ointment to prevent burns, and that he had, in fact, sustained no burns. This astonished them, like the astonishment of the scientists in India on seeing a Sadhu, Narasimhaswami, swallow arsenic, mercury and prussic acid unharmed. Khuda Baksh, in his enthusiasm, even piloted some English people across the fire, and they, too, got off unscathed. Some of them, encouraged by this, were confident that Khuda Baksh's piloting them had nothing to do with their not getting burnt, and, so, insisted on walking across the fire themselves, unaided by him, with the result that their feet were badly burnt. Their scepticism was not reinforced during their subsequent three weeks' stay in the hospital, and the application of soothing and burning medicines.

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## CHAPTER XV

### SOCIETIES LEARNED AND UNLEARNED

I propose in this chapter to speak about my attending the meetings of some societies, learned and unlearned, I was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom in 1933. This association of authors of which the King is the Patron, was founded by royal charter, and has on its rolls almost all the prominent authors of the British Isles, besides a number of prominent authors of other countries. Its headquarters are located in Bloomsbury Square, the heart of the University area. Every fortnight during the season, there were delightful teas, followed by learned and interesting lectures on literature. There was free social intercourse between the assembled persons, and it was one of the great advantages of these meetings that you could informally meet one of the brain trusts of England. During one of these meetings, I was talking to Drinkwater, the author of "Abraham Lincoln," "Oliver Cromwell," "Mary Stuart," "Bird in Hand," and other plays, and a fine poet and speaker. He told me that it would be a good thing if we organised in India an association of authors who made it their job to translate, as early as possible, the great works in the Indian languages into English, as, in his opinion, they would tend to bring about better understanding between England and India. He asked me whether I could read Tagore in the original, and seemed to be surprised when I answered in the negative. "They say that his works read so much better in the original Bengali," said he, "though they are fascinating enough in English." He then wanted to know whether I had written any book

in the Indian languages too, and was amazed when I said "Oh, no, all the emphasis in our days was on English." "It is good that you know English so well. Many Indian authors write in English very well indeed. But, then, there are some things you can't very well do in a foreign language. The highest Poetry can only be written in one's own language. Take the 'Paradise Lost' and the 'Mayor of Casterbridge.' Both are great in their own way, and cannot be improved; the 'Paradise Lost' has the greater effect, because it is poetry," said he. He then explained to me his theory that when the mind is tired, one should go to the pictures; when it is active and bustling, one should read good poetry, but not for more than an hour, and preferably only for ten minutes at a time; and that when the mind is neither alert nor dull, one should read prose. He was glad to learn that we were making the younger generation read their lessons in their mother tongues. "That's right" said he, "of course, even in one's own mother tongue, every one cannot be an author, much less a genius, but there is less risk of a genius running to waste when the education is in the mother tongue."

There was a lecture by Brett Young, a doctor, on "The Doctor in Literature." He, had a peculiar theory, that doctors had a special aptitude for literature, as they saw life at first hand, and were present at the advent and disappearance of man from the world, and knew the real feelings of people. He asked lay novelists not to dispose of their unwanted characters by heart disease, but to take to the more convincing 'motor accident.' He was right in this. Ten people were being killed, and a hundred wounded, every day on the English roads in those days.

There was an amusing and interesting lecture on "Propaganda and the Playwright" by Professor St. John Ervine. He ridiculed all literature written to order, as

the mouthpiece of silly propaganda, be it capitalism, class war, nazism or fascism. He said that, though a Russian comedy had been written on the discovery of non-rusting steel, and a tragedy on the failure of the collective farm, eschewing all love and jealousy, these two sentiments were ingrained in human nature, and would survive the non-rusting steel and the collective farm!

I became also a member of the P.E.N., London, another brain trust. It used to have monthly dinners at the Paganis', and authors of many nations used to meet, like brothers, there. The P.E.N. had, as its President, H. G. Wells. At the dinners, lively subjects used to be discussed, and the talks were most interesting. Of course the atmosphere was more international than at the Royal Society of Literature. One night, the topic of discussion was that all associations of authors should be banned. As might be expected, at a discussion of this by an association of authors, it was talked out. Few kings proclaim a republic! The Secretary of the London P.E.N., Mr. Hermon Ould, a poet, Playwright and author of repute, was a most genial personality, and had a far better opinion of India's possibilities than the President, H. G. Wells. Of course, this was because Wells had become set in his opinions, and they had been formed before the renaissance which is sweeping India. It is amazing how conservative even revolutionaries become in course of time. As an Italian author told me, "It is like glass-blowing. While it is being blown, it is elastic, pliable and receptive. But, once the blowing is over, and it has taken its allotted shape, it rapidly sets."

One day, I went informally with some friends to a supposed spiritualist, a young lady. She pretended that she could photograph the dead after precipitating them. She showed us a photo of two men with a shadowy figure in between, and said that the shadowy figure was a dead man

precipitated! I observed that the figure in the middle might have been that of a photo photographed in between two men. There was general horror at this observation. "I didn't expect you, an Indian, to say this" said the young lady. "Already, we, Indians, are at the beck and call of others" said I, "I should be loathe to believe that our dead ancestors, too, are at your beck and call. If what you say is really true, take a photo with my father or grandfather putting his hand on my shoulder." She said "We never accept challenges. This is a place for people who believe," and I left at once without regret.

There was in those days a delightful association called the A.P.A. or All People's Association. They had monthly Parties, each month's function being called after a particular nation, like the Irish night, Hungarian night, Russian night, Indian night, etc. On those days, the people of nation in question used to muster strong in their national costumes. On the Indian night, only some Bengalis came in their national costumes. The rest of us went in our English suits. A French lady asked some of us Madrasis why we were not in our dhotis. We said that it was too cold for dhotis. "But, have you got them here?" she asked, "then, you could put them on over the woollens." We confessed that we had not brought any dhoties to England. One Indian told her "I have got a dhoti in my room. I was ashamed to put it on." "Why should you be ashamed of any Indian thing which is harmless? The Scottish tartan and kilt are certainly not more seeming than the Indian dhoti, and Scotchmen are not ashamed of them. Mind you, your women will not go on wearing sarees long in England if your men are ashamed to wear dhoties," said she.

I became a member of the Irish Society of Literature also. Many were the pleasant evenings I spent there, I was the

only Indian member then, and both Ulsterites and Sinn Feiners told me that they liked Indians, and asked me to go to Ireland and see for myself. This society had an original night and a dramatic night in every term of two months, and, once, I witnessed there 'The Shadow of the Glen' of Synge, a most impressive One Act Play with the full Irish brogue. I also listened there once to a song recital by Plunket Greene, and the song about "Lochareema," the mysterious Irish lake corresponding to our Manasarowar, with a headless warrior riding by its shores at midnight, is still vivid in my memory.

I was also frequently attending the lectures organised by the New Education Fellowship. They were all extremely interesting and highly stimulating.

I attended the lecture of Mr. Lang on "Education and Internationalism." He spoke on the supreme need of making people internationally minded, and of catching the children young. A Canadian lady in the audience said that Canada was already international. When even the lecturer demurred, that Canada was against Chinamen (mind, *not* Indians), she said sweetly "But we can't allow these Asiatics to come in herds." I then said to her "How can any country, like Canada or Australia, regulating immigration by the colour of the skin, dare to call itself international?" The lecturer agreed with me, and the Canadian dame spoke no more.

Went to the talk on "Children's Books" by Miss Farrow. She said that children preferred photos to paintings, and that photos were more accurate. I disputed both points, and said that no child would prefer a photo to a painting, and that it was truer to show a parrot in its natural colour than in a black and white photo where it might even be mistaken for a sparrow! A Canadian teacher agreed with me about the coloured pictures, She, however, opposed the lecturer's.

idea that children loved repetition. She said that modern children disliked and hated repetition. I said that rarely did Indian tots object to repetition, and that the usual thing in India, the classic land of stories, was to say 'Crow, crow, have you taken your dinner?' All laughed, and certain English school mistresses supported me. The Canadian lady said "Perhaps, those children are backward." I said "No. But they understand that what appears to you to be repetition is really rhythm, and adds force, like 'Oh, dark, dark, dark' in Samson Agonistes, or 'To-morrow and To-morrow' in Macbeth." The audience agreed.

I attended a fine lecture on the "English School Theatre" by Mrs. King. The lecturer said that most educated people felt that the theatres were not showing the right kind of play, and yet knew that if the kind of plays approved by them were put on boards, the box office would show no receipts. She attributed this to the utter lack of training of the tastes of the young people of all classes, and their consequent desire to see only superficial or worthless films and plays. She suggested their training by catching them young in schools. One good theatre was to be induced to show four matinee performances on the off-days. The best actors and actresses were to be requested to give their services for this great cause at cheap rates. The charges for seats were to be 2, 1½ and 1 shillings, and the plays were to be exhibited during school hours. The children were to be asked to give their criticism, and this was to be considered by a committee seriously. Select plays of excellence were to be suitably adapted, and the scenery was to be specially chosen. She said that the U.S.S.R. was the only country which had children's theatres all over the country. She then added that when the Bolshies first asked a learned orientalist to write a suitable play from an Arabian Nights theme, he produced a story of a woman

entertaining a thousand lovers in the presence of her deluded husband. That was turned down as unsuitable for even Bolshevik men, let alone children. Then a very moral doctor of literature and medicine was asked to write a suitable play. He produced one with the stomach and entrails as the principal characters. That too was thrown out, stomach and entrails. Then they enacted some plays written by schoolmasters, professors and other humbler, but saner, individuals. I told her of the perverted attempt in India, by the health staff, to enact dramas with children taking the part of flies, rats and mosquitoes, and cholera and plague and malaria. She laughed, and asked "And what happened?" "The children ran away in herds to the *puranic* plays," said I. "Oh, I thought so. Children are sane everywhere" said she. I asked her whether she would allow adults, parents etc., to attend the 'children's plays, pointing out that this was the only practical way of inducing them to pay for the kids. She said "Yes, we may allow parents, but no adult of any kind will be allowed without a child." "Oh" said an old lady "then, some old ladies will go round borrowing children for a play.", I said "In the new order of society, childless old ladies of good character will be allowed to borrow children not only for a play, but also for play," and all laughed.

Attended another meeting of the New Education Fellowship. Mr. Redefers spoke on 'Progressive Education in the U.S.A.' in the College Preparatory Schools. "There are thirty of them, and all colleges except those of Yale, Cornell and Princeton, admit these boys from those high schools on proof of sufficient intelligence, (on a test), a recommendation from the headmaster, and proof of having applied their intelligence for the furtherance of the educational programme of their schools. There are no examinations in these thirty high schools. The boys are aged 15 to 17. There are *horizontal* curricula,

e.g., everything in the middle ages, art, literature, music, architecture etc. There are *vertical* curricula, e.g. the literature of a country from beginning to end, the history of a country from beginning to end, etc. Then there are *vocational* curricula, eg., engineering from beginning to end, and everything connected with it. There are some common subjects for all, like English, arts, and physical instruction. No Greek and little Latin," said he.

I asked him "Will there be as many learned men under your progressive system as under the old system?" He replied "We hope so. At any rate, the little deficiency in learning will be more than made up by more learning being applied to life, instead of remaining barren, or running to waste." To one gentleman's saying "I think that the mediaeval games should be restored," Mr. Redefer replied "You think so, but not the *American students*." To a further remark from the same worthy "Mediaeval games will make them understand football better," the reply was "Just as counting the revolutions of the wheel of a horse cart will make students count better, if only the job interested them. What interests us old men may not necessarily interest youngsters. And interest is the main thing in progressive education."

I went and saw the opening of the Conference of Educational Associations at University College, organised by the New Education Fellowship. In the darkness, I overlooked the chain encircling the compound, and fell down, but escaped with slight abrasions on the legs.

Miss Fry delivered a thought-provoking address on "The yield of the Universities." She said that while some people, who were not able to profit by university education were receiving it, many, more able to profit by it, were not receiving it. She contended that any man would be profited by a university education, even though he might be, later in life,

a poultry-farmer or hair-dresser or trader. She deplored the insularity of the English, and said that once a Chinese law student spent three years in England without having stepped inside an English home. She pleaded for greater social intercourse, in the cause of education and culture.

The next day, I saw the Montessori Exhibition, and the wonderful puppet-show, and book and gramophone exhibitions. The puppets are manipulated by a person from behind the screen with his hands (one puppet being held in each hand) and can display nearly fifty different actions, there being a hundred puppets. It was most amusing, and should be taught in India, being very cheap and funny.

The latest text-books were all exhibited in dozens of stalls, with cut-throat competition rates very advantageous to the consumer. There were so many good books to choose from, on any possible subject, that several people wasted valuable hours in doubts!

There was a business meeting of the New Education Fellowship. Some members complained that they were merely passive members without opportunities of actively assisting in the good work. They and some others were constituted into a Committee to investigate into the matter and suggest remedies, and the thing was dropped. This is a perfect English way of disposing of unwanted suggestions. The right to sue the King for torts, the abolition of hanging, etc., have all been safely entrusted to committees for burial.

Listened to the speech on "The State; Servant or Master?" by Professor Clerk. He said that, in England, State interference in Education was almost nil till 1870, and was widely resented, whereas in the English Dominions a bureaucracy controlled the education, and, in totalitarian states, like Germany, Italy and Russia, a dictator or clique controlled the educational machine. He attributed this to the differing temperaments

of the races and to different political ideals. He pleaded for some more State help and guidance in English Education. He alluded to the excellent ten year plan by leading educationists for transforming education. When the matter came up for discussion, I pointed out that political conditions, and not mere race, had a lot to do with the theory of State interference or *vice versa*. I instanced the case of India, where, two thousand years ago, in the days of Asoka the Great, the people were the most literate (about 15% being literate then) in the world, and yet there was no state education, the Kings merely rewarding authors and scholars after they had been created by private institutions, and the state of modern India with its 10 per cent literacy and clamour for compulsory education by the State, as the people were, owing to changed political conditions, unable and unwilling to run private schools for educating all the citizens. The lecturer agreed with my observations, but made the astonishing remark that he could not understand why the Indian people were not insisting on getting compulsory education! He knew New Zealand, but not India!

There were lectures on 'Some aspects of the validity and reliability of Examinations' by Sir Philip Hartog, and 'Inquest on examinations' by Sir Michael Sadler. Their main themes were that examinations were very unsatisfactory as tests for finding out the ability of students, every examiner varying widely from other equally efficient examiners in the marking at the same time, and even with his own marking after an interval of twelve months. They had no instance, as we have in India, of the same Examiner marking the same paper quite differently *on the same day* when he mistakenly took up a marked paper, and did the marking over again! Their conclusion was that examinations ought to be made more satisfactory by improvements in questions and in marking,

and the selection of examiners, but that there was no substitute for examinations in democracies. Dr. Montessori also delivered an interesting lecture on 'The Child's Place in Society.'

Dr. Montessori invited me to attend one of her lectures to her regular classes. So, I went to her fine studio at Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead, and attended a class lecture of hers. She spoke in Italian. It was translated into English by an old lady. The speech lost half its force, and one-fourth its meaning in translation. Thus, the translator said 'supernatural' for 'supra-natural,' and 'deviation' for 'wrong turn.' It was a wonderful lecture. Some of the beautiful sentiments were these. 'Man does not work to live.' 'More and more, it is becoming evident that there is a cosmic end towards which all men are working.' 'Man finds his path of Destiny lighted by his intelligence, but the path is long, and the light does not reveal the end.' 'Children do not require the conditions of *Nature*, but the conditions of *human nature*, which has become our second nature.' 'Give a child the work it likes, and it becomes obedient and cheerful at once.' 'You neglect a child, and the neglect comes down on you, in after years, with terrible compound interest.' 'As man becomes older, he lives more and more for his work.' 'God is in the eternal child.'

Later on, I had a delightful chat with her, and told her that there was a Montessori school in almost every big city in India, and that my little girl was one of her enthusiastic pupils. Of course, I had to talk through an interpreter. I consider Montessori to be one of the makers of the modern world, an equal of Marconi and Einstein and Gandhi. A dear little woman, with all the charm and dignity of a life lived well. I told her that India would love to have her as guest. I find now that she has come to India and is giving her wonderful lectures to our teachers. India has always welcomed such foreigners, and profited by them. Knowledge knows no caste.

I was invited by the Secretary of the Lycaeum, Mayfair, a famous Ladies' Club, to attend the discourse of Rosita Forbes on 'Slavery.' Though the membership is confined to ladies, men are freely invited to attend the lectures, and are encouraged to speak. The celebrated explorer had a pretty face and slim features, and had a very costly red feather in her hat. She was adjusting this often, unconsciously drawing attention to it. She confined her remarks to slavery in Abyssinia, and insisted that it was a light form of bondage, essential in countries like Abyssinia, and much better than the Anglo-Saxon slavery of old, or unemployment in Glasgow. She even expressed her admiration for the Abyssinian slave-owners and slaves, and said that she had bought some slaves who had refused to be set free later on, and, so, she gave the girls away as concubines to her Muslim princely friends, and allowed the men to sell themselves to others. She insisted that concubinage elevated the status of the slave, and should not be looked down upon. It reminded me of the alleged advice of a well-known Indian politician to the depressed classes to invite high caste Hindus to consort with their females as the only way of getting children with superior brains, and thus elevating their status. Several people spoke. I also spoke. I said that slavery was abominable, everywhere and always, and that Mrs. Forbes' chivalry for Abyssinia had run away with her human out-look on this abomination. Another speaker pointed out that none of the unemployed at Glasgow would, despite Mrs. Forbes' advice, exchange places with the slaves in Abyssinia. The proposition 'That slavery in Abyssinia is at present justifiable' was put and lost. I had proposed the substitution of the word 'unavoidable' for 'justifiable' (I wanted to show that, then, with a war on, the Emperor could not alienate his nobles by abolishing slavery, though his continuing it was still morally unjustifiable), but the mover would not accept the amendment,

though several ladies were on my side. If my amendment had been accepted, the proposition might have been carried.

Sylvia Pankhurst and others were present at the discussion, but not a single Indian lady. Indian ladies ought to have attended, seeing that Chinese, Turkish and other ladies were there. Sylvia Pankhurst was introduced to me. She struck me as a very forceful personality, but as quite ignorant about things Indian. But, then, nobody in England worries about India, as the Duke of Wellington complained long ago.

Attended some lectures at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Association premises in London. A *swami* said that God the Absolute was the only true form of the Deity to be worshipped, I doubted it, and asked whether a personal god was not a crying need of the human heart, and whether it was not because of this that Rama and Krishna were worshipped more, in India, than the Absolute, and Lord Jesus, in Europe, more than God the Father or God the Holy Ghost. So, too, when the *swami* said that Sri Ramakrishna was far too cosmopolitan to be called a Hindu. I felt a doubt. It is well-known that Sri Ramakrishna has said that there is no salvation, for seven generations, for the man who considers the water of the Ganges to be mere water, and the dust of Brindaban to be mere dust, and yet it is impossible to imagine any but a Hindu attaching such a mystic value to Ganges water and Brindaban dust. It appeared to me that this delightful Hindu belief found in that great saint conclusively proved him to be a Hindu saint, albeit universal in most of his tenets and teachings. The anniversary celebration of the Holy Mother (Sri Sarada Devi, wife of Ramakrishna) was very well done. It is said that the lady never wore widow's weeds, as Sri Ramakrishna appeared before her in a dream, after his apparent death, and said to her "I am not dead any more than you are. Only, I am living in a different plane." Sarada Devi

refused to believe that one of her husband's disciples, who had fallen on evil ways, was irredeemable. She said "A dacoit was made an honest man by my faith in him. Shall not this disciple be made a good man by my faith in him?" The disciple was eventually reformed, mostly, by his feeling that he should make good Mother Sarada's faith in him. This episode was the basis for Swami Vivekananda's famous words "Don't tell a man he is a sinner. Tell him he can be a saint. One shows our lack of faith in him, and the other our faith in him." Truly, Faith can move mountains.

I used to attend every meeting of the Kerala Association in London. We had many delightful discussions there, over Kerala dishes. I delivered many speeches there. The theme of one was that the language and dietetic areas of India should be constituted into separate provinces, as each area had its unique contribution, the Punjabis making excellent soldiers, the Mahrattas able diplomats, the Bengalis good poets and dramatists, the Tamils able accountants, the Telugus fine songsters, the Oriyas excellent cooks, the Kanarese good engineers, the Gujaratis successful merchants, and the Keralas unrivalled astrologers, physicians and sorcerers. On another occasion, I delivered a lecture on "Our correct attitude to the Past," condemning the school which wanted to reproduce the past, equally with that which wanted to ignore the past, and advocating a healthy pride in the good things of the past and an eagerness to weed out the evil things in our past heritage. One member asked "How can you retain the whole good and reject the whole evil?" I readily admitted that that was impossible, and that we could only do so to a limited extent, like wiping off the rust. it being impossible to make the iron wood. The insular attitude of Kerala people I attributed to their living among cocoanut trees, which have no branches, and rarely brush against each other.

I used to attend the meetings of a fantastic association called "Social Credit Association." One day, there was a parade of sixty ladies with flags and banners asking for a national dividend for every one in the country out of the sum represented by the fall in prices, and for giving every person the right to buy anything on the credit of himself or herself and the children! The movement would have been welcomed in India if it had succeeded in Alberta in Canada where a "Social Credit" government ruled, till it was refused credit, and crashed!

I went one evening to the International Club at Richmond. A lady talked on China. She spoke of the Chinese belief that the devils could only walk straight and the consequent meandering streets which would give the devils a knock at every turn. She said that children were exposed in China because they, being innocent of sin, would be easily possessed by devils which would leave them, after their deaths, and attack the others in the house, and, so, it was advisable to abandon these children in far-off streets wherefrom the devil could never find its way back to the house. The problem as to how the devils originally found their way to the children in the houses was not explained. The lady generalised a lot from her knowledge of one or two families in a single town in China. One of her remarks was "Chinese men and women cannot be distinguished easily from a distance. A very close approach is required before the distinction can be made correctly." "How close?" asked one from the audience, amidst general laughter.

I shall end with an account of my visit to the mosque at Woking (30 miles from London,) with some Muslim friends, to attend the Id festival marking the conclusion of the Ramzan fast. This was organised by the local Muslim League. More than two hundred Muslims were present, besides a few

Hindus and Christians. The prayers were very impressive. Then there was a tea. I bought a copy of the sayings of the Prophet. Some noteworthy sayings are:—

Trust in God, but tie your camel.

God sayeth "Oh, man, only follow my laws, and thou shalt become like unto myself."

Whosoever loveth to meet Allah, Allah loveth to meet him.

Heaven lies at the mother's feet.

A Virtuous wife is a man's best treasure.

Men will be liars till the end of the world.

I am no more than man.

The mortal crimes are to associate another with God, to vex your father and mother, to murder your own species, to commit suicide, and to swear to a lie.

The love of the world is the root of all evil.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### SOME LECTURES ON INDIA

WHILE in England, I was most surprised to see the appalling ignorance there of India and things Indian. It was also notorious that few people in England ever cared about India. The mere word "India" was guaranteed to empty not only the House of Commons, but any decent lecture hall in Oxford or Cambridge. China and Japan interested the British more than India. That was but natural, for three reasons. Firstly, there was a disinclination on the part of many democratic Britons to think of this great dependency ruled by a bureaucracy from their democracy, although most of them felt, like H. G. Wells, that in the "semi-barbarous" conditions of India, it was inevitable. Secondly, several felt India to be an ever-recurring nuisance, in the shape of agitators, round-tables, etc. Lastly, millions felt that they could never know the real truth about India, and that it would be futile, and a sheer waste of time, to decide between the lurid accounts of missionaries, ex-bureaucrats and Miss Mayos, and the glowing accounts given by young Indians in their midst and by the elder statesmen of India who visited England for round-table conferences, league delegations etc., and often spoke contradictorily at different places, and, not unoften, denied making the speeches they did, or pretended to have made speeches they never did. One English lady reporter told me about one of these statesmen, "Oh, Mr. Ayyar! What a man! So moderate and timid, a veritable lamb at the round-table conference, and so extremist and intransigent in his room when I went for an interview! However,

can you explain it?" I said "There is a story in our book of fables, the Panchatantra, of a certain donkey which used to dress itself in a lion's skin and roar before private audiences of friends in its stable, but used to appear in its own donkey's skin and bray when lions were about." She laughed, and, said "Excuse me, the phenomenon is present in our land too. How these old stories make the whole world kin! How stupid of me to think that that man was the only donkey!"

As I was only too willing to speak whenever requested, the Indian Students' Hostel, Gower Street, soon made me deliver a speech to the students there on what India should do if it were to rise again. As that speech may be of interest to my readers, I reproduce here the gist of it.

#### IF INDIA WANTS TO RISE AGAIN

If India wants to rise again, there must be a rapid readjustment of her ancient institutions to the changed times. Caste, untouchability, early marriage, enforced widowhood, spurious spiritualism, all must go. There will be no place for the hereditary priest, the hereditary soldier, the hereditary trader, the hereditary artisan, the hereditary cooly and the hereditary scavenger in the world of the future. Specialisation of some kind there is bound to be, but allotment by birth to a particular occupation for life is not likely to survive or be tolerated. All the special preserves will be invaded. Even the hereditary rulers, and the hereditary landowners may not survive, unless they are, willing to become servants of humanity, keen on the common welfare, and not concentrated on their own pleasures. The people of future India cannot afford to gamble on heredity which has cost India so much in the past and has been one of the main causes for the present backward state of the country. If it were not for the hereditary

priesthood, based on birth alone Hindu priests would not be so ignorant, so sunk in superstition, and so powerless for good as they are to-day. Were it not for the fact that only one caste manned our armies, the country would not have succumbed to any foreign invasion. Had it not been for the fact that the masses had no part or lot in the government of the country, they would not have remained apathetic and gloated in the horrible proverb "What does it matter to us if Rama rules or Ravana rules?" So, too, the fall in our trade, the stagnation in our arts, the dying of our inventive skill, the inefficiency of our coolies, and even the indifference of our scavengers, are mainly due to the inertia of caste. From the temples of our Gods to the latrines of our houses, the curse of hereditary occupations, so necessary, useful and beneficent in ancient times of difficult communications, great insecurity and general illiteracy, are only prolific sources of evil now. If any nation wants to survive, it must march with the Time Spirit; else, Time will march on and leave it far behind. That has been the fate of unfortunate India. Her spirituality has stagnated for lack of free flow; her army is not representative of the whole nation; her traders have become mere commission agents; her artisans have not the requisite knowledge; her coolies have not the necessary muscles; and her farmers are sunk in age-long despair. But the new spirit is stirring the country. The Behar and Quetta earthquakes are but symbolical of the tremendous earthquakes which are taking place in our social, economic and religious systems, crumbling down the out-of-date structures and paving the way for a new Quetta of a reconstructed India. The very Himalayas is shaking its snow, like some divine elephant before being harnessed. Her peaks should be desolate no more; her passes should be negotiated by trains, and her innermost recesses should be explored by aeroplanes. The mighty

Brahmaputra should be made to supply electric power and light to millions of homes ; not a drop of the life-giving waters of the Ganges should waste itself in the bitter sea ; and the proud Indus should be made to turn more and more deserts into gardens. Our army should become national by the rapid spread of interdining between all the children of the country. At present, if conscription is enforced, our army will require ten thousand different kitchens for its different castes, and the enemy will capture all our positions while we are eating in a thousand hidden corners. Wars are not yet over ; the predatory spirit of mankind is not dead. It will take at least a hundred years more before real peace and good-will among nations can be counted upon. And it can, and should, come only when every nation has come into its own. We need not attack others, but, surely, we should not allow others to, attack us. Our mighty god-given frontiers must be well defended on land, sea, and air by our own sons and daughters. To this end at least, we must enforce periodical compulsory vegetarian dinners of a nutritive kind among all our officials, professors and students, and especially the last, as they will be the guardians of the future. The practice of noting down caste, tribe and religion in Census and other official reports and documents should be stopped, so that the communal spirit may not be fostered. The laws which we enact should have no reference to communities, but should apply to the whole nation. Surely, the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists of India have much the same natural feelings towards their wives, children and neighbours. All customs which are not conducive to the good of the country or the progress of the nation must be ruthlessly abandoned. Quarrelling politicians and communalists should be forced to pass an advanced examination in theoretical and practical astronomy, so that they may realise their own pettiness by getting an idea of the infinity of the universe. All

priests, of whatever religion, should be made to see the grandeur of our mountains, rivers and lakes by free passes on our railways, issued as soon as they have passed the prescribed examinations in the selected scriptures of not only their religion but of all the main religions of mankind. Students must be made to go round over as much country as possible, during the vacations, by their teachers. Public servants must be made real servants of the public. Expeditions of young and suitable Indians must be organised at state expense to the North and South Poles and to the mighty Himalayas to climb up its giant peaks. Our seas must be filled with our ships, our atmosphere with our aeroplanes, and our land with industrious, happy, God-loving people devoted to their country and to the cause of mankind.

The process has begun. The Sarda Act and the Poona Pact and the Devadasi Bill, and the frantic attempts of many Indian princes to give at least a semblance of democratic regime to the government of their States, are all signs of the times. All of them show that the spirit of India is not dead, and cannot die. The dying Indian of fifty years back is now found to have only indulged in a cataleptic sleep from which he has awakened, refreshed and ready to take his place in the sun whose favoured child he has been throughout the ages. He is determined to make prohibition a success, though America failed therein; he is keen on making non-violence the golden solution for all disputes now settled only by the sword. He is seriously considering whether birth-control or soya bean or swaraj is the true remedy for India's teeming millions; whether the League of Nations should not be invited to spend a few years in India, a real live centre for racial, linguistic and cultural problems, instead of dozing away its existence on the shores of the Lake of Geneva with its unruffled waters; whether Fascism, Socialism or Communism

will suit Indian conditions ; and whether thoughts about the other world cannot wait till we have got a firm hold on this one. The people are waking up to the necessity of a common tongue, Hindustani, a language of their own in which they can all talk, as they talked in Sanskrit and Pali in ancient days, in addition to their mother tongues for provincial purposes, and English for international purposes.

Every caste and community is wide awake to-day. The apparently evil communal movement is really a god-send : it is galvanising castes sunk in age-long apathy. It is only the castor oil in the system, only a purification necessary for health. It will cause much uneasiness while it is acting ; but, what a relief, what a feeling of strength, joy and fitness it will bring when it has done its work, and the waste matters, accumulated during centuries, are purged out. No more will caste blame caste. No more will people blame the Brahmin or Kshatriya or Vaisya or Sudra for betraying the country, as of yore. Hereafter all stand for each, and each for all, until we reach the journey's end. And in this national journey we must have the co-operation of all the people of India, Hindus and Muslims, Christians and Buddhists, Jains and Parsis, all of whom have added their own quofa of colour and beauty to the national carpet of our culture.

Reaching our goal will, doubtless, take some time, but time should be of no account in this land of Yugas, Manvantaras and Brahmakālpas. The main thing is to fix our ideal. The children of this country have known in the past, and may be trusted to know in the future, how to march up to it. The one point to note is that Mother India is once more on the march, after a thousand years of stagnation and sleep, with a determination to rise again in the comity of nations. There should be no retracing of our steps. He who falters should

be left behind. Our maxim should be "The Pilot drops, but the ship goes on."

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Another day, some ladies at our club wanted me to tell them the truth about polygamy in India. Then I gave them a talk which I summarise below.

### POLYGAMY IN INDIA

It is certainly a great blot on Hindu Society that polygamy should still be allowed to be legal. The ideal of Hindu Society has always been monogamous, as is clear from the whole-hearted praise of Sri Rama as '*Eka Patni sthithe vraja*' (constant to one wedded wife). But, in the early days of Hindu Society, five factors contributed to a deviation from this very high standard. Firstly, the needs of war with the *Dāsuyus* made the Aryans very desirous of having as many sons as possible, in order to supply soldiers, much the same reason as is actuating Italy and Germany now in their frantic drives for larger and larger populations. So, Kings and warriors took unto themselves many wives, for getting many sons, instead of the maximum of a child every year, as would be the case with one wife. Secondly, vast lands had to be brought under cultivation, and farmers, in those days, when machinery was in its infancy, required human labour plentifully. Wives and children were the best of labourers, having no conflicting interests with the employer, and forming an ideal co-operative concern where profits and losses were enjoyed by all, and wages were paid to none. That is why the ryots took unto themselves more than one wife. Thirdly, the popular Hindu religion laid great store on offerings to the departed ancestors, at *Sraddhas* etc., for saving their souls. To offer *pindas* to the ancestors, a son was essential. So, those who had no sons by the first wife were permitted by our great law-giver, Manu,

to marry a second wife after eight years, if the first wife was barren; after ten years if she gave birth only to still-born children; and after eleven years if she gave birth only to daughters. Fourthly, powerful kings, nobles, and rich men wanted to marry as many beautiful women as possible, simply out of lust and a desire for enjoyment, the same motive that impelled Solomon the Wise, who, please remember, has never been condemned even by Christ for this. Fifthly, in the constant wars, several women were captured as slaves and kept as mistresses by the captors who were often married men. Hinduism was very considerate towards all women and children, and desired to give some right of inheritance, or at least maintenance, to every woman kept by a man and to every child born to a man. Some forms of concubinage, and even, rape, were therefore recognised as lower forms of marriage, and even illegitimate sons were recognised as quasi-legitimate. From this eminently human view arose also a part of the polygamy problem. In other countries, a woman raped by a married man, or a concubine kept by him, would have been regarded merely as a raped woman or a concubine (and not as a *wife*) and so the paramour would have still been legally 'monogamous,' as he had only one *wife*. In Hindu India, the concubine by the *Gandharva* marriage, and the raped woman under the *paisacha* marriage, became wives, and added two more wives to the legal wife.

The Muhammadan and British conquests of India, consciously and unconsciously, increased the evil immensely. The conquerors ignored (or were ignorant of) the higher Hindu thoughts represented by the law-givers like Manu, Yagnavalkya, Narada, Devala and others, and recognized, as legal, vulgar caste customs, sometimes under the pretext of religious neutrality and of freeing the masses from Brahmin domination. Of course, the Muslims and Englishmen of those

days, without much knowledge of comparative sociology or comparative religion, also considered the Hindus to be Kaffirs or heathens and pagans with no high standards of morality, and so freely allowed the Hindu men to marry as many women as they liked, without any kind of restriction whatever. The laws of Manu, prescribing strict rules and conditions before a man could marry a second wife, were ignored. The rule of Yagnavalkya compelling the husband to give his first wife *one-third of his property* on taking unto himself a second wife was let go. The rule of Narada punishing a husband who cast off the first wife and married another without legitimate cause' like unchastity, barrenness, loathesome disease etc., was set aside, and Hindu India was plunged into the chaos of dark and unbridled polygamy from which only the racial sense of the Hindus and the social opinion of the caste heads saved it from total demoralization and destruction. Now everybody, including the Muslim and the English administrators, have seen the initial error committed by them in ignoring the rules of the Hindu *Sastras*, and are quite anxious to enforce them, but are powerless to do so without restoring the ancient law by legislation. The Hindus too are not satisfied now with the ancient rules, and want to go even further, and enforce strict monogamy without giving even the very restricted right of polygamy allowed by Manu, Yagnavalkya and Narada. Indeed, a Bill is on the anvil uncompromisingly opposing any kind of polygamy among the Hindus.

But, unfortunately, this Bill cannot be whole-heartedly supported, as it is confined to the Hindus, and I consider it to be most undesirable to enact a *penal* law applicable only to one section of the community. It will be like restricting Prohibition to Hindus alone, or Muslims alone, or Christians alone. The policy of *punishing* only some of the citizens for doing a thing which others are allowed to do with

impunity is thoroughly wrong-headed, and against the spirit of the times, especially when it involves some offenders punishing others, as, for example, when a Muslim polygamist, sitting as Judge, can sentence a Hindu polygamist, under Section 494, I.P.C. Even now, this absurdity, unfortunately, exists in our country, as when an Indian Christian polygamist can be punished by a Hindu or Muslim polygamist sitting as a Judge. The problem has not yet received the attention of many people, as Indian Christians are few in number, and polygamists are rare among them. But with a large community like the Hindus or Muslims, the cases will become numerous and glaring. If this Bill is proceeded with, there must be at least a saving proviso (to save the law from falling into utter contempt) that no polygamist sitting as Judge can try a polygamist brought before him. It will be intolerable if one man's polygamy were to be treated as *sacred*, and another's as *criminal*. I submit that there is no need for any such sectional law at all, and that the better course is to make the law apply to all people, whether Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jains, Buddhists or any other community whatsoever. Even if that should mean waiting for some years, it is worth it. Meanwhile, we may rectify the errors of the past and allow a Hindu wife to claim the right to live separately and claim maintenance from her husband if he marries another wife, a right denied by our High Courts now as contrary to public policy and morality!

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Some of the ladies present had their curiosity roused by this lecture, and requested my wife to give a talk to them on "What the Women of India want." So, she gave them an informal talk on that subject, the gist of which I reproduce here.

## WHAT THE WOMEN OF INDIA WANT

What do the women of India want? First and foremost, they want to be economically independent. "The whole world revolves on the belly" said Chanakya. So, nobody living in the world can be really independent without the means to fill the belly unaided. In my opinion, that is all that old Manu meant by saying that a woman could never be termed really independent, since her father had to maintain her as a child, her husband as a young woman, and her son as an old woman. It seems to me to be absurd to inveigh against Manu's maxim, which is only an expression of an economic and social fact, without any attempt to make woman economically independent. It might have been all right, in Manu's days, to give the property to men, and only maintenance and stridhan to women. The strong arms of men were required in those lawless days to protect property and stridhan; jewels were also many. Now, jewels are few, and law and order much more rigidly enforced. So there is no reason to continue the old Hindu law of inheritance on intestacy. This law must be changed, and men and women put on an absolutely equal footing. Widows should get a share, like the sons. Till the laws are changed, wills to that effect should be made by Hindus as regards their self-acquired properties. It is amazing how few wills are really executed, not even one Hindu in a thousand caring to do so. Propaganda is required in this respect.

But, to achieve the object in view, something more is required than merely changing the law of inheritance. For, often, there is, in this poor country, nothing to inherit or divide. So every woman must try to earn something, either by some cottage industry, or by being a doctor or schoolmistress or insurance agent for canvassing among women. Incidentally, every wife should try to induce her husband

to insure his life for a modest sum in a reliable company and to assign the policy in her name. Of course, unmarried women and widows can also qualify for and become whole-time government servants or lawyers and earn an independent income. Once the women become economically independent, they will automatically take their proper place in society. So, all well-wishers of India, and especially workers for the uplift of women, should keep this as the foremost plank in their programme.

I may add here that workers in the past knew this well. Vignaneswara, the great author of the *Mitakshara*, tried, at one stroke, to extend *Stridhana* to all kinds of property known then, whether acquired by partition, inheritance, gift, adverse possession or purchase, and to make woman the absolute owner of all those properties. But, unfortunately for women, the Privy Council, in days when women in England too had not got full rights in property, curtailed this right, and held that *stridhana* would include only the ancient and insignificant kinds of property, and that the ownership too would not be absolute but only a limited estate for life. Now the women of England have got full rights, and, yet, Hindu women suffer from the above ruling.

Marriage is now almost obligatory for every man and woman in our land. This rule is, on the whole, quite sound. To make life complete, one must be married. Exceptions there may be, for lifelong ascetics or the incurably diseased. Hinduism, therefore, gave each woman her innings, and asked her to stand by for the rest to have their chance. That, it seems to me, was the genesis of enforced widowhood. The thing became monstrous because there was no enforced widowerhood. Otherwise, it would have been a just rule, though operating harshly on some.

Some marriage reforms are essential. Polygamy, which has been greatly extended by the interpretation of British Indian

courts, has to be put down with an iron hand. The marriage of girls below 16, or of boys below 21, ought also to be made illegal and void. Half measures are no good. We ought to have the courage to imprison all polygamists and to declare all marriages of children absolutely void. The Sarda Act ought to be amended in that direction.

Divorce is a minor question. It will always be repugnant to Hindu women. In this land of Sita and Savitri, women will prefer to nurse back to health even their incurably sick husbands than rush to courts to get a divorce for their own selfish satisfaction. Once child-marriage is abolished, and polygamy wiped out, even the advocates of divorce may have little enthusiasm left to proceed with Bills for securing it.

Bride prices and bridegroom prices are terrible evils, but are more fit to be dealt with by public opinion than by legislation. There will always be people who marry for wealth or family or influential connections, just as there are people who marry for beauty. This is only natural, as some men love to look at the sky, some on the mud which grows the crops, and yet others at the flowers and fruits. No doubt, no court should enable anybody to recover bride or bridegroom price. But that is the case even now. We must always remember that a land with too many laws will be unpleasant to live in, and that laws should be enacted only where unavoidable.

Women should adopt a sane attitude to changing fashions. That Time should bring about changes is only natural. Indeed, it is also desirable. The borings of noses and ears are not necessary for beauty. That ear-rings are worn in some western countries too is no proof of their necessity. While ear-rings come on the borderline, nose-rings must certainly go, the sooner the better. Nobody will regret the disappearance of the heavy gold ornaments worn by our grandmothers, though they served to train them to carry weights, and also as reasonably secure

banks for their savings. But, let us not congratulate ourselves too soon. New fashions, like smoking, eye-brow-plucking etc., have to be guarded against. Let us not exchange King Log for King Stork! That some fashions are necessary, and will persist, it is idle to dispute. Occasional changes too are welcome. A drab uniformity is unthinkable in this land of brilliant sunshine and rainbow and multi-coloured stars. Beauty and aesthetics require something beyond mere utility. The stars burn out valuable energy only to make the sky beautiful.

Children are the flowers in the garden of life. There is nothing which can compare with the love of the mother and the child. "Heaven lies at the mother's feet" says the Prophet Muhammad. The great Napoleon and Mussolini were largely shaped by their mothers. Unfortunately, in Modern India, many mothers are not able to leave any indelible impressions on their children. The reasons are obvious, namely, lack of education, economic dependence and growing bewilderment at the increasingly common adoption of western ideals. All this can and should be remedied. What availeth a mother if she gains the whole world but loses the affection of her child? So, education must proceed apace, and the future mother enabled to understand and guide her child.

Women must also give up meaningless rites and ceremonies. Even the Emperor Asoka said, more than two thousand years ago, "The womankind perform many, manifold, trivial, and worthless ceremonies," (Rock Edict IX), and urged the abandonment of useless ceremonial and the performance of the really useful and noble ones, like the rites of charity and hospitality. A reasonable belief in the mysterious and the unknown may be natural, and the belief in the supernatural and the divine is essential for peace of mind, harmonious development and salvation. But ceremonies to propitiate

serpents, demons and the small-pox goddess must be dropped once and for all.

I think that women should also take a keen interest in all kinds of social, municipal, and rural reconstruction work. Purdah must go, and child welfare and maternity centres and sanitation leagues started everywhere. Women, in the mass, will never care to fight and kill, like men. The mother of the race has little interest in such human sacrifice to the demon of War which is a thousand times more odious than the goat sacrifices at the temples of village goddesses and at devil shrines.

Woman's role in the social polity is bound to be different from man's. Manu has said that a child gets from its father its bones, sinews and marrow and from its mother its skin, flesh and blood. This symbolical distinction, in my opinion, represents a real distinction between the contribution, of the two sexes. All stern, violent and strenuous action needed for the upkeep of society, like defence, mining, mountain-climbing and polar exploration, must depend on man; all gentle, softening, harmonising action, like creating sweet homes, an enjoyable civilisation, and palatable meals, must depend on women. In other words, without woman, civilisation cannot exist, without man it cannot be defended and kept going. Woman cannot fight battles like man; nor can man nurse the sick, and heal mental and spiritual wounds like woman. Man represents Siva, woman Sakti, but in the benign aspect of Parvati, instead of the militant aspect of Durga. The difference between the sexes is fundamental, and cannot be eradicated, so long as mankind continues to exist. Both are necessary and complementary, like two semi-circles facing different directions, or the concave and the convex in different aspects, or alkali and acid.

It follows that the same kind of education for both

the sexes is not desirable, if we are to get the best results. In my opinion, the education of boys and girls till they are ten may be the same. Indeed, they should be educated together in the same schools, preferably by women teachers, as in this country. From the age of ten till the end of the matriculation or school final class, boys and girls should have different schools and courses. The girls should pay more attention to religion, ethics, music, cooking, household economy, hygiene, first aid, needlework, painting, and embroidery than to the languages, mathematics, elementary science, geography and history, though these too should be compulsory. In the college courses, while there should be provision for allowing such girls as desire it to join men's colleges, there should be separate women's colleges after the model of the Lady Irwin College at New Delhi (but, thoroughly nationalised and culturised) to train our grown-up girls to be ideal wives and mothers and to run their own households. For, the ambition of every woman all over the world, and more so in our country, is to have her own house where she can reign like a queen, instead of hankering after ordinary jobs and be somebody's servant. To keep the home fires burning, to maintain a cultured atmosphere at home, to take an intelligent interest in social welfare work, to form correct opinions on problems of national or international interest, to be able to shoulder the responsibilities of running the home economically, efficiently and cheerfully, with the undying faith which comes from a living religion, these are the ideals to be kept in view for the women of this ancient land. A knowledge of poetry, and drama, astronomy and mathematics, politics and law, may add to the zest in life, if added to these, but will be like rains in the Sahara desert without the above things. I would certainly advocate also that at least women's institutions in our hot country should work only in the mornings and evenings, and

that music, cooking, needlework and hygiene should form the four pillars of the edifice of secondary education for women, the floor being ethics, and the roof religion. Then alone will India regain her lost soul.

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An English theosophist wanted me to give a short discourse on how far Non-Brahmins were allowed to read the Vedas and Upanishads, and other sacred writings of the Hindus. I did so. Here is a summary of it.

### NON-BRAHMINS AND THE VEDAS.

Even the texts relied on by orthodox Brahmins do not forbid all *Non-Brahmins* from reading the Vedas and Upanishads. Strictly speaking, the word Non-Brahmin (*Abrahmana*) cannot be applied to anybody on earth, according to the Vedas, since there are only four castes in the whole world, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras, and there is no fifth caste at all—*Nosti tu Panchama*: Manu—and these castes were all born respectively from the mouth, arm, thigh and foot of Brahma, and so cannot be *Abrahmana* or Non-Brahmin. I would say that nobody can describe himself as a Non-Brahmin in religious communications. Of course, even the reactionary Brahmins say that only Sudras and women are forbidden from reading the Vedas and Upanishads, and not all castes besides Brahmins. Indeed, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas are not only permitted to read the Vedas but adjured to do so. Nay, some Kshatriyas, like Janaka, Ajatasatru and Janasruti, even taught the truth about Brahma to several caste-Brahmins. So, too, several Vaisyas were experts in the Vedas.

Now, we come to Sudras and women. The prohibition alleged by the orthodox Brahmin is against both alike. So, if one is disproved, the other too will be disproved. My reasons

for holding that all men and women can read the Vedas and Upanishads are:

1. Among the Rigvedic composers were 26 females, and some of the sublimest hymns were by these. It follows that those who composed should have heard the compositions, and that the prohibition is a later invention and interpolation.

2. Gargi Vachaknavi, and Maitreyi, the wife of Yagnavalkya, were fully instructed in Vedic mantras, and Upanishadic truths, and argued boldly with males in the celebrated Upanishads which are, of course, part of the Vedas. So, the prohibition is proved to be a later invention and interpolation. If it were existing in those times, would Yagnavalkya have instructed Maitreyi, and would the righteous King Janaka, and the great assembly of pandits, including Yagnavalkya, have allowed Gargi to argue on forbidden topics?

3. Satyakama Jabala, the illegitimate son of the woman Jabala, by a casual affair with somebody whom she could not name, as she evidently had such affairs with many persons in whose houses she served as maidservant, and, so, could not be sure who was the father of her child, would be, according to Manu and the lawgivers, far inferior to a caste-Sudra in birth. Still, he was taught the profoundest truths of the Vedas and Upanishads not only by Brahmins but also by cows, bulls, swans etc., which are, in our religion, far higher representatives of holiness than Brahmins.

4. Raikva, the cartman, was evidently not a Brahmin or Kshatriya or Vaisya, and, yet, he was the most profound Vedic and Upanishadic scholar of his time, and the celebrated Kshatriya, King Janasruti, went to him for learning about the nature of Brahma, and even gave him his daughter in marriage.

5. Bhagawan Sree Krishna, than Whom there is no greater or purer upholder and exponent of the Vedas and Upanishads,

even according to orthodox Brahmins, has, in his immortal Bhagavadgita, quoted, *almost word for word*, hosts of passages from the Vedas and from Kathopanishad, Isavasyopanishad, Brihadarankopanishad, Chchandogyopanishad, Mandukyopanishad and other Upanishads. If the words of those could not be read or heard by Sudras, would he have quoted them in a book like the Mahabharata, admittedly intended to be read by Sudras also, and, indeed, expressly written with that view?

There are also many arguments in detail, but I do not expound them here for lack of time. Above all, it must not be forgotten that the four castes in the Purushasuktha and the Bhagavadgita are not castes by birth, but castes by merit, and the distribution of qualities (*guna karma vibhagasa*)

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Some Indians at the Indian Hostel wanted to hear my views on making Hindi the common language for all India. Here is a gist of my talk to them.

### HINDI, A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

A common language for India is necessary not so much that India may become a nation, for long-standing and perfectly united nations exist, like Switzerland, with two or three languages for a small area. Nor will the utility of Hindi for soldiers, sailors, aviators, pilgrims, traders, tourists, legislators, and the unemployed, great though it be, incline me to force it down the throats of the seventy millions who know it not, but have their own rich and dear mother-tongues. What has made me a convert to the idea of a common tongue is its necessity for India's recovering her soul, now struck practically dumb by the absence of a common speech for her sons from different parts to discuss in. It is the absence of Sankaras, Ramanujas, Madhwas, Kautalyas, Kalidasas, Valmiki, Vyāṣas, Aryabhattachas, Varahamihiras Charakas and Susrutas

for the last so many centuries that compels me to vote for making Hindi, the only possible common tongue for Bharata, compulsory in our schools. In days of old, Sanskrit was understood from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, from Burma to Baluchistan. and scholars from all over the land of Bharata discussed in it new theories and ideas and extracted the essence by churning the ocean of India's thought. The ancient arts and sciences, systems of philosophy and religion, are all common to the whole country. Thought could not possibly stagnate in that roaring ocean which now and again sent up tidal waves which astonished the world and left priceless gems behind. Time came when Mother India, worn out by heavy fighting, became, dismembered and lost her common tongue as an effective medium. Thought became stagnant in the backwaters of the provinces and their vernaculars, which themselves became shallow for want of the ocean waves. It is to revive the mighty surgings of thought that I want Hindi made compulsory. Sanskrit is out of the question now as a language for discussion, and its daughter, Hindi, is the only possible successor.

There is another reason which prompts me in advocating this. That is to restore the immense co-operation of the great Dravidian race to the sister race of the north. Advaita, Dvaita, and Vishistadvaita, the caste system and vegetarianism, show clearly the southern impress on them. And these are no inconsiderable part of our heritage, and are loved by millions even in the north. Above all, those are the most characteristic features of our unique Indian culture. The day has come to reconstruct these great edifices which have become partly dilapidated during the centuries which have passed, and who can reconstruct them better than the descendants of the master builders who are now helpless owing to the absence of a common tongue in which they can thrash out

their theories of reconstruction with learned men all from over India ?

Hindi is spoken by the largest number of Indians, is a result of Hindu-Muslim co-operation, and is a dignified language capable of infinite advancement. Once India makes it her national tongue, all the world will have to study it, as it now studies English, for a language spoken by one-fifth of the world's population cannot be ignored by scholars, politicians, traders, soldiers, sailors, and aviators of other nations. Of course, our mother tongues, whether Malayalam or Tamil or Bengali or Mahratti, should receive our first attention, then Hindi, and then English. All these three should be made compulsory, the standards insisted on for Hindi and English being lower than for the vernacular. I daresay, even with these three compulsory languages, there will be plenty of students who will take Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, French or German in addition.

The problem of overloading the curriculum leaves me unimpressed. When an Englishman, not naturally gifted with a genius for foreign languages, can take French and German in addition to English, it is ridiculous to suggest that the Indian, and especially the South Indian and the Bengalee, who alone do not know Hindi, will find two additional languages, Hindi and English, an intolerable burden. Let Hindi be made compulsory, and, in a dozen years, I shall not be surprised if Madrasis and Bengalees carry off the first prizes for writing correct Hindi, even as Hindus carried off many first prizes in Persian when Todar Mal made that language compulsory. Make anything inevitable, and you will see the Indian adapting himself to it within a remarkably short time.

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I shall close this chapter with a short account of my discourse on "*Sanskrit. Is it dead? Will it die?*"

Sanskrit is not dead—can never die—though the old days are gone, and the old kings are departed. It will continue to live so long as the Hindu race is alive, nay, indeed, so long as man cherishes lofty thoughts couched in sublime words. Man, the younger brother of the gods, will certainly not abandon this language of the gods, though, now and then, when he reverts to his other capacity, of elder brother of the animals, he may fume or scoff at learning this difficult language, and advocate the study of only the much easier modern languages. This is not peculiar to India; the same thing is found in western countries regarding the study of Latin and Greek, and in modern Turkey regarding Arabic and Persian. But, when the animal needs are over, and leisure comes, the human heart craves for something higher than a work-a-day language, and scoffs at the very difficulty which it sought to avoid before. This is only natural, just as a hungry man hates the delay involved in washing his hands and waiting for the dishes to come, before beginning his repast, but the same man will not only wash his hands but also put on a special dress-suit and wait for guests, when his work is over and he is entertaining. So, no one need despair about the future of Sanskrit. By its intrinsic greatness, Sanskrit is as free from the need for public popularity as an elephant in a procession is from the need for many people to follow it.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### SOME PLAYS AND FILMS

THERE is no end to the plays, operas, reviews and films that I saw during my visits to Europe. It is impossible to give an account of all of them, or even of the majority of them. Some of the most delightful things that I have ever seen in my life are the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas, the Mikado, the Gondoliers, the Pirates of Penzance, The Town of Titupu, Utopia Limited, and the Hooligan. Gilbert had no predecessors in opera-writing before. He invented his own methods, and has left no successor. He was a master of stage-craft, and, in Sullivan, he had a perfect partner. I have always thought that something on the model of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas is a great desideratum in the Indian languages. Professor Swaminathan's "Kattai Vandi" in Tamil, in imitation of the Gondoliers, has confirmed me in that opinion, and shown the public that the thing could be done with success, and a perennial source of innocent amusement tapped for the weary peasants dying for it. Only, it should be in very popular language, and the songs should also be in popular melodies.

It is questionable how far Shaw can be imitated in the Indian languages and made a success. But, there is no doubt that his were the plays I enjoyed next best in England.

I saw "John Bull's Other Island." This most lively piece was played with spirit. None of the Shavian humour was lost in the acting. Broadbent and Nora were superb. When Broadbent hugged Nora to his bosom, and she demurred, he told her "It's an absolute necessity of my nature that

I should have somebody to hug occasionally....By George, Nora, it's a tremendous thing to be able to enjoy oneself." Again, Broadbent says "The pig's the thing: the pig will win over every Irish heart to me. We'll take the pig home to Haffigan's farm in the motor: it will have a tremendous effect," (at the elections!). I substituted 'cow' for 'pig,' 'Hindu' for 'Irish,' 'Rama' for 'Haffigan,' and 'house' for 'farm,' and the thing broadened in its significance and import. The play shows Shaw's intellect at its best. It reminded me of the story of the beautiful Bolshevik actress who wrote to Shaw "How I wish I had a child by you! Your intellect combined with my looks, think of it!" Shaw is reported to have replied "But, madam, think of the reverse. A child with *your* intellect and *my* looks."

Saw "St. Joan," which was hailed by the critics as the greatest play after Shakespeare. It is fully worthy of all this praise. The scene of consternation at the suggestion of St. Joan that she should rise from the dead, and come back as a living woman, is unforgettable. "Oh, do not come back. You must not come back. I must die in peace. Give us peace in our time.....The possibility of your resurrection was not considered in the recent proceedings for your canonization," represents the attitude of all hypocrites for all time. The millions paying lip service to Christ or Krishna will express similar sentiments if the author of the Sermon on the Mount or the Gita were to threaten to be re-born to continue the old mission. Joan's agonising cry "Oh God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive thy saints? How long, oh lord, how long?" is soul-stirring, and there the play ends appropriately.

Saw "The Apple Cart," a political extravaganza, and enjoyed it thoroughly. The play should be read as a whole. No useful purpose will be served by quoting from it.

Saw the several plays of Noel Coward. He is perhaps the most representative post-war dramatist of England. But, far from being a loose Cavalier dramatist and drug-addict, as some supposed him to be, there is an earnest morality preached in his plays, as St. John Ervine has shown in a brilliant essay on his plays. Though enjoyment of a healthy type is encouraged by him, he is quite against shallow philandering, a butterfly existence etc., as can be seen from his play where Nicky tells his mother, Mrs. Lancaster, one of those vain and greedy women who clutch at youth in their terror of old age and seek to replenish their fading vigour by sapping the life out of their juniors (the prototype of this in India is found in many an old *man*), "You're not young or beautiful; I'm seeing for the first time how old you are—it is horrible—your silly fair hair—and your face all plastered and painted," and, finally, "You're an awful rotten woman, really," and makes her promise to reform, to be different. "You're not to have any more lovers; you're not going to be beautiful and successful ever again—you're going to be my mother for once—it's about time I had one to help me, before I go over the edge altogether," says he, and she promises, and he falls on his knees by her side, and buries his face in her lap.

This attitude of Noel Coward is also seen in his famous song "Dance, dance, dance, little lady" in his revue, "Year of Grace:"—

"Though you're only seventeen,  
Far too much of life you've seen,  
Syncopated child.  
May be if you only know,  
Where your path is leading to,  
You'd become less wild.

But I know it's vain  
Trying to explain  
While there's this insane  
Music in your brain.  
"Dance, dance, dance, little lady!  
Youth's fleeting  
To the rhythm beating  
In your mind.  
"Dance, dance, dance, little lady,  
So obsessed  
With second best,  
No rest  
You will find.  
"Time and tide and trouble  
Never, never wait.  
Let the cauldron bubble,  
Justify your fate.  
Dance, dance, dance, little lady,  
Dance, dance, dance, little lady,  
Leave tomorrow behind.  
"When the saxophone  
Gives a wicked moan,  
Charleston!  
Hey, hey! rhythms fall and rise.  
Start swaying like a reed,  
Without heeding the speed  
That hurries you on.  
"Nigger melodies syncopate your nerves

Till your body curves,  
 Drooping,  
 Stooping,  
 Laughter some day dies.  
 "And when the lights are starting to gutter  
 Dawn through the shutter  
 Shows you're living in a world of lies."

As Mr. St. John Ervine says, Noel Coward is as embittered a Puritan as Aldous Huxley, he is a Savonarola in evening clothes. There is nothing like this song in the "Revue Du Monde" of Maurice Chevalier, or the revues of Sacha Guitry, which allow all kinds of self-indulgence with indulgence. In the "Vortex" and "Private Lives" and other plays of Coward, the theme is taken up again and rubbed in. His language is full of short staccato sentences. The speeches are all very short, generally from ten to twenty words, and all of the conversational type, very hard to remember for the actor or the audience.

From Coward, I pass on to Barry whose masterpiece, "Peter Pan", I saw at a private show, and wished I could see it again. Barry has immortalised himself by it, like Gray by his Elegy. Peter Pan's statue has been erected in the Kensington Gardens as a remarkable tribute to Barry's genius. Peter Pan is more real to London children than Robert Clive.

Saw St. Helena at the old Vic. The play was a product of the author of "Journey's End", and was entertaining from beginning to end. The man who acted Napoleon looked remarkably like him.

Galsworthy's "The Silver Box", which I saw at a private show, was noteworthy for the defence of the under-dog, a thing which I had considered this upholder of the rich incapable of doing. But, there is no doubt that he loved justice and

graciousness of mind, equally with riches. Of course, the author of the Forsyte Saga had attracted me even as a student.

Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln" was a very interesting play, and was true to fact. His subsequent play "Oliver Cromwell" was a comparative failure, something like Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of the World" after the phenomenal success of "The Light of Asia"

Attended a wonderful monoacting, by Arna Heni, of Ibsen's play 'When we dead awaken'. The plot is briefly this. Rubek is a talented sculptor. His model was the beautiful and innocent Irena. She stood naked before him as a model, for five years, in all her dazzling beauty. He was tempted to make advances to her, but refrained, so that his masterpiece, "Resurrection" might represent a woman untainted by carnal embrace or even kiss. She mistook this for coldness, especially when she had agreed to be his model for love of him, and not for money. She felt insulted when he referred to these five years of camaraderie as an 'episode', and left him. He grieved for her, but could not find her. In his despair he surrounded her figure of innocence with men and women outwardly beautiful, but, on closer scrutiny, veritable animals, cows, goats, pigs, asses and bulls. He got name and fame and wealth. As his efforts to trace out Irena proved in vain, he married an ordinary pretty girl, Maya, promising to take her one day to the high mountains, and show her the beauty of the world. She and he became mutually dissatisfied in four years, she disliking the dreamer, and he the frivolous butterfly. Then, they meet Irena at a hotel with a sister of mercy. Irena is mad with despair, and has had a nervous breakdown. The sculptor's old love for her returns. Maya meets a brutal hunter and he-man, Wulfham, and wants to go with him. The sculptor abandons his trip along the fiords with Maya. He goes to the mountains with Irena, to re-live his old dreams. Maya and Wulfham also go to the mountains to live their life of animal pleasure. A big

snowstorm comes. Wulfhām and Maya come down to safety, but the sculptor and Irena deliberately go into the very thick of the storm and are covered up by the snow and killed. The sister of mercy, who had watched over the semi-mad Irena, cries out "Pax vobiscum!". Maya exclaims, as she descends to safety, and hears of her husband's death, "I am free", and sings a song on those lines. The thing was beautifully rendered by Arna Heni. At the end, an old lady said to me "oh, Ibsen is so true, isn't he?" I replied "I prefer the old truth of Savitri". "Why?" she asked, surprised. "Because a husband or wife can then be sure. 'A heart will throb when I die, a tear will fall in love, a soul will plead with God for me, a sigh will go out into the outer void'." "How do you know?" she asked. "Because I happen to know" said I and left, taking away three-fourths of her admiration for Ibsen's truths.

Of course, I mean no disparagement to Ibsen. He is one of the great makers of the modern drama, a fearless fighter for individual rights against social tyranny. The author of "The Master Builder", "The Doll's House", and "Pillars of Society" has always attracted me greatly. His epigrams, like "He who has not loved one, cannot love mankind", "Marriage!, Nothing else demands so much from a man!"; "Home life ceases to be free and beautiful as soon as it is founded on borrowing and debts."; "The majority is never right, never, I say. That is one of society's lies against which a free and thoughtful man must rebel. Who are they who make up the majority in a country? Are they the wise or the foolish?"; show his piercing wisdom. But, I am bound to point out his limitations too. The minority also may go wrong, much more so, an individual, and not merely the majority or society.

Saw the "Short Story." It was acted well. Simon Leigh, an author, meets Penelope Marsh, a rich American unmarried lady, on a chance cruise, and has an affair with her, though

he is happily married to Georgina Leigh who has given up her actress's career for his sake. He writes a pathetic short story about the impossibility of continuing this love for a married man like him. That story is much appreciated by everybody, and not the least by Penelope who, escorting Lady Bucktrout as a paid companion, cadges an invitation to the house of the Leighs. Lord Bucktrout, a man who wants to kiss all the maidservants and other available females, is one of the guests. Mark Hurt, the former colleague of Georgina who wants to get her to 'act again for twenty-five thousand dollars, is another guest. Peacock is the maid, but is too elderly to tempt even Lord Bucktrout. Miss Flower is a subscription-hunter and organiser of unwanted functions, and is very clever in her line. Penelope makes love to Simon, and is found out by Georgina who also sees the compromising letter written by Simon to her. Georgina resolves, in anger, to accept Mark's offer to go to America. But, Simon refuses to accept Penelope as a substitute for Georgina. Penelope's terrible eagerness to secure Simon's divorce\* also makes Georgina resolve not to give Simon up. So, everything settles down, as of old, and the American Miss goes away to find unmarried lovers. Marie Tempest as Georgina, Ursula Jeans as Penelope, and Sybil Thorndike as Lady Bucktrout, were capital.

The theme of the story, namely, "The Eternal Triangle," is popular with many English dramatists, and takes the place of polygamous marriages in the ancient Indian stories. Only, instead of merely exploiting the possibilities of rival women lovers of the same man, we also get the possibilities of rival men lovers of the same woman fully exploited. "The Eternal Triangle" includes the Red Triangle as well as the Blue Triangle.

Saw the "Wind and the Rain" by Merton Hodge. It was also good, though not as good as 'Short Story.' It shows a

boarding house in a Scotch University City where students come to reside and read for medicine, but soon run after girls, and leave medicine to take care of itself, with the consequence that they take years and years to pass. They invariably bring some photos of their fiancées, but soon lock them up and take to other and nearer girls. Mrs. Mc. Fee, the landlady, a plump young woman, is a past master of their ways, and, whenever she has some little abrasion in the leg, shows the whole leg to each student in turn, alone, for treatment. The students curse themselves, and wonder how so many former students escaped maintenance cases, Raymond, Williams, Tritton, Duhamel, and Morgan are the students. Tritton has a fiancée, Jill, but consigns her to oblivion, in the time-honoured fashion, and takes to Anne. Jill is quite content to run after others. Finally, Anne also discards her old fiancée and marries Tritton. A very conventional and well-worn plot, whose chief merit is in the lively conversation and the good acting. The audience roared at the many philandering scenes.

Saw 'The Dominant Sex' at the Aldwych. Angela, after a period of free love, settles down with an Engineer and inventor. He eventually dominates over her, forces her to leave her job, and bear a child for him. Joe, a civil servant, has a wife who gads about with other men and tells him that he can have her at any time he wants, and, so, should not "find fault with her in what she calls "the dog in the manger" way. He puts up with her for a while, and then imitates her, and runs away with another woman, leaving his wife, who does not regret him, but feels keenly the loss of his liberal allowances for dress etc. Her lovers, of course, leave her alone, as they wanted her only when she was having all her wants, except the erotic ones, satisfied by her husband. The wretched woman learns a lesson by the eventual dominance of her husband. There were prolonged kisses and embraces

on the stage, to the huge delight of the audience which consisted largely of unmarried women.

"Tilly of Bloomsbury" came into prominence only because of the caricature of Indian students in England with their high-sounding words, frequent malapropisms and ungainly table manners. After a protest by Indians, these unsightly passages were cut out, and the play sank to its proper obscurity.

One day, an English friend rushed to me and said "I never knew that you had such great men in India." I asked him "Whom are you thinking of? Gandhi? Tagore? Raman?" "None of those" said he, "I was thinking of Clive. I have just seen 'Clive of India.'" I stood speechless with astonishment.

The play "1066 and After" was a most fascinating review of English History from the Days of the Norman Conquest, and I wished we had in India a similar play, "Asoka and After." It is the best and easiest way of teaching history to the masses.

Saw "The Inside Stand" by P. G. Wodehouse. The 'Inside Stand' means an accomplice sent inside a house by a criminal with intent to facilitate his robbery, like a maidservant or chauffeur. The play deals with Chicago gangsters, love-sick American ladies, gangstresses with hidden children passing off as respectable married people, senators with affairs and love letters, etc. It was rollickingly funny, like all Wodehouse stuff, and was acted superbly.

The "Limping Man" was a play about a murder. The plot was not very interesting. The murder itself was devoid of mystery or overmastering passion. The play was saved only by the fine acting of the leading characters.

"Julius Caesar" acted at the Old Vic, was excellently rendered, like all Shakespearian plays at this theatre.

Attended the performance of "Two little plays of St. Francis," "Sister Clare", and "Juniper's First Sermon," by Laurence Housman. Very short, and not too sweet. One shows the absurd horror of the old monks of (the temptation represented by) women, and the consequent avoidance of them, without ability to avoid them willingly. St. Francis rebukes such degrading thoughts about women, and advocates mingling with them as sisters, with respect, but no close familiarity. In the next play, Juniper is made to deliver a sermon, against his will, on heresy. It is 'funny', but not too funny.

Saw "Jack and the Beanstalk" (a pantomime) at the Drury Lane theatre. It was the last day, and the house was full. The acting was superb. Things were brought down to everyday life in the twentieth century, and almost every line had a modern touch. It was roaring fun, and the colour and scenery were simply marvellous.

Now, I shall speak about some films. I saw 'Moscow Nights' relating to the Russia of 1916. The utter rascality of army profiteers, the cunning of spies, whether disguised as benevolent old women (Madame Sabline) or as beggars, the sending of unarmed men to slaughter, the promising of a young and beautiful woman by her parents for money to a rich and dissolute man, the triumph of true love, the reluctance of even the rich lover to speak to a lie after being sworn on the cross, and the depicting of the hectic night life of Czarist Moscow, were shown forcibly and vividly. The rich lover was quite a brick, unlike the usual run of these ogres. I was leaving after the 6-30 performance, when a young couple, who had seen the thing with me, said "You can remain for this performance too. Why do you go?" I replied "Because I deem the 2½ hours to be spent hereafter as a waste, since I have seen the thing once."

"Sanders of the River" was an exceedingly delightful

film, with Paul Robeson as prime actor, glorifying British rule in Nigeria. The Canoe Song, and the Song of Love were very striking. The praise of an English Civil Servant in Nigeria:—

“Sandy the Strong,  
Sandy the Wise,  
The righter of Wrong,  
The hater of lies”

was very telling.

The lines, as to what people should do when each man is strangling his neighbour, namely,

“Of each for all  
We stand or fall,  
And all for each,  
Until we reach  
The Journey's end”

constitute sound advice to Indians too.

Saw also the “Show Boat” where, too, Paul Robeson acts. The lines

“Let me go away  
From the Mississippi,  
Let me go away  
From the white man far!”

and

“Old Man River,  
He must know something,  
But don't say nothing,  
He just keeps on rolling,  
He keeps on rolling.”

going on, later, to express the weariness of the life of the

dweller by the riverside, and the river's own continuing to roll on as before, with perfect nonchalance, make one pause and think.

Saw the 'Modern Times' of the inimitable Charlie Chaplin. It was a silent film except for Charlie's Italian song. It seemed, therefore, to be an antediluvian thing, and only Charlie's name kept the house crowded. Of course, there was roaring fun. Charlie begins as a worker in a steel factory, screwing on nuts and tightening them, which seems to be his only job, hour after hour, day after day. No wonder, he goes mad, and screws on the noses of fellow workmen, boss, and ladies visiting the place. Of course, the shape of some of the noses so treated was bettered, but the owners did not like this beauty treatment, and, so, Charlie went to a lunatic asylum, wherefrom he was discharged ten days later, a sane man, but without work. He gets mixed up with an unemployed demonstration, and is arrested, while carrying a red flag, for lack of better work to do. He is sent to prison, and, there, helps in saving the jail officers from bandits, and mutineers, and is released against his will. He then sees a poor girl steal a loaf to save herself and her starving sisters, owns up to the theft, is arrested, escapes with her, has all kinds of adventures with her in a ramshackle house and a cafe-restaurant, and is finally seen cheering her up when she feels hopelessly depressed at the persecution of a cruel world. "Buck up, never say die" says he, and leads her to the high mountains to begin a new life in a less organised world. The feeding machine (automatic feeder) was most funny, like almost everything else in Charlie's swan song. His singing was not up to much.

Saw 'Things to Come' of H. G. Wells, a most powerful and impressive picture. It shows a war which began in 1940 with terrible gas and aerial warfare and ended only

in 1970 after extirminating half the world and after a mysterious disease called 'wandering sickness' had been spread by the enemy. People had to be shot like mad dogs when they got this sickness. A war lord (who was a skit on Mussolini, according to the loud comments of many English members of the audience, but who might have been just any dictator, Stalin, or Hitler, or Mussolini, though the actor resembled the last more) rules Everytown despotically till he fears conquest by the airmen who use only sleeping gas, and commits suicide in desperation. His planes are helpless without petrol. His keep is a woman who wants to wed power, wherever it is, and is ready to drop him when he is falling. The airmen take over, and war and disease end. An era of unparalleled scientific progress sets in, and, ultimately, two people are shot from a time gun safely to explore the moon. 'Either the universe or nothing' is the concluding note, as the leading scientist gazes at the stars where the shot-at rocket is seen.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### SWITZERLAND, GENEVA AND MONTE CARLO

SWITZERLAND had long attracted me for three reasons, the glamour of the Alps, the glory of the lakes, and the love of the people for independence. Whenever I thought of the land of the free, I used to think of the Swiss, and of the immortal stories of William Tell, Arnold Winkelried and Bonnivard. But, when I had finished my visit to Switzerland, my impression was not that of a very brave people willing to shed their last drop of blood for liberty, but that of a nation of hotelmen ready to free the visitors of their superfluous, and even necessary, cash. Owing to the popularity of the mountains and lakes, winter tourists and summer tourists had become so numerous, that every part of Switzerland had become the resort of half a dozen nationalities, and, if it retained its original appearance, it was mainly to keep the tourists coming, by not changing too much.

My English and American friends recounted many stories of the greed in these Swiss hotels, though, of course, they added that the French and Italian hotels were no better. I may give here three stories very popular in those days. The first was that an American was charged for two bottles of costly wine, whereas he distinctly remembered that he had ordered for, and partaken of, only one. He would not put up with the nonsense, and, so, called the manager, and asked him indignantly why two bottles had been billed for instead of one. The manager saw that the game was up, and replied "Sir, the boy is new. So, when he set the bottle on your table, he might have mistaken the echo,

such a nuisance in these mountainous regions, to be the sound made by another bottle."

Another story was about an English Lady who went with her grown-up daughter to a Swiss hotel, and, without telling anybody, took her own soap in order to prevent the hotel from over-charging her at least on that account. But, on leaving, she was astonished to receive a bill charging for soap also, on the usual liberal scale. She went indignantly to the manageress, and said "You know I never used soap during all my stay of a week here.", meaning, of course, that she had not used the hotel soap. But, her daughter, not aware of this secret smuggling, was horrified, and said "Mamma, what! Not used soap all these days!" and the horrified lady, thoroughly embarrassed paid the bill in full, and left without a word.

A third story ran that an English lady carefully regulated her tips when leaving the hotel, and went with her friends and sat in the bus waiting outside. The hotel maid servant, who was none too pleased with her small tip, rushed to the bus with a sweet smile, and handed over to the horrified lady a worn-out comb which she had left behind, saying "Madam, you have forgotten this. It will serve you some time yet," and the lady felt as if she should sink into the earth, on seeing the significant glances exchanged by her friends.

Added to this feeling of disillusionment, I learnt from competent critics that the stories of William Tell, Arnold Winkelried and Bonnivard were as mythical as those of Samyukta and Padmini. Half the charm of the famous castle of Chillon on the lake of Geneva, with its bringing to mind Byron's memorable lines "His hair was grey, but not with years," and "Eternal Spirit of the Chainless Mind!," disappeared on learning that Bonnivard perhaps never fought the tyranny of the Duke of Savoy any more than Tell

and Winkelried performed the exploits attributed to them against the Duke of Austria and his governors. Of course, despite the legendary nature of the stories, there are half a dozen parts in Switzerland shown as the ones where William Tell placed the apple on the head of his boy, and where Arnold Winkelried rushed on the serried—Austrian army, clutching a dozen spears of the enemy and piercing his own chest with them, crying out "Make way for liberty!" The Swiss reputation for love of liberty got dimmed somewhat in the 18th century, by their going as mercenaries to the Kings of France and other autocrats, and became dimmer still during the last Great War, when, powerless to attack Germany, they remained content with war-profiteering.

But, all this is forgotten when the lakes and mountains are seen in their glory. The lakes of Constance, Zurich, Zug, Neufchatel, Thun, Lucerne, Geneva and Lugano are all striking in their own way, and are fine pleasure-resorts. So, too, the Alpine peaks with the eternal snow on them, and the glaciers and the ravines and the rushing rivers and rills. Mountain-climbing is one of the favourite hobbies of visitors to this land of the Alps. I contented myself, however, with going to the top of Jungfrau, 13,000 feet high, by train, after seeing how perilous climbing such mountains by inexperienced plainsmen like me was. I was told a story that an Englishman, in like predicament with me, once asked one of the mountain guides whether a certain steep and narrow path, bordered on both sides by ravines, abysses and precipices, was safe. "The path is quite safe" was the reply "but, I can't say whether the passengers will be." Needless to say, he was not one of the clients of that guide thereafter. From the top of Jungfrau one of the most exhilarating views anywhere in the world is obtained. Of course, the abundance of refreshments

on sale there does not diminish the enjoyment of the scenery. It was my ambition to go on to a glacier when I started for Switzerland, but I soon gave up the idea for the same reason as I gave up mountain-climbing. I had thought that having climbed up Doddabetta and other hills in India, it would be easy to do a bit of mountain-climbing in Switzerland. But, I found that the two things differed as vastly as climbing up an elephant, which is perfectly safe, and mounting a vicious and untrained mare, which is the very reverse.

Switzerland, though a very small country, was even then afflicted with the problem of the triple races inhabited by it, namely, the German, the French and the Italian. By the very nature of this conglomerate population, the country has to remain neutral in any war in which Germany and France are on opposite sides. There is little in common between the French Swiss, German Swiss and Italian Swiss, and I have always wondered why people who do not question the right of Switzerland to continue as a free and independent nation, despite its three races for such a ridiculously small population, find the Hindu-Moslem problem in India an insuperable difficulty to this country's being a nation.

I found the Swiss a very courteous people. Perhaps, they are even more courteous now than in days of old, for politeness pays in hotels. While in Switzerland, I took the opportunity of going across the lakes in steam boats. On lake Geneva, I went from Villeneuve to Villa Olga, the abode of the famous author Romain Rolland, just to pay a courtesy visit there, as I heard that he was ill. Romain Rolland's sister received me downstairs, chatted with me for some time, and regretted that I could not see the great author as he was confined to bed, I replied "Oh, no, I don't want to see him at all; I just came to see the spot where he lives, and to make enquiries after him, and go away." She was surprised, and told me

that some Americans would not take things so easily, but would insist on at least having a peep at the great author. I replied "That is because they want to tick off everything, and to finish the deal, like salesmen, whereas, we, Indians, simply go round without business motives, and without any desire to create records." I was told by her that Gandhiji's visit to the place had created a "record," and that the whole populace had followed him cheering.

At one corner of the Lake of Geneva, or Lake Lemán, lay the celebrated city of Geneva, the birthplace of Calvin, the asylum of Rousseau, and the then abode of the League of Nations. I went and saw the city and was well impressed by it. The new League buildings, by the shores of the lake, were most attractive, and the view of Mount Cenis was, happily, unobstructed. There, the mountain shone in all its majesty, though, after seeing Everest, Kanchinjunga, Dhavalagiri and Nanga Parbat, the impression created by Mt. Cenis has somewhat dwindled. I went through the several Secretariats of the League of Nations, and attended some of the sessions of the League. The annual contribution of India to the League was far more than its representation either in the League Council or in the League offices would warrant.

The charm of Geneva in those days was that you could meet, men of every nationality, from Abyssinians to New Zealanders. Chinamen to Chilians, Indians to Japanese Americans to Africans. Of course, the predominant men, with the booming voices, were the English, the French and the Americans. At the International University at Geneva, the teaching was only in two languages, English and French, and, as I told a Chinaman, Ming, "Look here, my friend, you, Chinese, number 500 millions, and we, Indians, 400. Between us, we are half the world of human beings. But, do not despair. There is an option of two languages for us, English or French." Ming

approved with a vigorous wink of his almond eyes, but told me, rather unkindly, that, while a Chinaman had been elected to the Council of the League, no Indian had been elected so far. I replied "Why should you and I quarrel here for the leavings of the table, we who ought to have presided over it?", and Ming relented, and told me "That is so. What shall we do about it?" "Nothing" said I. "Let us leave it to Time. We are the favourites of Time. In time, the League will fly away from Geneva. Nobody will be anxious to be on its Council, and our prestige will be restored." a thing which has happened since. Half the League has fled to America. The other half has gone, nobody knows where, and has, perhaps, committed suicide without even the dignity of an inquest, and disappeared from the world unhonoured, unwept and unsung.

A friend recently asked me "Why has the League fled to America?" I replied by a story. "There was once a very good man who always wanted to do things in the best of ways, but had no means to enforce his will except by words. Still, a lot of people liked him, and crowded round him, seeking his advice, and hanging on his words. One day, a robber broke into the house of one of these, and occupied a room. Indignant and helpless, the house-holder went and asked for the good man's aid. The good man said 'Wait till I bring round the robber by my words.' The robber would not listen. Again, the householder approached the good man. He said 'What can I do? you must wait till the robber listens to me.' Another day, another robber got into the house of a second admirer, and drove him out with blows. He, too, went and complained to the good man. The good man said 'I shall talk to him also. But, don't hope for too much.' 'Where shall I stay till your talks are finished?' asked the house-holder. 'Run away to a distant village' was the answer. The good man

talked to the second robber, but in vain. So, he ostentatiously said 'I shall talk to you no more.' A third robber entered the house of another admirer, but, he did not go to the good man. He began fighting the robber. The good man went to see what the matter was, and both the combatants asked him to clear out, lest he be finished off, and the good man fled to a far country, none of his admirers caring to follow him. Nobody misses the good man now, and he is now allowed to live undisturbed in the far country." It is obvious that only the strong arms of England, aided by the unlimited resources of America, are guarding the freedom of England. A thousand Leagues of Nations could not have done this.

The League of Nations has often reminded me of the basil leaves which the old Rajahs of Tanjore got incantated by Brahmins and put in the wake of Hyder's invading army, in the pious hope that the holy things would drive away the unholy troops. But, the miracle never happened, and the Rajahs of Tanjore fled. So, too, the incantations of the League of Nations never worked with Japan when she invaded Munchukuo, or Italy when she invaded Abyssinia or Albania, or Germany when she swallowed up Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. So, it has fled to America, where a race, full of commonsense, will keep it in its place, and treat it with indulgence as an interesting curio of the old world.

While at Geneva, I was told by a Frenchman, rather sarcastically, "Physically, mentally and morally, to all outward appearance, your people seem to be equal to us. Why is it then that you are not free even to vote as you like at the League meetings? Perhaps, there is something in race, after all." I said "Wait till the caravan of life has progressed somewhat more. There is no reason to believe that India is the only country overtaken by misfortune." To-day, I regret those words, seeing the miserable plight to which proud

France has come. Even in 1936, I could see certain misgivings in the hearts of Frenchmen, a fear of Germany and her rearmament, and a panic at England's acquiescence in the re-occupation of the Ruhr and the Rhine. That had led to two conflicting schools, one in favour of fighting Germany before it was too late, and the other in favour of doing nothing to provoke Germany, which was feared to be too strong. Owing to the diffidence in the strength of her sons, France committed the folly of trusting everything to walls and fortifications. The wonderful Maginot lines were the result, the most wonderful thing about these impregnable fortifications being that they never even put up a fight, and had not to be captured, when the crisis came.

At Geneva, too, I met a Norwegian lady who asked me why Indians were content to be under foreign rule for a thousand years, and attributed it to cowardice, saying that Norwegians, even though allied in race, creed, colour and ideals to the Swedes, had, in 1909, resolved to fight the Swedes in order to win their independence, and had got what they wanted by a peaceful separation being effected without shedding a drop of blood. I told her "Things were easy for you. The Swedes, people of your own race, creed, colour and culture, were quite willing to give you what you wanted, like Hindu brothers effecting a peaceful partition. But, our case is different." She refused to agree, but, I daresay that, now, under the heels of Germany, she must have realised that she was not altogether right.

I visited Monte Carlo purposely along with my wife. Neither of us has touched a card in our lives. We have also no belief in lotteries or gambles. If we win, we shall be sorry for taking other people's money. If we lose, we shall be sorry for losing our own. A French lady told us "Life itself is a gamble. So, there is no harm in a little gamble."

I retorted "If life itself is a gamble, we are already gambling, for we are living, and there is no need for any more gambling." "What do you mean?" asked she. I said "If the train is moving, there is no need for you also to move in the compartment." She laughed and said "You are perfectly silly. The world is moving. So, you need not be moving." "That also is quite correct," said I, "But, it will take some years before I reach that stage of philosophic detachment," which sentiment utterly amazed and bewildered her. She wanted to know whether it was possible for anybody to sit still. I told her that it was not only possible, but was being practised by many Sadhus in India. I went on, "A European visitor, seeing one of these remarkable men, said to him 'You are so wise. Why waste your wisdom here? Why not go about and improve people?' Pat came the reply 'If I am wise, I ought to know what is best for me to do. How do you know that, remaining here, I do not influence people, even as a magnet does?' The European visitor left without a reply."

The journey to Monte Carlo along the Riviera is certainly one of the most fascinating I have made. The sea has a variety of colours, azure, brown, blue, green and purple. Islands and peninsulas of the most enchanting shapes, and cliffs loaded with flower trees, are innumerable. We reached Monte Carlo at 1 p.m. and put up at a first class hotel. Then we went to the world-famous—Casino, showed our passports, and got the necessary cards for entry. We entered the vast halls, saw the tables of roulettes, chess, baccara, and *trentes et quarante*. An interpreter spent an hour showing us round and explaining the rules of each game. An elderly lady, the mother of a Rangoon High Court Judge, and an expert gambler at all the tables, hailed us with joy, and made many polite enquiries about India, Burma and ourselves.

On going round the tables, we found out that if two friends put their money always on black and white, manque and passe, pair and impair, they could go on playing for ages without their losing a pie, though the croupiers might soon discover the trick and send them packing. Possibly also, the plan would not be exciting enough for real gamblers, as the element of gain and loss would not be there. Just to try our luck, both of us put a five franc piece (about a rupee) each and lost. We tempted luck no more, but left at once.

The curious thing at Monte Carlo is that nobody is given his winnings in money, but is given tallies to be changed at a desk far away, and, so, most people play with their winnings till they lose everything. Many have got plans to break the bank, but the bank is not yet broken, and will never be broken unless the Nazis capture Monte Carlo with their mechanised army, instead of by playing on the roulette. The look of avarice on the faces of some of the players was astounding, just as the tragic look of the losers was pathetic. A beautiful woman who had appeared so charming outside the Casino looked a veritable hyena five minutes after she went in and sat at the table. Human nature in the raw is brought to the surface very soon indeed at these horrible tables.

Monte Carlo is, of course, in the principality of Monaco, a petty State comparable to one of our Kathiawar States in the Mahikantha or Rewakantha agency. Just when we went out of the Casino, a taximan asked us if we wanted to go to San Remo in Italy. We jumped in, and he drove off at a furious pace along the coastal road. We took in the beauty of the scenery. At Pont Luigi, the taxi stopped for the Italian officers to examine our passports and allow us to cross the frontier. There was a regular crowd waiting there including an English Captain and his wife. But the moment the

Italian officer sighted us, he came to us, checked our passports, and let us pass, probably because few Indian ladies cross the frontier, and his curiosity had been roused. He wanted to be specially polite to far-off Indians. Perhaps, it was also an attempt to get Indian opinion favourable to Italy, something like the message sent by Mussolini to Nehru that he was waiting to see him, an offer Nehru declined because of his indignation at the conquest of Abyssinia, to the great amazement of Mussolini's man. Whatever the cause, the English Captain was put out, and said "We have been waiting here for the examination of our passports." The Italian officer said "Yes, but they have to go to a more distant country."

On the other side of the frontier, we saw regular Fascist troops marching along the streets of Ventimiglio, Berghalieri and San Remo with cries of 'Long live the Duce! Long live Italy! Down with Abyssinia!' Placards with the above slogans were pasted to houses and trees and telephone posts. But, the people were scrupulously polite to us. Everywhere, ladies rushed to my wife and asked many rapid questions in Italian. My wife asked me what the meaning was. I tried to make a guess, but miserably failed. Then I conversed slowly in very bad French with those ladies, and interpreted to my wife, who knew no French, what they wanted to know. They admired her sari. They asked her why she had bored her nose, and put on a nose-screw. They insisted on seeing her marriage ornament, and they brought and gave her some peaches and grapes. So, my wife had a very good impression of Italy, and both of us returned to Monte Carlo after spending a few happy hours at San Remo.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### GERMANY ONCE MORE.

I shall now narrate a few of my experiences in Germany when I visited that country for the second time in June 1933 before returning to India by way of Genoa. In those days, there was no need for a visa for German subjects visiting Britain or for British subjects visiting Germany. So, I had been told at London that no visa was necessary for me. Watching the fascinating shores of the Bodensæ (Lake of Constance) from the train crashing through Austria, I reached Lindau in Bavaria. At once, a high German police official stepped into the train with all the offensive efficiency of the Gestapo. He eyed the two Englishmen in my compartment, with distinct disfavour, perhaps because I, too, was with them, examined their passports, grunted, and then came to me. I showed him my passport. He asked me "Where is the visa?"

"Visa!" said I. "I am a British subject, and require no visa."

"Nonsense!" said he. "You are not a Britisher, but an Indian. Get-down from the train, sir, and get a visa, and then proceed."

I said "The rule says 'all British subjects,' and I, too, am exempt."

He asked me "Do you really take pride in being a British subject?"

"Why should I answer that question now? I, too, am exempt under the present rules."

"No. Only persons with British passports or persons of British descent are exempt. Please get down."

"I say, I can't get down with all my heavy luggage, Why are you against Indians?" I asked.

"You are wrong. I don't dislike Indians. But, I have always understood that Indians are not Britishers."

I felt half flattered, despite my obvious embarrassment. Then a bright idea occurred to me. "Look here. I shall pay whatever the visa charges are," said I. "Endorse the collection in my passport, and I shall recover it, later on, through the proper channel."

"I ought to ask you to get down and obtain the visa, and go by another train. But, I like Indians, after having read Schopenhauer. Besides, your passport number (707.) reads the same forwards and backwards. So, it is all the same, I suppose. Pay 12 Marks,<sup>1</sup> and cast off all hopes of refund."

I paid the 12 Marks. He endorsed the payment on the passport, and went away, remarking "Wish you a good time in Germany. Don't hope for a refund."

This episode reminded me sharply that a new Germany had taken the place of the old Germany I had visited in 1922 with the advent of Hitler as Chancellor in the beginning of 1933. It was a good thing for me that this police official, characteristically called Fritz, was an elderly man continuing from the Kaiser's days, and had a knowledge of Schopenhauer, unlike the majority of Hitler's officials.

In the beautiful scenery, when the train resumed its journey, I forgot all about the collection of the 12 marks. But, when I reached Munich, I took the aid of an Indian friend, who met me there, and we soon sent a letter to the British Consul, stating the circumstances, and requesting him to get a refund. I got a reply from the Consul, after my return to India, characterising the collection as illegal, assuring me that all Indians were entitled to the same exemption from viss as

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<sup>1</sup> About a Pound sterling then.

Britons, and promising to get a refund, but adding that it would take "considerable time."

I may as well finish the story of this episode here. On my departure from Germany, I took the same route, and met the same police official in Lindau. He asked me "Got your refund, sir?" "No" said I. "You will never get it," said he. "Had a good time?"

"Fine."

"Glad to hear it."

At that moment, the Customs Official came, and examined my things. I showed him the Rolliflex camera, worth £40 outside Germany, which I had bought in Munich for £22. He asked me why I should not pay the difference in price, as Customs, under the existing rules. I said "I have used it already, and it is my personal property, and is not liable to any tax. Besides, your friend here has already deprived me of 12 marks unnecessarily."

"Let us see the snaps you have taken" said he.

When I showed him the snap of a little group of smiling Nazi girls, he smiled and said "All right. Go." So, I had cast my 12 marks on the waters, and saved 200 marks on the camera. But, I have not got a refund of the 12 marks yet, and I do not think that it will be added on to the reparations, payable by Germany at the time of the treaty at the end of this war. So, the police official was, after all, right. This episode reminds me of the remarks of a High official in a petty Indian State, to an outside litigant who had a good case, "Justice is always done here. But it is a bit slow; so, people do not ask for it, as it may not arrive in their lifetime, whereas the waste of time, money and energy must, of course, occur in theirs."

The visa episode naturally did not give me a very good impression of the new Nazi regime in Germany, so far as the treatment of Indians was concerned. This unfavourable

impression was deepened by the reports of my Indian friends at Munich that Hitler had issued circulars to all high Government officials, civil and military, not to mix with Indians or to invite them to parties, and that, consequently, the Indians, who had been invited even by the Kaiser and the Generals in pre-Hitlerite days, were not being invited even by the local Captains and Mayors. When I was walking round the streets of Munich, and was opposite a good vegetarian restaurant, near the University, I met a number of Nazis in uniform parading. They stopped their parade there, and dispersed, to have some refreshments. Their Captain, who knew English, accosted me, and asked me how I liked Germany.

I said "It is a grand country, but I hear that Indians are not being treated well after the advent of the Nazis."

He asked me "You see that building there?"

"Yes" said I. "It is the University."

"Now," said he "despite the advent of the Nazis, 17 scholarships are set apart there for Indians. How many are set apart in your Universities for Germans? Which part of India do you come from?"

I was neatly caught. So far as I knew, not a single scholarship in any Indian University was set apart for Germans in those days, or even now, for the matter of that. But, to confess to it at once would mean the man's mistaking me for a canting complainer, which impression does no good to foreigners, least of all, to an Indian, in Nazi Germany. So, I said "I come from Madras. No scholarship is set apart now for Germans in any Indian University, so far as I know. But, then, you know that, under the Aryan laws of Manu, 'Never shall a son, a woman, a subject, a slave, make a gift.' We are not a self-governing people yet, and, so, have no right to make gifts of scholarships to you. When we become

self-governing, we shall return your scholarships, with even 170 scholarships in our Universities."

He was genuinely pleased, and shook hands with me, and said "Have a drink of beer?"

I told him "I don't drink."

"Not even beer!" said he. "Then, why did you come to Germany?"

The joke goes that Germans are great beer-bibbers, and that a famous German Baron was once told by a lady how delightful the scenery of the Bavarian Alps was, and he agreed enthusiastically. But, when she went on to add "What wonderful water they give you there for drinking!" he replied "Yes. I have seen that water, too."

I replied to the Captain "I came to Germany not to drink beer, but to see your operas, picture-galleries, universities, museums and industries."

He said "You could have seen them to better advantage with a glass of beer in the intervals. But, I may as well give you a glass of citronnade. I hope you don't object to it?"

"Oh no" said I.

So, he and I took a glass of citronnade each. He then asked me "Are you, Indians, really Aryans?"

I replied "We are the only Aryans."

"What!" said he. "What about us?"

"Excuse me," said I, "you are Teutons. We are Aryans. The word 'Aryan' means merely 'Sir,' or 'Gentleman,' and can never come from the root 'Arrare,' 'to plough,' as expounded by the German Philologists. The Brahmins, who are undoubtedly Aryans, will be outcasted if they handle the plough. I must say that you, Germans, have taken two words from us, Hindus, and used them in altogether different senses. Our word 'Aryan' which means simply 'Sir,' or

Gentleman,' and has no racial arrogance in it whatever, has been made by you the spearhead of a movement of racial arrogance. Our 'Swastika,' which was used as a symbol of peace to all living beings, has been borrowed by you and made to mean 'Death to the Jew.' "

My friend flushed, and rose, and said to me "Look here. If you want to leave Germany in peace, don't utter these unwanted sentiments, and, if you must utter them, don't utter them to the common Nazis, but only to officers like me, who can at least understand, though not appreciate, them," and he left curtly.

That was a lesson to me to keep my mouth shut on such matters while in Germany. Later on, I heard from my friends wild tales of Nazi frightfulness. Thus, I was told that the poor Jews were persecuted wholesale, whatever their service in the last war, or present service to the country, or people, or public, and whatever their character. It was said that a popular Jewish doctor, with an unselfish record of service to one and all, irrespective of race or creed, heard one night, at 2 a. m., a knock at the door, and at once got out of bed with his doctor's bag and stethoscope. His wife implored him not to go out at that time of night. But he replied "Darling, somebody might be dying now." She retorted "Take care that you be not that somebody," and clung to him. He shook her off gently, opened the door, and stepped out, and was shot dead by two Nazis. I could hardly believe it of any human beings, but I was assured of its truth by the Indians who told me about it. The later record of the Nazis has probabilised it also. The great Einstein has been hounded out of Germany, and has had his properties confiscated. So, too, thousands of doctors, professors and lawyers, leaders in their avocations, have been expelled for no other reason except that they were Jews, and anybody having even a Jewish great-grandfather, in the maternal

or paternal line, has been practically ruined, or shut up in ghettos.

But, as might be expected, this orgy of violence is not confined to Jews, much the same treatment being meted out to the Christian German opponents of the Nazis. Thus, I was told that a German with a fine record in the Great War had pooh-poohed the militarisation of Germany by Hitler, and had affirmed his conviction that the Siegfried lines, which were being secretly constructed then, were no good, adding "We can never win by our own strength. We can only win with the loving co-operation of France and England. Of course, I, too, am as full of sorrow over this horrid fact as the rest of you." The next day, his corpse was found fallen from a three-storied hotel, and the coroner at the inquest held by the Nazis pronounced the death as due to "suicide, owing to the despair generated in his heart by the hopelessness of the Fatherland's regeneration," and the man was buried with military honours.

I was also told that no less than 30 persons who had constructed the secret fortifications in the Siegfried lines were coolly put to death by the Nazis so that they might not reveal the secrets, in much the same way as Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, and other Hindu and Muslim Rulers of Medieval India, dealt with artisans who constructed for them secret fortifications or even monuments of art. I can very well believe this, after reading about the periodic baths of blood indulged in by the Nazis later, and reported in the papers.

It was during that visit to Germany also that I first came to know of Hitler's book "Mein Kampf." (My struggle) in an English translation. It is a terrible book to read, brutal in its plainness, coarse in its attack on the Jews and Negroes, but, all the same, gripping. It is not without striking sentences and phrases which must make people think. I shall quote a few passages. Hitler says "Is the leading statesman's task to consist not so

much in producing a creative thought or plan as in the art with which he makes the genius of his proposal comprehensive to a flock of silly sheep for the purpose of imploring their final consent?" The advocates of extreme democracy can well ponder over this. It is because of the truth inherent in it that even heads of democratic countries, like Roosevelt and Churchill, and popular leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi, have had to assume to themselves almost dictatorial powers in times of crisis.

Again, "Human rights are above State rights. If in the struggle for human rights, a race goes under, it means that it has weighed too light in the scales of Fate to be fit to continue to exist in this terrestrial world. If a man is unprepared or unable to fight for his life, just Providence has already decreed his end. The world is not for craven-hearted races." For Indians, faced with the problem of fighting the arrayed Fascists and Nazis, this statement of a Nazi will come with peculiar appropriateness, and make them fight the grim terror of dictatorship and tyranny, lest they be wiped out by just Providence.

"I do not know what appalled me most at that period, the economic misery of our fellow-workers, their moral crudity, or the low level of their spiritual development. Does our bourgeoisie not often rise in moral indignation when it learns from the mouth of some wretched tramp that he does not care whether he is a German or not, that it is all the same to him so long as he has enough to keep him alive? They at once protest loudly at such want of 'national pride,' and their horror at such sentiments finds strong expression. But how many really ask themselves why they themselves have a better sentiment? The question of 'nationalizing' a people is first and foremost one of creating healthy social conditions, a thorough knowledge of the cultural, social and political greatness of the Fatherland. I can fight only for what I love, love only what I respect, and

respect only what I know about." This passage ought to make nationalist Indians understand why the backward and depressed classes are not much interested in getting Swaraj.

"The State was sure to check and obstruct every really great German and to support every man and everything that was un-German." This is about Austria-Hungary in the last days of the Emperor Francis Joseph.

"The gloomy question occurred to me whether possibly inscrutable destiny, for reasons unknown to us, poor mortals, had not decreed the final victory of that little nation." This is about the Jews whom Hitler considers to be a separate nation.

"An army would not be much good if the fighting men were all generals. It would be harder to maintain discipline in a company of two hundred men, all equally gifted intellectually, than in one containing one hundred and ninety less gifted, and ten with higher intellects." This truth has been often proved in India.

"The national State must act on the presumption that a man of moderate education, but sound in body, firm in character, and filled with joyous self-confidence, and power of will, is of more value to the community than a highly educated weakling." Indians may well ponder over this.

"The national State must fight for its life. The citizens will be its best protection' rather than its weapons. Fortress walls will not cover it, but rather the living walls of men and women, full of love for the Fatherland." It is impossible to deny the truth in this.

"No nation on earth holds a square yard of territory by any right derived from Heaven. Frontiers are made and altered by human agency alone." There is profound truth in this, and the aboriginal inhabitants of any country, whether Hindus or Dravidians or Adi Dravidas, had better reflect on it before claiming to drive out all later comers from the spot

of land occupied by them, by human agency alone, for lack of better men.

"Today all our life in public is like a forcing bed for sexual ideas and attractions. Look at the bill of fare offered by the cinemas, playhouses and variety theatres, and you can hardly deny that this is not the right food, especially for the young. Hoardings and advertisement kisoks unite in drawing the public's attention in the vulgarest ways." This thing is happening in India too.

"All propaganda should be popular, and should adapt its intellectual level to the receptive ability of the least intellectual of those whom it is desired to address. The receptive ability of the masses is very limited, their understanding small; on the other hand, they have a great power of forgetting. This being so, all effective propaganda must be confined to a very few points which must be brought out in the form of slogans, until the very last man is enabled to comprehend what is meant by any slogan. If this principle is sacrificed to the desire to be many-sided, it will dissipate the effectual working of the propaganda, for the crowd will be unable to digest or retain the material that is offered them. It will, moreover, weaken and finally cancel its own effectiveness. There is great truth in this. The Advaita school of Hindu philosophy proclaims "I am God. God is real. The universe is unreal," a teaching far above the receptive ability of even the most intellectual men and so, the populace was unable to understand the teaching, or retain its truth, and coarsely assumed that they were Gods, as they were, and could do anything as they pleased, till Nature, red in claw and tooth, tore them to pieces mercilessly, and they, in agony, unjustly attacked the supreme truth as false. Muhammad, who knew Human psychology intuitively, proclaimed the simple truth "There is no God

but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet," and had it announced five times per day by the Muezzins from the minarets, and the whole world of Islam pulled like one man, and conquered half the world before it was even aware of it.

There are also some pathetic and feeling passages about Germany's downfall at the end of the Great War, and all patriots of all countries must sympathise with the genuine sorrow, though they need not regret Germany's well-deserved defeat.

"At the moment that the German divisions received their final orders for the great attack, the General Strike broke out in Germany. What was the army going on fighting for if even the people at home did not desire victory? For whom these vast sacrifices and privations? xx xx The House of Hohenzollern was to wear the German Imperial Crown no more—the Fatherland has become a Republic. xx xx So, all had been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices and privations, in vain the starvation and thirst for many endless months, in vain the hours we spent doing our duty, gripped by the fear of death, and in vain the death of two millions of men xx xx The blow from which the German Reich and nation are suffering is so heavy that they seem to have lost all power of feeling or reflection, as if seized with vertigo. It is hardly possible to recall the former heights, so dream-like and unreal seem the greatness and glory of those times compared with the present misery. xx xx Though thousands of years pass, none may talk of heroism without thinking of the German army in the World War. Through the mists of the past, the gray steel helmet will appear, never flinching or turning aside, a monument of immortality. As long as there are Germans left, they will reflect that these men were once sons of their nation."

He has also an interesting discussion in the following

passage:—"Are nations in fact ever ruined by the loss of a war and by that alone? It is always so, if the military defeat has been due to laziness, cowardice, want of character, in fact unworthiness on the nation's part. If it is not so, the military defeat will become a spur to a greater recovery in future, and not the tomb-stone of the nation. xx xx Germany's military defeat was, alas, not an undeserved catastrophe, but a merited chastisement of eternal retribution. The defeat was more than deserved by us. If the Front, left to itself, had really given away, and if the national disaster had been really due to failure, the German nation would have accepted the defeat in quite another spirit. There would have been neither mirth nor dancing, cowardice would not have swelled with pride and glorified the defeat, the fighting troops would not have been mocked at, and their colours dragged in the dirt. And Col. Repington would not have said 'Every third German is a traitor'."

Again, the passage "It is hardly imaginable that any one should think that a German could be made out of, say, a Negro or a Chinaman, because he has learnt German, and is ready to talk it for the rest of his life, and to vote for some German political party. The process would mean a beginning of bastardization of our race, and, in our case, not Germanization, but destruction of the German element," has some truth in it, and explains why the British Labour Party told an Indian candidate for Parliament recently that his first duty was towards India, and that he could not be held to be a hundred per cent Britisher, though he talks English and belongs to the British Labour Party.

Hitler's venom against the Jews appears on almost every page. A characteristic sentiment is "A thirty centimeter grenade always hisses louder than a thousand Jewish newspaper vipers—so, let them hiss!" His contempt for the

Negroes is shown by his calling them semi-apes, and he deploras the fact of any negro's being trained as doctor, lawyer, clergyman or teacher, so long as one white man remained to be trained for those honourable professions.

His idea of the Indians may well be seen from the following passage: "Representatives of some Balkan States and of Egypt and India impressed me as being chattering busybodies with nothing behind them. xx xx I still remember the childish and incomprehensible hopes which arose suddenly in 1920 21 in Nationalist circles. England was supposed to be on the verge of collapse in India. A few mountebanks from Asia (they might have been genuine fighters for freedom in India, for all I care) who ran round Europe, had managed to inspire quite reasonable people with the fixed idea that the British world empire with its pivot in India was just about to collapse there. That the wish was the father to the thought never occurred to them. xx xx It is childish to assume that in England the importance of the Indian Empire for the British world union is not appreciated. And it is a sad proof of refusal to take a lesson from the world war and to realise the determination of the Anglo-Saxon character when people imagine that England would let India go. Indian risings will never be successful. We, Germans, know well enough, by experience how hard it is to force England's hand. Apart from all this, I, speaking as a German, would rather see India under British domination than that of any other nation."

There are ample indications in the book of Hitler's intention to give his subordinates as much power as they wanted, so long as they remained good Nazis, faithful to the Fuhrer. His reply to the captain of the *Gras Spee*, that he was the Fuhrer of his ship and could decide its fate, shows this fully.

When, in Munich, I wanted to buy a fine camera, The

German shops had marked the Rolliflex at £25, whereas a Jewish shop offered it for sale for £22. But, a recent decree had been passed under which "Aryans" alone could sell things to foreigners. When the Jewish lady running the shop asked me to buy her camera, which was cheaper, I said "But, what about the decree? I don't want to have my camera confiscated by breaking it." She replied "Oh, that is easy. I shall hire an Aryan for 10 sh. now," and contemptuously hailed a German workman from the street, sold the camera to him for something like £21 10 sh., and made him sell it to me for £22. Thus, I got a perfectly valid sale, and also an insight into the working of such racial laws. Of course, a Jew could sell to a German. This incident ought to be a warning for Indians who want to indulge in such communal laws. The law only degraded the Aryan, instead of impoverishing the Jew.

Almost the first snap I took with my new camera was a group of Nazi girls, between 10 and 14, in uniform on parade. I asked their leader who knew English, "Will they mind if I snap them?" "Not at all; they love it," said she. She was right. All the girls put on their happiest smiles, and I got a lovely picture.

It is curious that inside Germany no jokes of any kind were heard against Hitler, and people were afraid even to talk of him. The impression I gained was that there were spies everywhere, fathers spying on sons, pupils on teachers, servants on masters, soldiers on captains, and barbers on clients. The Germans had mastered the chapters about the spies in the *Artha Sastra* of Kautalya only too well.

In England, I had heard two jokes about Hitler. One was that Hitler and Goering went out together one day in a car at a high speed, and ran over a farmer's dog, and killed it. Hitler, who respects a *German's* property, sent Goering in to tell the farmer about the tragedy, and come back soon. Goering did

not return for half an hour, and at last turned up drunk. "What is the matter?" asked Hitler, who is reputed to be a teetotaler and vegetarian. Goering replied "I went in and said to the farmer "Heil Hitler! The dog is dead!", and the farmer replied "Heil Hitler! Let us celebrate the event!"

Another joke told me by a London schoolmistress was that a certain boy in a German school had told his headmaster that a cat had given birth to five kittens in his house, and that all of them were Nazis. The next day, when the Fuehrer was inspecting the school, the headmaster, glad to have something pleasant to tell him, narrated this to him, and, to reinforce the story, called the boy, and questioned him again about it. "No, sir" said the boy "They are all Bolsheviks, "a pet aversion of Hitler then. "What is this?" said the headmaster, after the Fuehrer had left. "Yesterday, when I told you, sir," said the boy, "their eyes were all closed. So, they were Nazis. To-day, their eyes are fully open, and they have become Bolsheviks." Of course, it never occurred to my schoolmistress narrator that there was more truth in the joke than she had dreamt of, as even the grand Nazi, Hitler, became a Bolshevik over night, when he concluded his pact with Stalin over the heads of the British and the French.

When I tried to narrate these two jokes to an Indian friend in a Munich restaurant, and asked him whether he had heard them, he stared at me without replying, and, after the Germans in a corner of the restaurant had left, told me "Whatever is the matter with you, Ayyar? Don't you want to rejoin your wife and children? Walls have ears in Nazi Germany." And, of course, I never repeated my jokes to anybody again, so long as I was in Germany, as I had no ambition to leave my corpse in that strange country.

I took advantage of my visit to Munich to see the

Deutsches Museum. and the famous picture gallery. The Deutsches Museum, started in 1903, is a gigantic affair. It would take nine miles of walking before everything there is seen. Mines are exhibited as actual mines. Purification of ores is demonstrated. Metal working is always going on. Engines, from the oldest to the latest types, are available for inspection and test. Aeroplanes and airships of various patterns are kept, and the finest scientific instruments are allowed to be handled by visitors. Little tots of 7 and 8 go in and out of these rooms, and come into contact with mechanical contrivances and scientific appliances which even educated Indians of 40 and 50 have never seen. When I was standing gaping at the television apparatus, unable to read the German instructions, a little girl of 8 clapped her hands, and signed to me to remain there and look through the receiver, while she went out of sight to the other side of the booth, and grinned and made faces and caught her ears and nose, all of which operations I could clearly see through the receiver. Thus, little children in the Germany of 1933 were becoming thoroughly acquainted with television, which has not yet reached the major cities of India. Bavaria, with an area only equal to that of Mysore, has got this wonderful museum. No wonder, every German can handle a machine; no wonder, the steel production of Germany is greater than that of England, no wonder, German machines are so cheap and efficient. A famous Englishman has remarked that the Santal of the forest is easily able to do high-class work in the Tata Iron and Steel Works after a few weeks of training there. If we had the same opportunity as the Germans have, I have no doubt that we would be even more skilled than they at machines, as our hands are more pliable, our bodies more elastic, and our minds more subtle.

In one section of the Museum, I was shown some small

pellets of the size of black grams. I was told that they were food pills, and that three of them swallowed would stave off hunger for ten days. I looked incredulous, and simply said in joke - "That won't suit us, for, we, in India fill our bellies like gunny bags." "So do we, Germans." said the man in charge, "And that is why we are keeping this.", and he took out from a box near him something which looked like black bread, but was a compound of saw dust, potato peel, banana skin etc., which are generally thrown away. I asked him "Why do you keep this?". He said "For two reasons. Firstly, everybody wants to have a sense of a full belly, and our pills will not give it. So, we give one of these loaves along with the three pills. It weighs two pounds. Secondly, though for food, the pills are enough, this loaf is necessary for moving the bowels regularly." "Thirdly" said an American to me, when we had gone a little further away, lowering his voice, and with a wink in his eyes, "when the Aryans and others are fighting as allies, all will be doled out the loaves publicly, and the Aryans alone will be given the pills, privately, for quick swallowing." I wonder whether this is being done today, and would not be surprised if it were so.

At Hamburg, I enjoyed a fine dinner at a restaurant which had the reputation of being the best vegetarian restaurant in Europe. But, unlike in France, the cooking was only plain, and not exquisite, though the quantity made up for the quality, and the things were much cheaper, and the cleanliness greater. I heard there from an Indian that a German had been running a circus at that place, and had included therein Africans and Indians, both males and females, and had made them eat in public, and even have conjugal relations in public, to satisfy the curiosity of the thousands of Germans who assembled, and that this last thing had roused a storm of protest from some Indians, and had been, therefore,

discontinued, I have not been able to verify the truth of this, but should not be surprised if it were true, since Germany and France, and even England, had numerous nudist colonies in those days. With the advent of Hitler as Chancellor, this exhibition would have been stopped, even without the Indian protest.

Germans love War and reckless bravery above all things. And Hitler has these traits in abundance. His famous offer to his hesitating generals to commit suicide if his daring plan to re-occupy the Ruhr with camouflaged troops met with combined British and French opposition and failed, in order to save Germany from the horrors of invasion and certain defeat, and his remark to the British ambassador in Berlin "It is better to fight a War at fifty than at sixty" show this. He has conquered almost all Europe for the Germans, for the first time in all their history. No wonder, he is their Fuhrer, and not Goethe or Einstein or Kreisler or Keyserling. He is sure to be their hero long after he has passed away, even as Napoleon has become the national hero of the French far more than the saintly Joan of Arc. For, Germans love War more than Peace, power more than virtue greatness more than goodness, and glory more than liberty.

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## CHAPTER XX

### ITALY

**M**ANY things attract foreigners to Italy, the land of gaiety and beauty. In those days, they were undoubtedly the famous lakes of Como, Garda and Maggiore; the living volcanoes of Stromboli, Vesuvius and Etna; the celebrated paintings and sculptures; the sacred city of Rome, with its Pope; the ruins of Pompei; the advance in agriculture, and electricity; and the curiosity regarding Mussolini and the Fascists.

The first town in Italy reached by me was Venice, the Queen of the Seven Seas, *Septe maria*, which used to stretch from Ravenna to Aquileia. The tradition is that it was founded by the refugees who fled from the terror of Attila, the Hun. After seeing the city of Naples, it struck me that the proverb "See Naples and die," ought to have been "See Venice and die," for, there is no comparison between the beauty of Venice and that of Naples. The innumerable canals in Venice serve the same purpose as roads in other cities, and, though the *gondolas* have disappeared, steam-boats and row-boats have taken their place, to the greater convenience of passengers, though they are not, perhaps, so picturesque. The Grand Canal is an impressive sight, The only appreciable roads in Venice lead to St. Mark Square where the Great Cathedral stands in all its majesty. The palace of the Doge, seen from the lagoon, also makes an impressive sight.

The memory of the great mercantile republic of Venice is an ennobling one, Despite all the faults and frailties of

the plutocrats, who governed the republic, the Government was one of the best in those days, and did yeoman service to Europe and Christendom, by keeping the seas open and clearing them of pirates, and putting an end to all dreams of the Muslim conquest of Italy by defeating the Turkish fleet in the famous battle of Lepanto in 1571. The Lion of St. Mark, the Hall of the Council of Ten, the bridge of Sighs, the famous paintings of Titian and Veronese, the imposing buildings, the living industry of artistic glass-blowing and conch-carving, all make Venice even now a city of great interest. The feeding of the Pigeons in St. Mark Square is as delightful a sight as the feeding of pigeons at Nagore in South India.

I bought in Venice a beautiful image of a lady, carved on the spot for me on a small conch-shell, and also an exquisite piece of artistic glass blown in my presence. The artisans exhibited as much pleasure at my watching them at work, with admiration on my face, as the Muslim weavers of Benares lace-goods and the workers of Kashmir shawls did when I watched them making some things for me. I have been told by my friends that the things I bought were better than the usual things sold even in the best shops, and I do not wonder at it, as it is my firm conviction that the personal touch always pays.

One evening, while I was in the Grand Hotel at Venice, I heard voices suddenly, as in my room, and looked round to see who had come in; there was none. On looking down through the window, I saw that they emanated from some merry youths and maidens going in the boats along the canal below. It is as pleasing an experience to go along the Grand Canal, and into some of the side canals, as to go past the seven bridges in Srinagar, in lovely Kashmir.

I purposely went to see the leaning tower of Pisa,

and gazed at it for full five minutes, in dumb astonishment. Nobody could have built it like that. Nature's fantastic tricks have made the thing stand at such an angle. Though scientists have predicted, for donkey's years, that it would come down soon, it has not come down yet. When I was gazing at it, an American tourist was standing behind me, flexing his body at an angle and smiling. When I turned round, he said to me "This thing is no more wonderful than my standing at an angle." "No," said I "you can't say that. If a thing other than man can do what man does, it always surprises us. For instance, suppose a dog talks, crowds will gather, whereas it is doubtful whether crowds will gather if you talk." "But, do you know, my friend," said he "that a dog has talked?" "Oh yes." I replied "and crowds gathered." The American left without a word.

He had been referring to a famous dog, trained by a clever teacher to talk eight words, in reply to eight questions, as follows :—

"What is your name?"

"Don."

"How old are you?"

"Eight."

"What ails you?"

"Hunger."

"What do you want?"

"Cake."

"Do you like cats?"

"No."

"Do you swim?"

"Yes."

"Whom do you love best?"

"Master."

"Who is your butcher?"

"Tom."

Its proud owner went round with it, and it attracted greater crowds than prime ministers at elections. Men thought sadly that the gulf between them and the dumb animals had been bridged, till one day, a psychologist came along, and altered the order of the questions as he chose. He asked the dog

"What ails you?". It replied "Don."

"What do you want?"

"Eight."

"Do you like cats?" he asked.

"Hunger," replied the dog.

"Do you swim?" he queried.

"Cake" was the reply.

"What is your name?" was the next question.

"No" was the astounding reply.

And the whole mob, relieved from the fear of dogs equalling them in speech, laughed the laugh of the just. The leaning tower of Pisa reminded me also of the half-burnt tower of Tenkasi temple in South India which has been standing for over fifty years in that condition. A P.W.D. Engineer, who went there on his way to construct a building at Courtallam, predicted that the tower was bound to fall in three years. His building fell in three years, but the tower is standing still.

Milan, the capital of Lombardy, with its towering cathedral and palace, was another interesting place. Its gigantic cathedral, the Duomo, reminded me of the giant temples of South India, at Tirupati, Srirangam, Madura,

Tanjore etc. The people who constructed the Duomo must have been men of great vision and grand outlook. They loved to do things big and great, and, yet, in an artistic way. The statue of St. Bartholomeo in the Duomo, with a single loin cloth put round his neck and shoulders, like a Sadhu at ease, was specially impressive. The cathedral is nearly 600 years old, and was constructed by the Viscontis. The palace of the Sforzas, with its very large hall called the ducal council, constructed in the time of Lodovico, II Moro, or Lodovico, the Black, is imposing. Lodovico is the Duke said to have had jet black hair with not a streak of grey in it one night and the very next morning to have had the whole hair gone utterly white owing to his defeat by Louis XII in 1499. He was lucky in having the great painter Leonardo da Vinci under him. His famous painting "Last Supper" is still in the refectory of St. Maria Della Grazia at Milan. I saw it. It has almost disappeared; indeed, it is less distinct than the Ajanta frescoes painted a thousand years earlier. Leonardo painted Mona Lisa del Giocondo at Florence to which city he went after the capture of Milan by the French King in 1499. That is in the Louvre, and is one of the most famous pictures in the world. Of the best 100 Paintings in the world by European masters, at least 75 are by Italians, though they may not all be now in Italy. It was my ambition to go and see the renowned paintings in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, but, owing to my resolve to spend at least a week in Rome, to see that city in proper fashion, I never saw it, though I saw the rest of Italy hurriedly,

It is very difficult to say which is most pleasing in Italy; the Alpine towns and villages, or the sunny Apennines, Venice and the lagoons, or San Remo on the Riviera. Naples in South Italy is very different from Milan in north Italy. But, then, South Italy differs from North Italy as much as South

India differs from North India. It was very interesting to see the clearing of the marshes all over Italy, and especially in the Campagna and near Ravenna. These mosquito-infected swamps, with their atmosphere laden with death, have been converted into beautiful orchards and gardens and fields. The Italians are very skilled agriculturists and horticulturists, and are extremely clever in making the most of what they have got. In Lombardy, I was surprised to see a plot of ten cents yielding as much paddy as an acre of fertile land in Malabar or Tanjore, and the rice was of better quality, the seed having been purchased from the paddy-breeding stations where even grafting is resorted to. The Italians are also skilled mechanics, deft with their hands and tools in peace time, though, of course, in war, when panic and fear seize them, they are helpless, and may desert even perfect aeroplanes and take to flight. I have never seen such speed on water as the speed boats used to make on the lakes of Como, Garda and Maggiore. Those sparkling lakes, full of sunshine and beauty, replete with everything that the eyes can feast on, in the shape of mountains, lakes, rivers and trees, will live in the memory of any one who has ever had the good fortune to visit them. The Dal lake in Kashmir, with its background of the Himalayas and its beautiful gardens, like the Nishat Bagh is the only thing that I can think of as equal to the Italian lakes in beauty, and there is this additional advantage in Italy that villages and towns on the banks of the lakes are more artistically constructed, and have not got the miserable houses of appallingly poor folk as in Kashmir. There are also fine restaurants with inviting refreshments, unlike in Kashmir. Steam boats ply regularly on these lakes for comparatively cheap fares, and one can even stop at every town, and station, and make a leisurely progress. Of the three lakes, I liked Como best.

I went to South Italy not so much to see Naples as to see the adjoining ruins of Pompei. The ruins of this great city, with the living volcano, Vesuvius, in the background are very interesting. Those who have read the "Last days of Pompei" will have some idea of the luxury and grandeur of this pleasure-loving city till death and destruction came with a suddenness and swiftness which numb the imagination, as at Mohenjo-Doro in our own country. From Pompei, I went to Vesuvius, and got into the crater, with the aid of six Italians, who piloted me and the other visitors. Often, you have to walk along narrow ledges of earth between cracks from which tongues of fire and flame leap up in bizarre fashion. One Bengali lady was in our group with her husband. She was cheerfully walking along the ledges, chattering all the time, while her husband was pitifully stranded most of the time, and was bawling out, "Let us go back, let us go back!" As for myself, I was in between these extremes, walking along the ledges, concentrating most of my attention on my foot-holds, and watching the fires and flames and the aridity and blackness around with a slight misgiving. The Italians were, of course, jollily walking along, and were jogging along the visitors with even greater nonchalance, for obvious reasons. They were also taking coins from us, and putting them in the new lava, and giving them to us to keep as souvenirs, taking from us additional tips for this service. But, despite all this, I liked them, as they were really willing to do anything for us in the hope of an additional tip, and the tips they expected were by no means as big as those expected in England or Scotland or France, being more Indian in their moderation.

Even when travelling in S. S. "Gange", I had noticed some of the peculiarities of the Italians. I had a single-berth cabin, and the cabin steward was a good fellow, though somewhat eccentric. I did not know his name. Whenever I wanted

him, I was expected to ring. But, with Italians, as with Indians, to provide electric bells is not the same thing as to see that they would work. Most often, they would not work, though there was nothing wrong with the button so far as I could see. But, my suspicion was that it had been disconnected at the other end, in order to avoid too frequent ringings. So, after two pressings of the button, when I could not see the man, I used to go out into the corridor, and bawl out "Antonio", and the steward used to come and do what I wanted. But, I never found out, and he never told me, whether he was Antonio or not. This was because of the usual habit with inferiors, as in India, not to correct the name, even if wrong, so long as it was not insulting. I have had the same experience in India where I used to call a friend's peon Ramasami for a long time, and discovered, to my amazement, after several months, that the man's name was really Errayya.

The Italians had, as I have remarked before, no colour prejudice at that time, and they used to make a regular exhibition of their freedom from colour prejudice by seating black men next to white ladies at dinner tables. A particularly snobbish English lady was allotted a seat next to a gentleman who was so black that charcoal would make chalk mark on him, and whose hair was somewhat frizzly. The astonished woman edged away from him as far as she could. Till she openly told the dining-room steward, that she did not like to be seated next to this black man, he never took notice of her dislike for him. After she expressed her desire to be seated next to some other person, he, of course, complied with it, and told us all "That is only on the principle that nobody should be afflicted with the presence of a woman like her who does not like him."

Often, in the Italian boats, it was no strange thing to see your shoes not blacked in the morning, though left outside

the door of the cabin. That used to remind me of a joke I heard in Ireland, A fashionable Englishman had left his shoes outside his room in an Irish hotel in far Galway, where modern ways were not as easily understood as in London. Early in the morning, he saw, to his indignation, that nobody had blacked his shoes. Calling the boy, he told him "I left my shoes outside my room last night. Nobody has touched them." "Why, sir," said the boy, "even if you leave your gold purse outside your room, nobody will touch it." But, of course, I used to solve the difficulty, whenever it arose, by bawling out for "Antonio" and requesting him to get the thing done.

The city of Genoa, with the statue of Columbus, was also interesting, and had lots of ups and downs, with a funicular railway taking people right to the top of the several terraced roads, and bringing them down. I went on this railway in the rush hours several times up and down, for lack of having nothing else to do, not feeling hungry yet. I always met with the friendliest grins from the crowded passengers. One of them said to me, when I was gazing at the statue of Columbus, "He discovered America." "He did not discover America." said I. This Italian was very much puzzled, and asked me to explain what I meant by it. I said "America was discovered first by the Hindus, though this is disputed, and the Aztecs and Incas were perhaps the descendants of the Hindus. It was discovered next by the Japanese, who are the ancestors of the various Red Indian tribes in the other parts of the two Western Continents. Then, it was discovered by the Danes and the Vikings who colonised Vinland, the later State of New England, after they had colonised Iceland and Greenland. Finally, it was discovered by Amerigo Vespucci, who gave it its name, America." "Then, what did Columbus discover?" asked the astonished Italian. "He discovered Jamaica, and

mistook it for India, and called the American indigenes Indians, the name which has stuck to them. We, Indians, are trying our best to justify Columbus, by migrating to Jamaica, and making an appreciable part of its population Indian." "Signor" said he "you appear to be well up in your Geography," "Rather say history." said I "I am not good at maps, and geography is all maps." Then I went to a nearby restaurant, and had a delicious meal of fresh peaches and mineral water.

When going by the P & O boat, S. S. "Naldera", late in September 1935, we found the change effected by the threat of war. At Aden, there were no less than 15 British warships and destroyers of all kinds from the East Indies squadron, putting up a very brave show. H. M. S. Norfolk, the flagship, looked specially imposing and reassuring at that time of the Italo-Abyssinian war with all its possibilities of a flare-up. The Indian troops in Aden had given place to the new Arab and Somali police, and had evidently been drafted to the Sudan to watch its frontiers, and to keep the waters of the Nile flowing on into Egypt, without any Italian trickery to prevent it. In the Suez canal, we saw numbers of the Italian transports crowded with soldiers, tanks, air-craft and horses. In most of them, the soldiers were singing. All were on their way to Abyssinia. One English lady on our boat said "They are singing now. They won't sing when they leave Abyssinia," a truth which can only be realised by us, as we saw the Italians driven out of Abyssinia which they had conquered so brutally.

While in London, I saw some of the heroic Abyssinian soldiers who fought the Italian flames of fire rained from the sky, with bare arms, spears and swords, and had their already none-too-favoured faces scarred and indented, in a horrible fashion. I asked one of them, who knew some English "Why did you go on fighting such an unequal fight? How could

you hope to fight aeroplanes, raining liquid fire, standing on the ground with your spears, and crying out 'Cowards, come down, if you dare!' as your English friend told me you did?" He said, simply, "Sir, something had to be done. What else could I do to express my abhorrence for the invader, and my readiness to give my life for my country?" I felt the justice of his reply, shook hands with him, and left.

Another Abyssinian had told me that, in the heart of Abyssinia, there was a tower constructed with Indian help, in the second century after Christ, and that, in those days, Abyssinia was getting Indian spices, and India used to get ivory, rhinoceros skins and other things from Abyssinia. I was glad to hear about this early connection between Indians and this brave race.

S. S. "Naldera" touched at Malta. This wonderful Island does not look attractive from the ship, but is picturesque when seen at close quarters. We went round the whole of Malta harbour and Valetta town, and saw the excellent fortifications, the gardens on the rocks, the cathedral of St. John, the museum of the Templars, and the bazaar. We tried to buy oranges, but could not find a single decent orange, though Malta is reputed for oranges. That is nothing strange. In the depths of Nilambur, the Wyanaad and Papanasam forests, supposed to be teeming with ferocious beasts, I have failed to sight even a wild cat.

We had an exciting incident at Malta. Some people on the deck suddenly shouted out that there was an Italian submarine just within the territorial waters. We saw nothing but a small stick above the surface of the waters, said to be the periscope of the submarine. But, the calm surface of the seas was soon disturbed by three other stick-like projections, said to be British submarines on the alert. This vigilance ought to make it easy for Indians to understand why it has been

impossible for the Italians to take Malta in this War, though it lies very close to their shores. Like Gibraltar, Malta will be defended till the last by the British who have devoted all possible attention to its defence and are always on the watch, just as at the Khyber. The Maltese, by the way, differ from the Italians as much as the Sinhalese differ from the Indians, despite the same superficial similarity.

In Italy, I read for the first time an English translation of Mussolini's autobiography. Despite a lot of pompous nonsense and self-praise, there are some striking thoughts in it. The Italians resemble the Indians very much in their physical and mental make-up; their thoughts are, of course, much grander than their deeds, and are almost unexceptionable in their excellence. Thus, Mussolini's grand principle "I am always responsible for whatever is done by my Government. My subordinates are responsible to me," is a thing which modern Indians can afford to put into practice, instead of disowning responsibility for whatever miscarries, and claiming credit for things they never did. Again, the sentence "I was then a restless being. I am still one," gives not only an insight into the ambitious nature of this dictator, but also shows that he, like Montagu, had no affection for "the pathetic contentment of the masses." So, too, Mussolini's affirmation "For myself, I have use for only one book, the book of life. I respect only one teacher, everyday experience." is worthy of being pondered over by present-day Indians who are afflicted with many books, and with a crowd of wanted and unwanted teachers. The passage "Nothing can give or take away from the dead. They do not belong to any party. They belong to the eternal motherland." is an ennobling one, and ought to make Hindus and Muslims respect Asoka and Akbar, the Taj Mahal and the Tanjore Temple equally. Mussolini's famous words, after escaping from an assassin, "If I go forward, follow me. If I recoil,

kill me. If I die, avenge me" are grand; but, then, the Italians are grander in their words than in their deeds. The words "America still calls to the spirit of youth. I look to Italy's youth for fulfilling her destinies and preserving her ideals. It is not easy to remember always the importance of youth. It is not easy to retain the spirit of youth." have more than a grain of truth in them.

When he was a soldier, people used to say of Mussolini, according to his autobiography, "Benito Mussolini, ever the first in operations of courage and audacity." His motto, when saving Italy from the threatened communism and anarchy, was "Stand to a finish." He has put it on record that never in his life had he experienced a sorrow equal to that which he suffered after he heard the news of the battle of Caporetto, when the Italians, under General Cadorna, fell back in panic before the far smaller army of the Germans on the Isonzo. I heard a funny story, from an English friend, that the retreat was largely due to the failure of the tapioca supply from Travancore, so necessary for making the macaroni for the soldiers, I cannot say how far it is true. It may be a make-up, like the story of 2000 English soldiers not being able to take their meal on the Western Front in 1914 because the boxes containing the forks and spoons had not arrived, and the soldiers did not know to eat with their hands.

Mussolini has written in his autobiography "I never forget," A tragic interest attaches to this. It is largely due to his incapacity to forget that Italy, remembering the hostile attitude of the English during the Abyssinian War, has joined Germany in this War, and is rushing to her ruin. It has been well said, by a great educationist, that the greatest memory is found in those who have got the greatest capacity to forget unimportant things, inconvenient things, painful things, and depressing things. Of course, if all of us were to remember every trash

we read at school, our memory will be so gutted with rubbish that there will be no room for thought to function, and Mussolini has by now become a dust-bin of old memories.

The autobiography mentions that Italy had won the war but was utterly defeated in the diplomatic battle. The patch of desert Italy gained after the last Great War satisfied no Italian, and, in Italy, people speak with a plainness which can only be seen in India. They do not consider any war as a war for civilization, or as a war to preserve democracy, but only consider what loot can be got, regarding every other war as 'senseless murder' or 'useless massacre.'

Mussolini's belief in "righteous force" is characteristic of this man of violence. The passage "Oh, many had meditated on my funeral, and yet love is stronger than hatred." is significant.

His love for religion is very limited. He considers the Pope to be on a par with the bolshevik dictator, Stalin, and says, with evident delight, "When a Pope is dead, another one is made." In spite of all apparent diplomatic reconciliation with the Pope, there is in him a deep underlying antipathy towards him, and religion. He often calls Rome and Moscow the black and red Galileans, and boasts that he will not go to Canosa. He asks whether the Pope will triumph again over the Julian apostate, and whether the winner will be the Galilean of the Vatican, or the Mongoloid Galilean of the Kremlin. On 17-9-1922, a month before the famous March on Rome, he wrote "It is necessary to throw down from the altars, erected by the 'Demos,' His Holiness The Mass."

The passage regarding his missing the train when going to see his dying mother is touching. His condemnation of the general strike organisations in Milan and other towns by Soviet groups, as an enormous crime against the nation, will be endorsed by many. His facing the mob of strikers and

telling them "What do you want of me? To strike me? Well, start. Then be thereafter on guard. For any insult of yours, any blow, you will pay for dearly", and their being taken in by this supreme self-confidence, and sneaking away, is a sad commentary on the mentality of ochlocracy.

The passage "We have solved a series of problems. We have abolished disorder and doubt that had poisoned our national soul. We have given rhythm and law and protection to work. We have found in the collaboration of the classes infinite possibilities for power and prosperity, and prevented class-war. We do not lose time in troubles and strikes which vex the spirit, sap our strength and impoverish us. We consider class-war as a luxury for the rich and the idle. We must get strong, stronger, and still stronger. We must exalt work as productive strength. We must not exile capital, as in Russia the communists dream. We consider capital as an increasingly important factor in the drama of production. The prosperity of Italy is what we should all aim at." is noble in its conception and truth, though it is highly doubtful whether Mussolini's policy is leading Italy to the heights he contemplates, or to the depths of ruin and disaster.

I shall close this account of the Autobiography with some funny stories I heard about Mussolini. One day, before Mussolini had become famous, he went in person to the main post office in Milan to receive a money order, personal appearance being insisted on in those days. A post office clerk, of Bolshevik sympathies, read from the money order, with the bureaucratic red tape for which his ilk is noted, "Benito Mussolini'. Yes, you are Benito Mussolini. But, how do we know that you are *the* 'Benito Mussolini' mentioned here? You are not the only person of that name." An elderly clerk, who had foreseen the forthcoming greatness of Mussolini, ended it by going to the first clerk and telling him "Pay

the money to him. Don't be silly. Soon, he will be the only 'Benito Mussolini' known throughout the world, and your confusion will be over for good."

There is another story, narrated to me by an American friend. At a leading cinema in Milan, Mussolini sat in the pews, watching the show. At the end of the performance, his photo was thrown on the screen, and the entire audience rose, took off their hats, and gave the Fascist salute, and shouted out "Long Live the Duce!". Mussolini alone continued to sit, with his hat on, watching the homage done to him, with evident enjoyment and relish, till his hat was taken off, and he pulled up, by a rough working-class neighbour on the next seat, who told him "I say, don't think we stand up, take off our hats, give the salute, and shout like this, because we like it. We do it to keep our heads on our shoulders safe from Mussolini's bullies."

Another story goes that when a dark Indian was chosen to preside over a famous electricity conference of world scientists, in Italy, some of his white compeers, mostly American, English and German, were dissatisfied at the selection of a dark man as President, when they were available for selection, and one of them, rather tactlessly, mentioned this to Mussolini. In those days, Mussolini was free from all colour prejudice, and gave the biting retort "Sir, I do not know much about science. But, what colour is electricity?" The snob backed out at triple speed.

After Mussolini assumed power in Italy, he wanted to raise the rather low esteem in which Italians were held in those days in England, France, Germany and other countries. They were regarded as pedlars, hawkers, bear-keepers, chestnut-sellers, hotel waiters and organ-grinders, and held in as low a repute as that in which Indians were held formerly in South Africa, where they were known as coolies, and Mahatma

Gandhi was called the 'cooly leader', and Gokhale, the 'cooly king', Mussolini forbade any Italian who was an organ-grinder or bear-keeper outside Italy to enter Italy. So, many Italians desisted from these activities, and the status of Italians rose correspondingly in foreign countries.

Another story is about some anti-Fascist poets who wanted to be free as birds, and attacked the draconian Fascist regulations, and Mussolini, also, personally, as the opponent of liberty. Mussolini had them all interned in the Lipari Islands, and, on the first day, they were all put in cage-like cells and given milk and rice as if they were birds, something reminiscent of Hyder Ali's treatment of Khande Rao who betrayed his king on a promise of being treated like a parrot, and was, after Hyder Ali's accession, put in a cage, and given milk like a parrot, and carried about in his cage during Hyder's campaigns.

I add one more funny story. A man was serving under the British, but his ancestors were Italians, and he loved Italy and its scenery more than the English, though he detested the Fascist methods as much as any Englishman or Indian. Once, on leave, he went to Italy to feast his eyes on the mountains and lakes, statues and paintings, villas and orchards. Just then, a police regulation had been issued by Mussolini that any person of Italian descent visiting Italy from abroad should first of all report himself at the police stations in the respective localities. This official was wroth at it, and, when he visited the first police station, wrote not only his name in the register, as was required, but also some unwanted remarks to the following effect "We, Italians, exiled from home, come to our country to see the beauties of Italy, and not its drab police stations." A copy of these remarks was sent to the Duce, and our official's friends fully expected that he would come to trouble. But, Mussolini simply remarked "I forgive

him for his insolent remarks, for he appears to love Italy. Exempt that man from visiting our police stations and insulting us by writing similar remarks." This official remarked to me "Mind you, if it were a democracy, I would have been put up before a third class bench magistrate, and admonished solemnly, and made to conform to the rules thereafter. But, with this tyrant, the personal element came in, and I got off even better." He used to prognosticate that, one day, Mussolini would be assassinated by some fanatical and unbalanced advocate of liberty, and only hoped that Italy would have had its dose of discipline before that event occurred. There is nothing strange or absurd in his prediction or its rider. Italy is not England, and mere constitutionalism has never had much hold on her people. Mussolini's regime is only like the old Czar's - "an autocracy modified by fear of assassination." My impression in Italy was that men feared Mussolini less than Germans feared the Fuhrer. The difference between the Teuton and the Latin is evident. Mussolini's claim that the modern Italian is the descendant of the old Roman is not sustainable. The opera, characteristic of so much in Modern Italy, was unknown to Imperial Rome, and quite incongruous with the mental pabulum of a typical Roman like Agricola or Scipio or Pompei or Caesar or Marcus Aurelius. It is hard to imagine Mussolini saying, like Hitler, in cold blood and in dead earnest, "It is better to fight a war at fifty rather than at sixty." Hitler is a tiger, Mussolini a hyena.

I shall close this account of Italy with a mention of its wonderful roses. They are of such a size, and grow in such profusion, that one feels as if one is in paradise. And the flower-girls, selling these and other flowers, are as attractive as their wares, and are as much glorified in novels and stories as the Gopis, the charming milkmaids of our own Brindaban.

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## CHAPTER XXI

### ALL OVER BRITAIN AND THE EMERALD ISLE.

I shall give in this chapter a short account of my tour of Britain and Ireland. I first went to Birmingham and Manchester. The Black Country, the district with Birmingham as centre, and Sheffield, Coventry, Manchester, Liverpool and Birkenhead as spurs, is an enormous workshop bristling with the chimneys of thousands of factories which pour out smoke into the sky in monstrously dense columns. The sky in this region is almost always black in consequence, and it is, indeed, difficult to see the real sky for days on end. These factories keep England great, rich and prosperous, being its armoury, export-warehouse and home-needs-reservoir in one. The steel, cotton and porcelain goods, and the cars and machines turned out from here supply half the world. But, the workmen in these factories lead a hard life. With the advent of the powerful trade unions and labour guilds, they are no longer "hands", but "heads and hearts." It is a sight to see thousands of these factory hands rush to Blackpool at week-ends to have their spree. Reckless in expenditure, eager to have the week's fun in a day, good-humoured, but keen, these bustling crowds of men and women are quite different from the genteel, dilettante crowds of shop-assistants, girl-typists and gentlemen at large seen at Brighton, Eastbourne, Torquay or Bournemouth. I was not anxious to climb up the 400 feet tower at Blackpool. A factory boss on holiday said to me "Come on. Let us go up," I went up, panting after him. When we came down, he asked me "Anything like it in India?" I told him that we had the Kutb Minar and temple towers.

He was astonished. "Then, why did you stand gaping at this tower without climbing it at once?" he asked. "When there is one tower or hill, you climb it up. When there are innumerable ones, you lose all enthusiasm." said I.

It was such a welcome change to pass on from the Black Country to the Lake Country. The Lake District of England lies in Cumberland and Westmoreland. It is a place of quiet beauty, and full of homely charm. English lakes have not got the flamboyant beauty of the sunny Italian lakes, or the awe-inspiring qualities of the Swiss lakes, surrounded by snow-clad peaks or the eerie majesty of the Scotch lochs. Derwentwater, Thurlmere, Ullswater, Grasmere, Windermere, Brothers' Water are, all, typical English lakes, and are hardly bigger than our big irrigation tanks, but are, of course, far better kept and, therefore, present a better appearance, just as English dogs present a better appearance than Indian dogs, and English lawns present a better appearance than our lawns. For Indians who have seen the Italian and Swiss lakes, the homely English lakes are like plain rice after rich cakes. But, of, course, you can remain for a long time near these peaceful lakes till their beauty sinks into you, and you come to love their surroundings.

From the Lake District, I went into Yorkshire with its wide rolling moors and quiet valleys contrasting with its own share of factory towns with their inevitable din. I saw the old Roman wall at York and in other places. I was astonished to see how carefully these crumbling fragments are preserved in England, whereas in India, ancient temples and mosques, almost intact, were, till recently, allowed to go into utter ruin, senseless villagers plundering the materials for building compound walls and cow-sheds, and even using stone slabs containing inscriptions as stones to mash curry paste, and priceless palmleaf manuscripts as fuel for the oven. The

cathedral at York is imposing. So is the one at Carlisle where a horrible old prison is exhibited, like Tippu's prison at Bangalore. Truly, in those days, prisons were veritable torture - houses for the body, mind and soul, whether in the East or in the West. Those who talk of the unmitigated glory of ancient times, and the absence of all progress, had better think of the old prisons at Carlisle and Bangalore, and of the sending of the severed parts of Wallace's body to various towns, to be exhibited there, by the great King Edward I, and the sending of the cooked head of a rebel to his mother - by Muhammad Bin Tughlak, or of the murder of the princes in the Tower in England, and of the murders of innumerable baby princes in India, and then resume their senseless theme.

From Carlisle, I passed on to Scotland, crossing the old wild border country with its centuries - old castles of ancient barons who loved plunder as keenly as the inhabitants of India's own free tribesmen of the North - West frontier.

Scotland had always attracted me because of Scott's fascinating novels about the lowlands and the highlands. I had also, of course, read a lot of jokes about the Scotchman's love of money, his lack of humour, and passion for whisky, and had got a somewhat amusing idea of this great race. I had better narrate some of these jokes to warn Indians against accepting these good stories as true. They are too good to be true. Here are a few about the Scot's miserliness.

An Englishman and his Scotch friend became bald at the same time. The Englishman spent a lot on hair-restorers. The Scotchman promptly sold his comb and brush, and invested the money.

\* \* \* \* \*

A clerk in a Scotch Firm said to his Boss, "Sir, I want a

rise. I am doing the work of three men". "I am sorry I can't give you a rise", said the boss. "But, give me the names of the other two: I shall sack them at once."

\* \* \* \* \*

An undertaker in London celebrated the silver jubilee of his wedding. While wishing all his guests long life and prosperity, he promised to bury free the next man who died in the locality. A loud report was heard. A Scotchman had shot himself dead!

\* \* \* \* \*

Out of four Scotch brothers, one went to America and returned, after 25 years, with much money, and was met at the station by his three brothers with beards a foot long each. "Why have you grown such whiskers?", he asked them, "Don't you know, you took away the razor when you went", was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two Aberdonians going out to fish agreed that the first to catch a fish should stand the other a dinner. For four hours they fished without either catching a fish. Then, each discovered that the other was using no bait!

Farthings were first coined so that Scotchmen might practise benevolence.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Scotchman put half a crown into the collection box at his kirk, mistaking it for a penny. Realising his mistake later, he thought of not visiting the church for six months in order to make up the loss, but, soon, the awful thought occurred to him that the pew rent, of two pence a week, would be lost if he adopted that course. "Ah" said he to his wife in despair, "this is one of those critical problems of religion our elder spoke about at kirk."

\* \* \* \* \*

A man from Aberdeen, on a visit to London, bought some bread, and went to Piccadilly Circus to get free jam for it out of the traffic jam there!

\* \* \* \* \*

Donald, to the Minister: "It was a powerful discourse on 'Thrift' you gave last Sunday."

Minister: "I am glad you profited by it."

Donald: "Sure. I did. I would have put a six-penny bit into the plate. But your telling words made me put a penny, and save five!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Scot: "I'll give a thousand pounds to be a millionaire."

\* \* \* \* \*

An optimist is he who buys an article from a Scotchman with the hope of selling it to a Jew at a profit.

\* \* \* \* \*

An Englishman and a Scotsman went out for the evening. The Englishman stood dinner, theatre tickets, and a taxi home. The Scotsman stood five feet ten inches in his socks.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Head of an Orphanage wrote to a prominent Aberdonian to send something to the orphanage. The Aberdonian sent two orphans!

\* \* \* \* \*

After my visit to Scotland, I found that the Scotch were every bit as hospitable as the English, and not a bit more fond of another's money, that Andrew Carnegie, the Scotsman, had endowed more funds for charity than any Englishman, and that the Aberdeen man's repute for meanness in money matters was as undeserved as the Kumbakonam man's for low cunning. All the same, the Scotchman is the *Komati* of Britain, and is canny canny in money matters, and very clannish. Both lowlander and highlander, when filling up a job under his control, will invariably prefer a Scot whenever he can,

whether in Scotland or England or Nova Scotia or India or Singapore.

When a Bill for Home Rule for Scotland was brought, an English member of the House of Commons said "I oppose it. Who will rule our empire for us, if this passes into law?" Of course, the Scots believe that they are superior to the English as a race. When an English M. P. said "I was born, and will die, an Englishman!", his Scotch brother cried out "Man! Man! have you no ambition?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Nor are the Scots devoid of humour, as popularly supposed. Only, they don't laugh at every joke, and they see no point in making pointless jokes. The following examples of Scotch jokes will show that the Scots have a fine sense of humour.

\* \* \* \* \*

English teacher to Scotch pupil: "John Mac Tavish, your mouth is open!"

"I ken. I opened it myself." said John innocently.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mac Dougall, at box office, "Will you please return the amusement tax?"

Clerk "Why?"

"Because I was not amused." said Mac Dougall.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Scotchman married an ugly woman. He asked the parson, another Scotchman, "How much do I owe you for this?"

"How much is it worth to you?" asked the Parson.

The Scotchman blushed, winked at the parson, and gave a shilling. The parson looked at the shilling and at the bride, and gravely returned eleven pence!

\* \* \* \* \*

A London Journalist asked an old lady in the isle of Lewis "Do you get the London papers here?"

"Oh, no." was the reply.

"Then, you won't know here what is going on in London."

"That is so. But, then, they won't know in London what is going on here." came the quiet retort.

\* \* \* \* \*

An Englishman went for grouse shooting. He was a notoriously bad shot. A hen was sighted. The Scotch guide said "Shoot."

"But it is a farmer's hen" said the Englishman.

"It won't make any difference" was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two Scotchmen were engaged by a bad English shot out on deer-shooting. Donald said to Hamish "He is such a bad shot. What shall we do?" "We shall be on either side of him. So he can shoot only one of us." said Hamish.

"Gee!" said an American millionaire to a man from Caithness, "You are miles away from anywhere. You have no doctor for a hundred miles. What will you do if you or your wife or children fall sick?"

"We shall have to die a natural death, I suppose" was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

An English lord was pleased with a highland piper and said "I like your music. I am going to engage a piper at my place."

"What kind of piper?" asked Donald.

"Something like you." said the Lord.

"It's easy to find a lord like you any day. Don't think it is easy to find a piper like me" was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here are a few of the usual whisky stories. Donald was asked by Hamish to fetch provisions, after several hours of

deer-stalking. He took twelve bottles of whisky and a loaf of bread. Hamish examined the stock critically, and said "It is all right, but what are we going to do with all that bread?"

\* \* \* \* \*

A Scotch patient was asked by his doctor "Had you a good sleep?"

"How can I sleep with whisky in the house?" was the reply.

A Scot went home one night perfectly sober, and his dog bit him!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Scotch are not any greater drunkards than the English or the Irish. When in Scotland, nobody takes to whisky more than the English who thus chaff at the Scotch.

Edinburgh is a stately city. The castle is historic and interesting. The University is celebrated for its degrees in medicine. The Zoological gardens are fine. The hotels are the cleanest in the world. As in all Scotland, Sunday is observed ceremonially. A cooked breakfast can be got only by special arrangement that day, though drinks require no such arrangement.

My tour of the lochs and highlands is still vivid in my memory. The Scotch lakes, Loch Lamond, Loch Katrine, Loch Tay, and, finally, Loch Ness, with, its famous monster, are eerie and impressive. I have enjoyed few things more than the trip through the Caledonian canal from Inverness to Oban. Inverness itself, the capital of the highlands, was, a charming little place with the river Ness and its gardens. An old lady there enquired about Mahatma Gandhi, as if he were my next-door neighbour, and gave me a drink of cow's milk for his sake. It is amazing how the Mahatma's name has captured the imagination of folk all round the world, including its remotest nooks and corners. Of course, I am not suggesting

that Inverness is a nook and corner of the world now. Far from it. It is a modern town. So is Aberdeen. One thing that struck me when I saw the highlands, so full of lawless tribesmen two hundred years ago, and so full of educated and orderly folk now, was the possibility of a similar transformation of our North West Frontier.

One can never forget the highland cattle standing in the peaceful valleys by the side of some loch or tarn, attended by some charming cowherd girl. Nor can the view of Ben Nevis from the lakes be forgotten. The Loch Ness monster I never saw, though I watched for it eagerly, like the rest. It is said to be the sole surviving specimen of a whale which became extinct as a species a hundred thousand years ago. Is the animal a hundred thousand years old? Nobody can say. Its discovery was the signal for the announcement of discoveries of similar monsters all over the world, ranging from a peculiar hermit-crab to a land-dragon! Truly, the world loves monsters!

I went to the Emerald Isle with eager expectations. I have always loved Ireland and the Irish, and Irish bulls and jokes. I give some samples here.

When the Shannon scheme of electrification was complete, the story goes that on the great carrier beams was put up an advertisement like this:— "Don't touch. To touch means certain death. Those who touch will be prosecuted."

\* \* \* \* \*

A poor Irishman was going to America, his whole worldly goods amounting to the clothes he was wearing. An American salesman went up to him with a suit-case, and said "Buy this?"

"Whatever for?"

"To put your clothes in?"

"And me land naked in America!" was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two poor Irishmen went to America together. One prospered and became a Judge. The other remained a navvy. One day, the judge, for the sake of old times, invited the navvy to dinner. At the end of it, he said "Now, Patrick, I, a judge, would never have dreamt of inviting you to dinner if we were in Ireland."

"But, Fagan, if we were in Ireland, you would never have been a judge," was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the Black and Tan days of the Great War of 1914—1918, the English put up a notice in Dublin "Those who want to see the world, join the Irish Army!" The next morning, it was altered to "Those, who want to see the other world, join the Irish constabulary!"

\* \* \* \* \*

A riot was in progress in Belfast between Protestants and Catholics. An Irishman, who arrived just then, was asked by the rioters to which sect he belonged. He could not make out the sects of the rival parties. He looked at both sides, saw their arms, brickbats, sticks and knives, and espied a ferocious looking man with a big axe. "I belong th the sect of that gentleman over there with the big axe," said he.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two Irishmen were sheltering in a shed from the rain. But the roof was leaky, and the rain poured in. So, one said to the other "Begorrah, I'm for out. It'll be drier in the wet."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is your village lighted by electricity?" asked an Englishman of an Irishman.

"Yes, when there's a thunderstorm." was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

"How does an Englishman differ from an Irishman?" asked an American of an Irishman.

"They are very much alike, but the Irishman is more so," was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

"How did George break his legs?" asked a Welshman.

"Do you see those steps there?" asked his Irish friend.

"Yes."

"Well, George didn't."

\* \* \* \* \*

Said the first drunken Irishman to the second "Just passed a man looking extraordinarily like you."

"Strange. Let us go back and see if it was me." replied the second.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Do you mind if I smoke?" asked an English lord to an Irishman in a non-smoking first class compartment.

"I don't care a hang if you burst into flames." was the reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

A man was angling for an invitation from an Irishman. "I don't know what to do with my week-end" said he.

"Put your hat on it," was the reply.

(Note: 'Week-end' is cleverly turned into the "weak-end" of the questioner, namely, his head).

\* \* \* \* \*

An English snob was wearing monocles. "Why do you wear that glass?", asked an Irishman.

"What a silly question to ask! Because the eye is weak, of course," said the Englishman.

"Then, why not go in for a glass over the head too?" asked the Irishman.

\* \* \* \* \*

An English snob, always travelling first, said to an Irish porter, at Dublin station, as the train pulled up, "Hope this train is not all second class!"

"No fear!" said the porter. "I shall put you into a third all right!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Why do you still call Ireland your motherland, seeing that you have left it ages ago?" asked an Englishman of an Irishman in London.

"Why do you still call your mother mother though you left her womb ages ago?" was the retort.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Irish Sea was stormy. This crossing is said to be a test for sea-sickness. I emerged triumphant from it. Dublin charmed me. The Four Courts and the castle, the streets, all fascinated me. Nowhere is the Indian so welcome as in the Irish Free State. Rumour goes that De Valera invited an Indian lady student to an official reception of the Papal nuncio, but omitted to invite the Governor-General of Ireland!

From Dublin, I went and saw Cork, and then went on to the glorious lakes of Killarney. These lakes consist of an Upper Lake, Middle Lake and Lower Lake. All have beautifully wooded islands. The ruins of Muckross Abbey are situated on a promontory of the Middle Lake. There is a Boar Mountain at one border of the lakes. Dinis Island and Dinis cottage abound in welcome refreshments and equally welcome souvenirs. I bought there an ancient cross resembling the crosses in the Syrian Christian churches in Travancore. The Meeting of the Waters and the Old Weir Bridge are other noteworthy beauty spots. The Devil's Island in the Middle Lake is a very striking object named with a picturesqueness matching its own. The Lower Lake is the largest of the lakes, but is only five miles long and three miles broad. The Boar cascade is 150 feet long, and falls from a height of 70 feet along one of the most wooded parts in Great Britain. The Long Range is a narrow sheet of water four miles in length connecting the Upper and

Middle Lakes. Midway between the two is the Eagle's Nest, a cottage built at a height of 1700 feet. An eccentric Irish judge constructed a similar Eagle's Nest at Vizagapatam on the Simhachalam Hills. Innisfallen Island, in the Lower Lake, is a thing of exquisite beauty, though only 21 acres in extent. The artist, the botanist and the archaeologist will all find it interesting. Ross castle, seen from the Lower Lake, is impressive. The view of Killarney lakes from the Kenmare Road is delightful. There is a wild tarn called. The Devil's Punch Bowl at Mangerton Mountain at a height of over 2000 feet above Muckross Lake. It is reputed to be fishless, fathomless, and icy cold. I did not climb up to it or bathe in it.

The Killarney Lakes have the quiet charm of the English lakes, and some of the sunny joy of the Italian lakes, and the mystery of the Scottish lochs. No more ideal spot can be found to spend a holiday than these beauty spots on the shores of these lakes in the midst of the ever-hospitable, ready-witted, Irish people.

From Killarney, I went to Glengariffe and Bantry Bay. The sugar-loaf mountain, Glengariffe, and Cromwell's Bridge, which Cromwell got completed by forced Irish labour, threatening to hang a man for the delay of every day caused by its non-completion, were most interesting.

I went thereafter to Limerick, and thence to wild Galway. Then I returned to Dublin where I remained for a week to welcome New Year's day to the chimings of the bells and the cheers of the crowds. On Christmas Eve, I called on A. E. (Russell), the famous poet, critic and scholar. He lived in Rathgar Avenue, and had no phone. While the houses on either side were brilliantly lighted, his had no front lights. I thought he was not at home but, on ringing twice, the front door was opened by Russell himself. He took me to his room, and we talked on till 11 p.m. He spoke very lovingly of India

and things Indian. "Never lose your heritage or any part of it," he said "lest the soul of the nation perish! Your epics are the greatest in the world, and what wonderful stories are imbedded therein!"

"Which of those stories do you like best?" I asked.

"Damayanti's" said he, "Damayanti's story has thrilled me more than Sakuntala's. Oh, the unforgettable scene when, at her wedding, the immortals sat there, shadowless, with unwinking eyes and unfaded garlands, with their feet not touching the earth, and with no perspiration on their foreheads!"

We went on to talk about Gaelic. "Do you approve of compulsory gaelic?" I asked.

"No" said he "compulsion kills a language. When it is optional, only genuine lovers handle it. When it is made compulsory, one and all handle it and mangle it." A thing for lovers of compulsory Hindi in South India to ruminate upon!

"Why does De Valera advocate gaelic, and waste money on teaching it in schools, and on putting it on signboards, though he makes all his best speeches in English?" I asked.

"One may not believe in God, and yet may honour churches with perfect justification" said he.

He then taked of *Hatha Yoga*. "I read about some yogic practices in books. Then, I experimented. In three days, I began to see fire at the tip of my nose, real fire. I got terrified, and consulted the Sanskrit professor at the University. He asked me to desist from these practices, saying that yogic practices should always be commenced under the immediate supervision of a *guru*, and advised me to read the Gita. This I have done, and found to be far safer. The fire steadily grows within you; there is no fire outside, and no fear. I now

recommend the Gita instead of yoga, to all seekers after the ancient wisdom of India."

So we talked on. Anybody seeing us talk would have thought that we had known each other for years, whereas we had met for the first time that night. Such was the rare faculty of A. E. to make his visitors feel quite at home. He told me that Yates had talked about my *Panchatantra* to him. I was sorry that Yates was away in America then. He had written to me that he was taking up my *Panchatantra* again and again to dip into the wisdom of the East, and to draw inspiration from that fountain of ancient Indian wisdom. Yates and Russell were influenced by India, and, were lifelong friends of India and the Indians. When I think of them, I feel convinced, like Bana, that all human beings belong to one family, that caste, creed, colour, class, country are all immaterial, that the soul of man alone counts, and that good men all over the world are brothers!

On New Year's Day, I left Ireland after partaking of a grand tea given by an Irish lady to a party of Indians and Irish. I asked her what she thought the main weakness of Indians was. "Too much faith in one's own omniscience, too little readiness willingly to obey others, concentration on petty differences, and forgetfulness of major points of agreement, the same defects as we, Irish, had—and still have" said she.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### ODDS AND ENDS

WHILE in England, I used invariably to attend the torchlight tattoos at Aldershot, the grand military manoeuvres and parades. These were very spectacular, and used to be performed with clock-like precision. The crush was very great, and the rows of buses parked on the extensive grounds bewildering. But for the police aid, many a man will never be able to find his bus for hours on end. But the traffic arrangements are wonderful, and each man used to get a slip describing the parking ground of his bus, and he had only to show it to some constable to be guided to the right spot. At one of these tattoos, I saw many people surprised at a firework detonating six times, and, with pardonable pride, told them that at Trichur, in the Madras Presidency, we had fireworks which would detonate eleven times in succession. They were puzzled, and would not quite believe it. "Artillery is not so advanced over there, as here," said a journalist "then, how could this be?". I replied "This is amusement, not artillery. So, just as your biggest animal is a bull, and ours is an elephant, your biggest fire-work is a sixer, and ours a elevenner." All laughed, including him, but I could see that he was not convinced. He asked me the exact geographical position of Trichur, and, next day, came over to my seat at the stand, and said "You are right. I made enquiries of a retired civilian, and he confirmed it. Remarkable!" I told him "It is even more remarkable that you believed a retired civilian, when you were not content with the statement of a functioning civilian." "It is just like this" said he, "A statement of a retired politician

is believed more readily than that of a functioning one, as he has no motive to indulge in terminological inexactitudes." "What about journalists?" I asked. "They rarely retire, and, therefore, rarely tell the truth" said he laughingly.

Once, I saw a great collection of jewels exhibited at a prominent jeweller's in London. When I casually remarked, to an Englishman there, that we had in India an emerald four inches long, at Kollur temple, in South Canara, he said "What next? Is there a sapphire six inches long?" I said "There is a sapphire four and a half inches long at Sode Mutt in Udipi, and an image of Vittala, one of our gods, is sculptured on it." "What next? Have you remarkable diamonds too?" he queried sarcastically. "Yes, we had" said I "till they were taken away from us. The Regent, the Orloff and the Kohinoor were all from our country." "This is very hard to believe" said he. "I can understand your difficulty" said I, "seeing that you have not, in this country, any mine producing even a gem of the size of a mustard seed." And there the discussion stopped abruptly.

Once, at a party, there was a discussion on the rope trick. "It is all an invention of an Australian circus man in 1889" said an Englishman. "What!" said I astonished. "I saw it in the Times" said he. "In a leader?" I asked. "No, in a letter by a correspondent" said he. "That is a different matter" said I, "even you could write to it," All laughed. "Have you seen the trick?" he asked. "No" said I. "Then why do you attack the Times correspondent?" he asked. "I need not attempt to drink up the ocean" said I "before I proclaim that it is an impossible feat." "Please tell me how you are able to prove the correspondent's statement to be wrong." said he. "I can easily do that" said I. "Sankaracharya, the great exponent of the *Mayavada*, who certainly lived before, the tenth century A. D., has argued that, just as the man is

believed to have disappeared, at the end of a rope trick, till he appears some time later, so too things and events appear to be real till they are proved to be unreal, with the dawn of true knowledge. So, whether the rope trick is true or not, the idea was not started by your Australian circus-man in 1889, and his claim to that effect is the greatest feat of gymnastics he has performed." Every one laughed. "Why not you send a reply like that to the Times?" he asked. "An Indian proverb says 'Leave barking dogs alone'" said I.

Three days before the Bar Examinations, my eyes began to sputter and water, for no reason I could think of. I got alarmed. If this thing were to go on, it would be impossible to sit and answer questions. An Indian medical friend named a Harley street eye-expert to me, but said that his fees were five guineas! I said that the fees were too high. "This is not India. No bargaining here" said the medico. I took up the challenge and said that I would bring down his man to three guineas. I phoned to the expert, explaining my trouble, and keeping my friend too in the telephone booth. The expert asked me to go to him at once. I asked him "What are your fees, please?" "Five guineas" said he. "Five guineas, for examining an eye casually watering!" I explained. "Come along, pay two guineas" said he "if that is all the matter with your eyes." My friend collapsed, but I got brisk, and went and saw the expert, who examined my eyes for half an hour in the dark room, prescribed an excellent eye-drop, said that it should stop the watering in six hours, accepted my two guineas with profuse thanks, and asked me to see him again that evening or next day, if the watering should persist, adding "No more fees. This is piece work, as we say in India. Achcha, sahib?". "Achchha Sahib" said I, and departed. There was no need to see the doctor again. But I had learnt that a rock-like body, eagle eyes, rhinoceros skin and whip-cord mus-

cles were not my lot, and that health, like wealth, can never be the ideal maximum, but only the proper care and preservation of whatever chance allots to us.

Attended the I. C. S. Dinner held at the Trocadero on the 4th of June 1936. Sir Reginald Caddock was the Chairman, and the Marquess of Willingdon was the Chief Guest. There were 110 guests in all, and I was the only vegetarian. But, with the proverbial efficiency of the Civil Service, excellent arrangements had been made for me, and no less than five persons in charge asked me whether I was satisfied with the arrangements made for me. As I expected, the Marquess of Willingdon came round, and, when introduced to me, asked me "Now, where have I met you?", and I told him that I had met him at Bellary in 1923, though I knew that this question of his was a customary one, something like Disraeli's asking every M. P. how his little ailment was getting on, sure in the knowledge that every one must have a little ailment and would be thankful to the Prime Minister for remembering it in the midst of his multifarious duties!

Before the dinner began, I was engaged in talking for some minutes with a cheery old man. He said that he had never been to Madras and had served only in Punjab, but that he had heard a great deal about the intelligence and moderation of the Madrasis. I told him that the intelligence still remained, but that Madras was fast becoming an extremist province, in the sense that Swaraj and the Congress had a greater hold over Madras than over the martial Punjab. An Indian friend, who was listening in, took me aside, on some pretext, and asked me "Do you know who he is?". I said "Haven't the ghost of an idea." "That is Sir Michael O'Dwyer" said he, and left me gaping. I had imagined O'Dwyer to be a man looking like Tamerlane, the Scourge of the World, and was astonished to see him so genteel, and

affable. Indeed, he had not even offered any comment on my mention of the veering of Madras to Congress Politics. It is, therefore, with a shock that I read about his recent murder by a deluded Indian.

One day, at a party given by a lady belonging to the society of friends, our hostess asked me to tell her plainly whether there was no truth at all in Miss Mayo's book "*Mother India*", adding "How could she write utter falsehoods with impunity?" "Do you think Japan is all right?" I asked her. "Oh, yes, *Japan* is all right." said she. "Then, hear this" said I, reading from an advertisement, in a Paternoster Library book on '*The Menace of Japan*' by Professor Taid O'Conroy, 'Professor O'Conroy's book is a startling revelation of the soul of Modern Japan. He portrays a country that is corrupt from one end to the other. He shows that the power is in the hands of a few strong men. In this volume are authenticated stories of the debauching of Buddhist priests, unutterable cruelty, sex orgies, of trafficking in human flesh, of baby-brokers. The book is not mere sensationalism; it is a cold, logical thesis compiled by the author during his fifteen years in Nippon. George Bernard Shaw has referred to it as "a work of great importance." The author spent over fifteen years in Japan teaching English, at Keio University and other centres of learning, and, during these years, he collected the material for his astonishing book. The new edition has been thoroughly revised and brought up-to-date. In a preface in this edition, the author answers some of those critics who felt that he was dealing a little too harshly with the people of Japan.' So, you see, madam, the technique of this new poison campaign launched against key nations by select, trained individuals." She said "Oh, I am now convinced of it. What monsters!" "In our stories, a man saved a cobra, and took it home, and fed it on milk, and it bit his son. This Miss Mayo

was saved by an Indian, and she has bitten his mother." said I. She laughed. "Never mind it," said she. "I have already forgotten it" said I "We have so many disease germs. One more cannot make much difference."

There was a big Chinese Exhibition in London. Priceless porcelain vessels and sculptures and paintings on silk were exhibited. Near Downing Street, a bus-man was shouting out "Crowds of Chinese going to the Japanese exhibition!", thus exhibiting the confusion between the two warring races common in England, just as the Tamils have, in their ancient books, confused between the Buddhists and the Jains.

Got a ticket for the Royal Gallery, from the Secretary of State for India, for the State opening of Parliament on the 2nd of December 1935. The King and Queen were expected to go in a picturesque procession. I was arranging to borrow a morning coat for the function when news was received that the King's sister had died in the morning, and, so, the state opening had been cancelled. The Royal gallery was closed, and dull commissioners did the opening of Parliament, but without me as a spectator!

Went and saw Havelock Ellis, the celebrated author of "Psychology of Sex", to have a discussion about 'punishment and the criminal' on which subject too he was an authority. He told me that he was a descendant of Vikings, and was proud of it. But he had no phone, and disliked aeroplanes too. I was astonished. "So modern about sex, and yet so conservative in these things!" I exclaimed "I hate to be rung up" said he. "But, fancy, how disappointed people like me will be on running up to this remote corner (Herne Hill) and with no other object except seeing you, and finding you not at home." "You can always write and fix up an appointment," said he. "I shall" said I. Then he relented. "I shall make a special arrangement for you. I shall ask the French lady

downstairs to take your phone message and communicate it to me, and to give you my reply." I was very glad for this bit of courtesy on his part.

I was surprised to see his conservative attitude towards Indian reforms. "You have got absolute peace", said he, "that is a great thing." "But there can be such a thing as the peace of the grave" I told him, "that is why Montague wanted to disturb the pathetic contentment of the masses." "Was he wise? I wonder if he was wise," he said. "Anyway, the thing has been done" said I "and cannot be undone." "That is so" he admitted.

He said to me, on the main topic of our discussion, "An expert criminal remarked, some years ago, when out of prison. 'The only way to stop us is to find out who and what we are, and what we're good for'. During the nineteenth century, Science, in so far as it concerned itself with the criminal at all, mainly devoted its energies to assisting the police in fixing the responsibility for anti-social acts. For the criminal as a human being, it had little sympathy or interest." Then, he told me about The Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, and gave me the literature about it. "Do you think our system is working well?" he asked. "Not very well" said I, "I have hardly known a case in India where a man was bettered by a period in jail." "Nor here" said he, "Have you visited our jails?". "Yes" said I "Pentonville and Wormwood Scrubs." "Anything of interest to, report *apropos* our discussions?" "Well" said I "I asked the governor of one of these after he had shown me round, 'Do you think that these prisoners are much worse than people outside?', and he replied 'I would rather be with them than with some of the city gents'." He laughed heartily. "Well, there it is. The problem is one of scientific study of the early cases of delinquency, in our laboratories and clinics, of the early cases of delinquency. That

will check. at source, the present constant supply of criminals, make thousands of potential criminals useful citizens, almost empty our prisons and save the vast treasure now wasted in tracing, trying and punishing criminals, and make it available for constructive purposes. A few, a very few, will have, of course, to be permanently segregated." I met him on two more occasions. Always he had a hearty welcome for me. His talk was polished, and none would dream from it that he was the author of the "Psychology of Sex."

An Indian student, one day, told me that, after having finished two years of his course in the London School of Economics, he found himself without funds to continue for the few months remaining over, and to pay his examination fees, as his family had been unable to make a remittance, due to creditors having attached the entire crops. Those were days before the passing of the Agriculturists' Relief Act. He looked most dejected and desperate. Some of us joined together and floated the requisite loan for him, and he tided over the crisis. "What a demon is money!" cried he. "It is neither god nor demon" said I "It is a mechanical thing, a wheel which turns the whole universe, which is indispensable for monarchists, and anarchists, communists and fascists, and was threatening to stand still with you, while the maws of the London School of *Economics* (what an appropriate name!) were opening wide. I hope the trouble is over, and that you will soon be as dynamic as ever. The truth is that most Indian students in England are living on the edge of economic sufficiency. One step beyond, one wave of the invading sea of expense (it need not be a tidal wave) and they are thrown off the balance. The disparity between the Indian rupees and the English pounds cannot be bridged easily." "How to get over this money problem?" he asked. "Never try to get over it. If money goes, it will be barter", and all laughed. "Then?" asked he. "Somehow, stick on to

the wheel. Never say die!" said I. "A poor world this" said he. "Undoubtedly" said I, "and a poor country ours." "It is potentially rich" said a friend. "So are Sahara sands" said I, "Present riches alone are of any use."

I went to the Greenwich observatory in a party. Saw everything. The biggest regular telescopes were only 26 and 28 inches, though there was a reflex mirror telescope of 36 inches presented by one Mr. Yapp of Carrera Cigarette factory. The Mt. Wilson 200 inches telescope is of the mirror type. It seems that it would be a waste to have a bigger telescope in England with its notorious climate of fog, mist and cloud. Walked on the O meridian for two yards, which is all its marked length. Saw also the telescope fixing that meridian. Told a Schoolmaster that I saw stars in daytime at the Trivandrum observatory. All my 26 comrades were astonished, and were even sceptical. The Schoolmaster asked the officer-in-charge "Can we see some stars now?" "Impossible" was the reply. So, he rushed triumphantly to me. I replied "He merely meant that it was impossible to show you." That was confirmed by the officer who explained that all the stars which could be seen with the naked eye at night could be seen with the telescope in daytime on a clear day, but that, at Greenwich, no visitors were favoured with star-gazing in daytime. I told him "Indian machines are not so busy as here, and can be spared, and Indian men are not so much machines as here, and can be moved by appeals." Everybody laughed.

A party of us went and saw the process of printing the Daily Telegraph from start to finish. The big direct telephones from Rome, Vienna and Paris, transmitting the news into the dictaphones which type them out, were very interesting. There were also the usual rotary, linotype etc. Each one of us had our names linotyped in lead and given to us as souvenirs. An Indian who had failed at the Bar, as he had

gone by the superseded curriculum, read his souvenir while it was being linotyped, and said "A letter is wrong" to the surprised compositor who was composing from his visiting card. Our friend was right. The compositor said that it was rare for such mistakes to creep in, and rarer still for others to find it out before him. I said to our friend "Congratulations. You can read backwards better than forwards", to the amusement of the rest. Forty thousand copies of the paper were being printed per hour. The folding of the paper was being done by machines. Each page was taken out on lead plates which were prepared from papier machier impressions taken from the composed linotype plates.

I must not omit to mention here the unexpectedly early return of my wife to India. In the evening of 29-10-1936, I received an air mail letter from Madras stating that my sister was developing a third abscess due to diabetes, and that the first three children were down with fever and cough, and that my eldest daughter was suffering terribly, and that my brother had to keep awake all night to attend to all the sick. The former letters had also contained accounts of continued sickness of my sister and children, and had stated that my sister and my smallest girl were even in a critical condition. My wife, who had been already worrying to death about these sicknesses at home, and had wanted to return, definitely decided to return by the first boat available, on receiving this alarming letter. So, we rushed to Cook's on the 30th morning, and booked her passage in the Viceroy of India sailing from London on the 9th of November, and arriving at Bombay on the 25th. We had to pay a supplement of £ 15, as this boat was sailing in season, and she had taken only a slack season return first class. So, we rushed to the High Commissioner's office, and got from there a supplemental C form certificate for £ 15, on the 30th itself, in the record time of half an hour,

My brother's later letter, received on the 5th of November, showed that the house at Madras had, for the time being, ceased to be a hospital. But the only comment my wife made was "Thank God, I get a cheerful mind to sail with. But, make no mistake. Before the 25th, you will get two gloomy letters of the old kind. Our children require to be scientifically looked after. That work must begin only now, and may take years. Till then, such sickness is likely, and my presence there is far more urgently needed than here. I have seen everything here that I can possibly hope to see in this trip. Now I must go there and do everything that I can possibly hope to do." So, her decision to go back was not affected in the least by the latest cheerful news of 'All quiet on the Madras front'. I had arranged for my brother at Bombay to await the 'Viceroy of India' at Bombay harbour, without fail, and to take her to his place, and then send her, in the Express, to Madras, after a day.

On the eighth of November, we did the last roaming about, and made the eleventh hour purchases. Bought the tickets for the special train for Tilbury Docks for catching the steamer.

The next day, my wife and I went from St. Pancras to Tilbury Docks in the special train. In that train, I met an old lady travelling to Bombay, and introduced her to my wife. She was very cultured, and had some original ideas. She had three remarkable theories. The first was that tips are always given only to inferiors, and that, therefore, till the working classes in England ceased taking tips, there could never be any equality between them and the tipping classes. "You never tip the Engine-driver, because he is an equal. You tip a porter, because he is your inferior." said she. She added "Inadequacy of wages is no excuse to support the tipping system. Wages ought to be fair, and ought not to be supplemen-

ted by tips." Her second theory was that religion was largely determined by climate, and that hot countries required religions with elaborate ceremonies, including human sacrifices in some cases, in Africa and America. She was unable to state why Arabia has evolved such an elemental religion, like her own sands, and why the depressed classes in India leave their complex beliefs for the simpler beliefs of Islam or Christianity. Her third theory was that if people opposed humanitarian killing of hopeless and suffering incurables, on the ground of interference with nature, they should also not treat such persons and feeble babies, and interfere with nature's disposal of them speedily. An original, though revolting, idea! She wanted all the people rendered lunatic by the Quetta earthquake to be killed at once painlessly. And yet, she said this in such a smiling voice, resembling like that used for suggesting the giving of milk to babies. A vigorous he-woman, but quite illogical, as she was herself on a mission of mercy to help her sister injured in the Quetta earthquake.

My wife had by now developed such self-confidence that she boarded the ship bravely and told me that she could take good care of herself. And she did so. I was worried about her luggage not arriving before sailing. But she got it within half an hour after my leaving her, and wrote to me about it from Dover. Even this self-reliance was worth developing by such a journey back to India. The latest letter from Madras, received on the 9th morning itself, was encouraging, and was against her return. But the rubicon had been crossed already, and nothing could be done. My wife said to me "Don't worry about me. It is all for the best. If another crisis should develop at Madras, I would be there to help brother in taking care of the sick kids." Her cabin was good, and the ship far better, and infinitely more crowded, than the Naldera. I told her that I would be going back in

July 1936, by the Strathnaver arriving at Bombay on the 16th, since the High Commissioner's people had promised to extend the leave by the necessary two days, as the ship was very good and convenient.

I returned home from Tilbury Docks, and felt very queer at the absence of my wife. She was not there to light the fire, or make the orange soup, or cut the melon. I was no earthly good at these jobs. The contrast between her loving cooking, and the mercenary diet I had to take thereafter, made me sad and depressed. On the 10th, I went on an excursion train to Cardiff to get over the feeling of loneliness at her departure. Saw Gloucester and Cardiff cathedrals, and the Severn estuary, and Cardiff pier and Cardiff castle. But neither fine architecture nor natural scenery will ever bring peace to a worried soul. Indeed, it is never advisable to see these glorious things in fits of depression. They will never be appreciated then. Nor will they be of any help to us. So, I returned to my rooms in a far more gloomy mood than I had gone out. Life's partings are always sad, especially from those we love like our own selves.

The following incident shows how strong the atavism of the race and the strength of the tradition is, and what an effort will have to be made by educationists to eradicate race and caste and colour prejudice from the minds of children. One day, we were all sitting in the drawing room of our Club, taking tea. A very cosmopolitan Indian, who was always condemning the Indian caste prejudices and praising the English freedom from prejudice, had invited two English Society ladies with three children, Crystal, Christopher and Muriel aged 2, 3 and 5 respectively. I called the three kids. Crystal and Christopher came to me at once. Muriel would not come. Then the cosmopolitan friend called Muriel to him, saying "Come to 'me. I am a good man.", and the child

said "No. You are just a black nigger.", to the mother's confusion. I at once said "Children will be children." The cosmopolitan friend dangled out two black and white picture cards, and said to Muriel "Aren't these nice cards? Come to me. I shall give them to you." The redoubtable Muriel said. "No. I have seen *millions* of them" and all of us laughed. The child was not to blame. Her training had implanted colour prejudice unconsciously into her, even as caste prejudice is implanted in Hindu children.

An English lady told us that evening an amusing story. She said that she ran a boarding house in London. An Indian, who became a famous scientist later, was one of her boarders. Years after he had become famous, he returned to London, and wanted to go to her boarding house for a day; she thought that he should stop at some big hotel in Lancaster Gate. But, when she went round with him to two hotels in the locality, the managers thereof, after viewing the colour of the scientist, pleaded that they were full up. The scientist at once told her "Oh, drop this. Let us go to my old digs. I shall be far happier there." She went with him there, gave him a whackingly good vegetarian meal, at preparing which she was an expert, and took him to a famous film. All the way to the film, and during the show, the scientist looked absorbed in his own speculations, and did not speak to her a word. He did not even notice the chocolate pest at the show. When they returned to the boarding house, he asked her "What have you earned, Mrs. B.?" She replied "Three thousand pounds." "I am glad" said he "You remember that in those days you wanted to earn something for your child. I wanted to discover something in science. Both of us have made good." That was all the social talk she got out of him. But she was glad. "His very presence in my house made me glad" she said "and yet these hotels refused him." I replied "Donkeys prefer carrots to gold." She laughed.

In London two painters were kind enough to invite me to their studios. One was a Jew, Mr. A. and the other an Austrian, Mr. T. Mr. A. was quite average, but told me that he waxed more enthusiastic when he had some colourful scene from the east, than when painting things western. Mr. T. was a very well-known artist who had painted many society figures in Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Paris and London. He insisted on painting me too free, just because he had not painted an Indian yet. One evening, at a crowded Mayfair theatre, he asked me to pick out, from those coming in, the most handsome women. When I picked out one by one, as they came in, he used to say "Oh, she is flashy. No good", "Too geometrical a figure", "Mostly get-up", "Animal within, see her chin", "too sensual, look at her mouth" etc., till, with one he said "No soul". I asked him, "My dear man, what is a soul, and how can you see it, or miss it, at such a casual glance?" "Ah," said he "that is a sixth sense we artists have. Never went wrong till now." He had gifted me a book with copies of his best paintings of men and women. I asked him "How many of them have souls?" "Oh, just one or two. The rest have none." I said "It is a soul-less society, what!" and both of us laughed so heartily that many people in our row glared at us. "Laughter is not in their line any more than soul" said I, and we laughed even more.

One day, a number of us, of all professions, were sitting together discussing true-dreams. One lady said. "It is reliably recorded that a man sojourning a hundred miles away saw in a dream his house on fire, and, on rushing there, found a fire on. So, too, another dreamt that his child was very ill, and, on hurrying to his place, found his child actually on the death bed." "How can we rely on the truth of these dreams?" said one, "Let us have an authentic dream from our own experience which came to be true." "Well" said a retired

Judge "I can tell you one. Once, in Court, I dreamt that an advocate was addressing his arguments to me, and that the court hall was packed, and, I opened my eyes and found the thing to be true!" There was a roar of laughter.

I may mention here my visit to the Blarney stone in Blarney castle near Cork. That stone is in a deep hollow, and people have to kiss it by being held, head downwards, by a care-taker and his wife who catch hold of either leg, demanding a fee of six pence each to start with, ending up with at least a shilling apiece. The kissing is supposed to give the power of "persuasive eloquence" with a little touch of "prophetic insight" into the real truth, something after Shaw's alleged theory. Shaw is supposed to have, for some years, stood on his head every morning, leaning his legs against a corner of the room. One morning, one of his guests surprised him at this exercise, and asked him why he was doing it, and he gave the characteristic reply. "The whole world is topsy-turvy. So, to see it right, I too have to stand on my head!" My friend and I were duly held down by the care-taker and his wife. The position was wholly precarious, and the couple demanded, and got, an increase of the fees from six pence to one shilling, when we were dangling down, their demand prevailing over all our newly-acquired powers of persuasive eloquence, we having got firm hold of the prophetic truth that, unless we agreed, we might be dropped down into the abyss *by accident*. My friend said to me. "Why do people entrust their lives to these two people?" "Why not" said I "Do we not entrust our lives to barbers when they are shaving us?"

One day, I was talking to a highly cultured English statesman of wide experience who had just returned from a special mission to China. I said to him, "Tell me frankly, are the Chinese, on the whole, better than the Indians?"

"Oh, no" said he, "only, they have not got the caste system, the curse of India." He paused for a moment, and then added, slowly, "But, then, you Indians have not got the War Lords, the curse of China." "Then" said I "we both seem to be fairly equal. If the Chinese can rule themselves, why can't we?" "There is no reason why you shouldn't, in the course of a few years" said he "Don't forget that, now, even the Chinese have not proved that they can rule themselves and guarantee the country the requisite freedom from external invasion and internal disorder. Nor have you. When, in the course of a few years, you are both able to do that, I daresay the peace of the world will be more secure." "And the world a happier place?" I asked. "That I cannot say" said he. "Perhaps, in this world, the increased happiness of some may mean the decreased happiness of others?" I ventured. "Perhaps" said he.

In 1936, I visited Stratford-on-Avon again. There, I met an American visitor who told me, with a lot of glee, "What fools these English are! They believe that an unlearned yokel, like William Shakespeare, who signed his will with much difficulty and in such a clumsy manner, was the author of Hamlet, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet, Two Gentlemen of Verona, and other plays, which show an intimate acquaintance with foreign lands and with the best thought and learning of the age in law, art, politics and philosophy. "I asked him "Well then, who was it? Do you believe in that ridiculous Bacon theory?" "Good heavens, no," said he "Bacon could no more have written these plays than the present Lord Chancellor of England. These heavy-weight champions are no good at such performances. Their sphere is law, and sense and non-sense, never works of genius like Shakespeare's plays." "Then" said I, with increasing curiosity, "who was the real author?" "Well, keep it a secret" said he "We, Americans, have found out the truth by

a dispassionate criticism and by a scientific examination of his paintings and portraits, and laborious plodding through of his own works and writings, including handwriting. The real author" said he, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, "was Edward De Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, and Lord Chamberlain of Queen Elizabeth, who lived between 1550 and 1604, and wasted his entire income on poets and playwrights, and wrote innumerable sonnets on 'dark ladies' and others. Fancy the Startfordshire yokel having a dark lady to make love to, in those aristocratic days of rigid class distinctions, almost as rigid as your caste distinctions. Doubtless, Shakespeare was one of the persons patronised by De Vere, and lent his name, especially as it did not matter much. The simple fellow considered Ben Jonson to be far superior to him, and looked up to him, and quite rightly," "But" said I "why should De Vere have hidden his name?" "Because" said he "playwrights and actors were both considered little short of vagabonds in those days. See the paintings of Shakespeare. Are they not those of an Elizabethan nobleman? Compare them with the known paintings of De Vere, and they are identical, and are not those of the husband of Anne Hathaway." I was very much interested, but not quite convinced. I told him "In our country, too, there are similar problems. One of the greatest of Tamil Poets, Tiruvalluvar, is believed, by tradition, to have been a Pariah, forgetting that a Pariah, in those days, had no chance of having an intimate acquaintance with Princes, Statesmen and noble ladies, let alone with law, literature, art and philosophy, exhibited in his *magnum opus*, the Kural. So, I and some others consider Tiruvalluvar to have been a noble at some Tamil Court, as you consider Shakespeare to be De Vere, a noble at Elizabeth's Court." "Aye," said he "are you pulling my legs, by inventing a parallel?" "No" said I "It is sober truth. Besides, our greatest Sanskrit dramatist,

Kalidasa, is reputed, by tradition, to have been an illiterate shepherd, and the next greatest dramatist, Bhasa, to have been a washerman. But, nowadays, people consider them both to have been aristocratic Brahmins, owing to their knowledge of philosophy and literature, and the improbability of a shepherd or washerman being able to write such plays. At least, as regards Kalidasa, we have story that a goddess, Kali, wrote on his tongue, and made the illiterate tender of sheep into the eloquent writer of plays. There being no such story about Shakespeare, your case of his having been a noble is stronger than the case of Kalidasa's being a Brahmin." "I say," said he "you are confusing me by giving too many illustrations of a similar nature in your country." "Better be confused," said I "than be confirmed in what may possibly turn out to be an error," and he laughed, and offered me a cigarette, which I promptly refused, as being a non-smoker.

On my return journey in 1933, I had the good fortune to meet two educated Muslim ladies, Mrs. S and H, who boarded our steamer at Port Said, Both had just performed the Haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. They were naturally very enthusiastic about Arabia and its ancient and modern glories. They said to me "What judges and laws have we in India! In Arabia, a thief is still having his arm chopped off, making it impossible for him to steal any more; and an immoral woman has her nose and ears cut off, making it impossible for her to sin any more. Why don't you do that in India?" "Because" said I, "it will be horrible for people to have to travel in trains and buses along with gents having an arm off, and ladies having the nose and ears clipped. Remember, the British, a chivalrous race, fought the Jenkin's Ear War to avenge the supposed chopping off of a drunken and dishonest sailor's ear by the Spaniards. You can't expect them to be parties to the mutilation of beautiful ladies.", and they laughed.

"Look here" said Mrs. S, who was of Persian parents, "what do you say to your barbarous Hindu custom of not giving a daughter any share? In Muslim law, we give a daughter half the share of a son." "We, Hindus, prefer a daughter to be a whole daughter, instead of turning her into half a son." said I. "Better be half a man than a zero." said she. "Remember that the zero is the Central Exchange in life" said I, "We Hindus, therefore, call even God the great Zero. Better any day to be a zero, than a miserable fraction." She laughed heartily, and said "What a pity you were not born a woman! Then, you would have found any number of arguments for our poor, down-trodden sex."

Afterwards, we talked of the Haj. I learnt with pleasure that all the pilgrims, irrespective of wealth, rank and status, had to wear the same simple clothes, an unstitched cotton loin cloth and a similar upper cloth, when doing the pilgrimage. "All are the same before God," said they. "But, evidently, they are not the same before man" said I, "see the terrible differences between nations, and even between people in the same nation." "And between *men* and *women* in the same family." said Mrs. S. "We must abolish all this" said I. "But how?" asked Mrs. S and H jointly. "By making life a life-long pilgrimage" said I.

I shall now give the readers an account of a party in London, at a Negro friend's. He was from a southern State in the U. S. A. A number of his friends from the States, besides some Englishmen and Chinese, had gathered. Some of these Negroes were whiter than Italians, but were still dubbed 'Negroes' as they had 3% to 5% Negro blood in them which would only be revealed by minute anthropological tests! No caste system could have been more rigid. All were very much interested in Gandhi and Tagore. One of them had with him an English version of the "Gitanjali" of Tagore, and read enthusiastically the following poem:—

"Where the mind is without fear, and  
 the head is held high ;  
 Where knowledge is free ;  
 Where the world has not been broken  
 up into fragments by narrow domestic  
 walls ;  
 Where words come out from the  
 depth of truth ;  
 Where tireless striving stretches its  
 arms towards perfection !  
 Where the clear stream of reason has  
 not lost its way into the dreary desert  
 sand of dead habit ;  
 Where the mind is led forward by  
 thee into ever-widening thought and  
 action—  
 Into that heaven of freedom, my  
 Father, let my country awake."

He said "This I consider to be his finest poem". I demurred, and took the book from him and read out poem 60 :—

"On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. The infinite sky is motionless overhead, and the restless water is boisterous. On the seashore of endless worlds the children meet with shouts and dances.

"They build their houses with sand, and they play with empty shells. With withered leaves, they weave their boats, and smilingly float them on the vast deep. Children have their play on the seashore of worlds.

"They know not how to swim, they know not how to cast nets. Pearl fishers dive for pearls, merchants sail in their ships, while children gather pebbles and scatter them again. They seek not for hidden treasures, they know not how to cast

nets. "The sea surges up with laughter, and pale gleams the smile of the sea beach. Death-dealing waves sing meaningless ballads to the children, like a mother while rocking her baby's cradle. The sea plays with children, and pale gleams the smile of the sea beach.

"On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. Tempest roams in the pathless sky, ships get wrecked in the trackless water, death is abroad, and children play. On the seashore of endless worlds is the great meeting of children." "That" I said "is, in my opinion, his finest poem." "That poem too is beautiful. But I stick to my opinion" said the Negro friend. He added. "It is amazing that a man from such a backward country could have written a book like this, containing so many strikingly beautiful poems". I asked him, in surprise, "What makes you think that India is intellectually backward?" "From the Year Books I find that India is less than 10% literate, whereas even we, Negroes in America, are 60% literate" said he. "That is largely due to Booker T. Washington and the democracy in the U. S. A." said I, "2200 years ago, India was, under Asoka, the most literate country in the world. Don't forget, it produced the Buddha". "But I thought that all that the Indians did was to drive him out as an inconvenient light in their congenial darkness" said an English student who was present. "That was centuries after his death" said I, "and resembles the hounding out of democratic ideas by the descendants of the founders of the French Revolution, or of ideas of liberty in subject countries by the countrymen of Hampden and Milton." "What about the countrymen of Lincoln?" asked my Negro friend. "Where is the political equality of the Negro with the White, guaranteed by the fifteenth amendment? Besides, what did Englishmen do even three hundred years ago? Hear", and he recited select stanzas from Cowper's poem. "The Negro's Complaint" which I reproduce here, as being sure to interest Indians:—

## THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT

"Forc'd from home, and all its pleasures,  
 Afric's coast I left forlorn ;  
 To increase a stranger's treasures,  
 O'er the raging billows borne.  
 Men from England bought and sold me,  
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;  
 But, though theirs they have enroll'd me,  
 Minds are never to be sold.

"Still in thought as free as ever,  
 What are England's rights, I ask,  
 Me from my delights to sever,  
 Me to torture, me to task ?  
 Fleecy locks, and black complexion  
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim ;  
 Skins may differ, but affection  
 Dwells in white and black the same.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,  
 Is there one who reigns on high ?  
 Has he bid you buy and sell us,  
 Speaking from his throne the sky ?

\* \* \* \* \*

"Deem our nation brutes no longer  
 Till some reason ye shall find  
 Worthier of regard and stronger  
 Than the colour of our kind.  
 Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings  
 Tarnish all your boasted pow'rs,  
 Prove that you have human feelings,  
 Ere you proudly question ours !"

"So, you see" concluded my Negro friend "the Englishman talked of freedom at home, and even fought a civil war for it, and beheaded his King, while merrily hunting men, women and children in Africa, carting them like cattle to America, and selling them there to his countrymen who had run away from oppression at home. Such is the inconsistency of men, whether Englishmen or Americans or Indians." "The victims are as much to blame as the bullies" said I, "Submission to injustice is a sin, says Gandhi, as we ought to behave like free men". "That is what Henley too would say" said the Englishman, and he recited:—

"Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

"In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

"Beyond this place of wrath and tears.  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

"It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate ;  
I am the captain of my soul."

"How many of us are even captains of our bodies or minds, let alone our souls?" asked the American. "We cannot be blamed for not being captains of our bodies or minds" said I, "for the material world outside shakes them, do what we will, like plague a healthy constitution, but we can be

captains of our souls, as they belong to the spiritual world." "That is India's way of looking at things" said the American.

He was right. While the other countries looked to the body and mind, and turned to the outward ray, the Indian sages turned to the inward ray. So, no doubt, some westerners have pitied India and have called her poor and backward. One has only to read the soul-stirring poem "India, my India" of Dwijendralal Roy, rendered into beautiful English recently by Sri. Aurobindo, to realise the folly of these westerners. I give it below, for the benefit of the readers, with a deep debt of gratitude to the *Bhagavan*, and to the *Modern Review* which published it:—

"India, my India, where first human eyes awoke to heavenly light,

All Asia's holy place of pilgrimage, great Motherland of might!

World-mother, first giver to humankind of philosophy and sacred lore,

Knowledge thou gave'st to man, God-love, works, art, religion's opened door,

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?

Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

To thy race, O India, God himself once sang the Song of Songs divine,

Upon thy dust Gouranga danced and drank God-love's mysterious wine,

Here the *Sannyasin* of Kings lit up compassion's deathless sun,

The youthful *Yogin*, Shankar, taught thy gospel: 'I and He are one.'

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?

Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's  
inward ray!

Art thou not she, that India, where the Aryan *Rishis*  
chanted high

The Veda's deep and dateless hymns, and are we not  
their progeny?

Armed with that great tradition we shall walk the earth  
with heads unbowed:

O Mother, those who bear that glorious past may well  
be brave and proud.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's  
grace today?

Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's  
inward ray!

O, even with all that grandeur dwarfed or turned to  
bitter loss and maim,

How shall we mourn who are thy children and can  
vaunt thy mighty name?

Before us still there floats the ideal of those splendid  
days of gold:

A new world in our vision wakes, Love's India we shall  
rise to mould.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's  
grace today?

Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's  
inward ray!"

I am sorry that the translation was not out at the time  
of the Negro friend's party. Else, all of them would have  
enjoyed it thoroughly, and all doubts about India's intellectual  
and spiritual stature dispelled.

At that party, we had some more interesting discussions.  
"Did you have the scout movement in ancient India?" asked  
an American. "No" said I "we in India concentrated on  
remembering our evil deeds, in order to repent and reform,

than in recording our *good deeds*." "Some say here that you Indians have no word for 'honour'" said an Englishman. "No country in the world is more obsessed by 'honour'" said I. "Hear this. A landholder, in the black cotton districts of Madras, became an insolvent. One day, after this catastrophe, he asked a woman selling vegetables 'What is the price of brinjal?'. She replied 'Three annas per viss'. He asked her 'Won't you give it for two annas?'. She retorted, in anger, 'Even if I give it for one anna, how can you, a pauper, buy it?' At once, in great wrath, he stabbed her with a knife, crying out, 'Honour gone, why leave life behind?' and surrendered at the nearest Police Station, and was tried and hanged in due course." "But scouts don't do such things" said the Englishman. "No, they record their *good deeds* thus:—'Felt a violent temptation to throw a stone at a passing dog. Desisted. Good deed number 1. Got a box of chocolates. Gave one chocolate to Tom who gave me an egg yesterday. Good deed number 2.' Sheer hypocrisy, I call it!" said the Negro friend. "Well, well, let us not concentrate on the bad points alone" said the American.

"I say, I must tell you that I was disappointed in your Maharajas" said the American to me. "I thought that they would be like bisons, but they were—oxen." "Don't blame them" said I "they were bisons all right once. Now, they are just oxen." "Why" said an Arab "Our chieftains were lions once, and are hyenas now". "The Manchu war Lords were tigers once, and are wild cats now" said a Chinaman. "All this is the effect of the impact of the west on the east" said I "but, there are, now and then, sparks in our Maharajas, reminiscent of the old times". "Give some instances" cried out several in the company. "Well", I said, "There was a Maharaja who used to dress in Indian clothes when taking his evening walks in a great Indian city where he was on a visit.

He was about to place orders with an English firm there for books worth one hundred thousand rupees for his State schools, and correspondence was already in progress. One evening, he walked into the bookshop informally. Nobody recognised him. Several Europeans were taking whatever books they wanted, and leaving mere I. O. U. slips behind. The Maharaja took books worth fifty rupees, and wrote out an I. O. U. The Manager said "Sorry. We don't allow credit to natives." "Awfully sorry" said the Maharaja, paying out the money, "Please close the correspondence regarding the supply of books worth a lakh of rupees to—State". "Who are you to say that?" asked the Manager. "The Maharaja of the State, with your leave," was the reply. No amount of apologies had any effect. The intended order was given to an Indian firm, and the English firm in question began to give credit, thereafter, to natives also".

"This term 'natives' is odd" said the American. "Yes" said I "There is a funny story about it. Surendranath Banerjee was the only Indian who passed the I. C. S. in his year. Twenty-three Englishmen got through along with him. A party was given to all the twenty-four. In the midst of it, an English lady asked 'How many natives got in?'. 'Twenty-three natives, and one Indian' was Surendranath's prompt reply." There was general laughter.

"Are your Maharajas very religious?" asked the Negro friend. "Some are" said I. "A great Maharaja came to London with a huge pot of Ganges water, to drink when here. The pot sprang a leak, by being unloaded clumsily. This was not noticed then. The next day, there was not a drop in it, when the cook went to take water from it. The scared cook and the *aid-de-camp* held a hasty consultation, stopped the leak, and went in a car to Putney, and filled the vessel up with Thames water. But an aristocratic nose and tongue can never fail to

distinguish between the holy water of the Ganges, and the oily water of the Thames. The Maharaja was wroth, and refused to take his meals, being a man given to saintly ways of protest. The frightened servants ran hither and thither, all over London, till they found another Maharaja with an ample supply of Ganges water, and got a good quantity from him, and rushed to their master. 'Villains', said he 'Are you bringing me more *Mlechchha* water? My forbearance has limits; I am not a Gandhi' 'Sire' said they 'This time, it is *Mother-Ganga* herself, we swear.' He tasted it, was convinced of the truth of their assertion, and gave the fellows a five-pound note each".

"A five-pound note for a thing like that!" said an Englishman. "Why, I read once that a Maharaja gave a Rolls Royce car as a tip to a waiter in Vienna for taking his coffee, steaming hot, at 5 A. M. in December" said the American. "We have never heard of such princely tips" said the Negro friend, "Are they equally generous to their subjects?". "Oh, no" said I "The subjects pay, through their noses, for all this generosity, just as the oil does for the speed of the car".

The talk then turned to the destruction wrought by chemical warfare, and the race in armaments among the nations of the world. "The strides in science during the last two centuries have been amazing. Material progress has far outstripped spiritual progress, and science will finally murder Humanity" said the American, "But, remember" said I, "it is man who has made Science bad, by mis-using it, and not Science which has made man bad". "Germany and England, two kindred white nations, will soon be at one another's throats. So too, Japan and China, two kindred yellow nations. What a pity!" said the American. "It is better like that," said I "else, we shall have a great colour war which will be too awful to contemplate". "Especially for us blacks and browns" said the Negro friend.

I shall close this chapter with two funny incidents. In the celebrated case of Mr. A, the Courts at first did not want to allow the mention of the gold razor made by a firm of English goldsmiths for Mr. A, as they considered the context not quite fit for the English drawing-rooms where the newspapers would be read. So, the newspaper reporters were merely allowed to refer to the razor as "a certain instrument". But, as the public thought, from the hush-hush manner, that it was an instrument used for criminal purposes, of abortion, etc, the firm begged of the Court, and got permission, to mention that it was but a razor "to be used for certain hygienic purposes among Oriental races" !

There was a polygamous Indian gentleman, Mr. R, living in London with his two Indian wives, who were sisters and very similar in appearance, though one was fat and the other thin. Out of fear of public opinion in England, he kept them in two houses, in two different localities. Each one was taken to be the only Mrs. R by the people of that locality, and received visitors only once a week, and, then too, very formally. One day, the first Mrs. R fell ill, and the second Mrs. R was taken to her house to attend on her. Visitors saw only this lady that week, took her, of course, to be her sister, and asked her why she had become suddenly so fat. Rising to the occasion, she complained of bad water and vegetables which had brought about "the swelling", but said that she would become her old self, in a week, by expert treatment. In a week, of course, she went back to her place, and visitors, this time saw her sister, as usual, and were surprised to see her her old self again. She was flooded with requests for the wonderful medicine which had made her slim so soon, but she told them that a Yogi had done the trick, and that he would not offer his services to any others.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE ENGLISH FAMILY AND THE INDIAN

ONE of the most important institutions of mankind is the family. Nothing is so striking or instructive as the differences between the Indian family and the English. They are not merely superficial but go to the very root.

The Indian family is at once more extensive and intensive. The definition, in the Madras T. A. Rules, of a family as 'husband, wife and children' has roused the wonder and indignation of pious Hindus, but is an exact description of a typical English family. The average Indian stands aghast at a definition which excludes the father and mother, let alone brothers, sisters and cousins. I dare say that the average Englishman will be equally aghast at a system which includes in the family a multiplicity of members running up to adopted sons and third cousins, in many instances. To the Indian the English family is a miserable and selfish mutilation of a noble institution; to the Englishman the Indian family is a huge crowd miscalled a family, and really a clan. So too, the intensity of feeling which binds a member to another is far stronger in the Indian than in the English family. English parents spend much less time with their children than Indians. The bond between brothers, sisters and cousins also is infinitely stronger in India. In this country, thousands look after their widowed sisters, brothers' sons, etc., in a way which is inconceivable in England. Even the bond, but not necessarily the love, between husband and wife is stronger, as, in most cases, divorces are impossible, and night clubs are unknown, and, so, they have perforce to spend more time together and

have fewer chances of escape from each other. Again, the authority of a father or mother in India is far greater than in England. Most of the marriages of the sons, and all the marriages of the daughters, are arranged by their parents. In a few cases, mothers have even compelled their sons to contract a second marriage either owing to the lack of male issue by the first wife, or owing to their dislike of the unfortunate woman. Such things will be unthinkable in England.

Indians claim for their joint family system several unique advantages, like the support of poor relations, the creation of a spirit of equality among large bodies of people, the promotion of commerce, industry and agriculture by the joint utilization of the resources of many, and the protection afforded in times of danger. Most of these advantages are mythical, and, where they do exist, will exist in even greater measure if other suitable institutions were substituted for the joint family. The support of poor relations like widowed sisters, orphan nephews and the like is, no doubt, widely found. But in many cases, it is fear of social condemnation which is the cause of such support, and not pure love or humanitarian considerations. Then, too, it must never be forgotten that the widowed sister is a very great help to the family. She drudges, and is made to drudge, for the family. She sweeps the house, milks the cows, looks after the numerous children, attends to the frequent confinement cases, cooks for the multitudinous members of the family and the hosts of guests, invited and uninvited, and does odd unpleasant jobs, like making cowdung cakes for the oven. And, for all this, she gets nothing more than her bare meals and a few cheap clothes. I don't think much credit can be claimed for maintaining widowed sisters, though certainly many families are put to hardship in having an additional member where there is hardly enough food to go round even among the existing members. Sometimes the family borrows for

celebrating the marriages of such sisters' daughters, and then we can hardly withhold admiration for this splendid, though misplaced, self-sacrifice. My point is that widowed sisters can be maintained even without the joint family, and, then, the sacrifice, being voluntary, will be appreciated more not only by such sisters but also by God. The same remark applies to the maintenance of poor brothers, nephews and cousins. At present the earning brother in a joint family toils and moils not for the benefit of himself, wife and children, but for a whole crowd of brothers, cousins, nephews, nieces and lesser relations as well, who will thanklessly swallow the major portion of his earnings, and then blame him for the real or supposed favoured treatment he has accorded to his wife or children. And, strangely enough, the village will support these ungrateful people. We cannot blame anybody for this curious phenomenon, as, according to the theory of the joint family, the earning brother is bound to feed the whole crowd impartially. It may be argued that such an ideal is higher. I disagree. Such god-like men are not yet born, and the ideal only breeds hypocrisy. Again, even if they were evolved, they will be no compensation for the degradation of the crowds of ungrateful parasites generated by the system.

The boasted spirit of equality and impartiality among the members of a joint family simply does not exist, in the majority of such families. Each mother accords preferential treatment on the sly to her children, and this slowly works up to a crisis, when all the mothers fight and force their husbands to effect partitions and start joint families of their own. The petty meannesses which take place in a joint family are beyond count; and elderly males, who ought to know better, can often be found to engage themselves in silly quarrels of which children in other countries will be ashamed.

As regards the fostering of commerce, industry and

agriculture, it is obvious that an intelligent co-operative system will achieve the same thing in a much better way. Such combined capital will not be endangered by extraneous considerations, like family quarrels between ignorant females. The management of the concerns too will be much better, as all the shareholders will take an interest in them, and not merely the family manager. Needless to say, misappropriation by the manager will be more difficult than now. So too, the additional protection afforded by the joint family is unnecessary in these days of advanced security.

While the joint family has at present few advantages, it has quite a crop of peculiar evils of its own. Quarrels between joint families tend to develop into riots, as all the members of the joint family take up the family quarrels as theirs and assemble in great force at the disputed field or temple. Again, the constant intrigues and bickerings inside the family take away a valuable portion of the time of the members and also lead them to seek the intervention of a particularly low and unscrupulous set of creatures who, under the pretence of arbitrating, knock away much money from their dupes, and cunningly manufacture more disputes. Then, too, some children are taught to steal eatables and also to stealthily get better meals and sweetmeats than the remaining children of the family. An exchange of words among the women is also of frequent occurrence, and children, too, often take part in this mud-slinging. Thus the nature of women and children is coarsened, and many evil habits are implanted which may not always disappear in later years. Further, since the earnings of a man are not to be enjoyed solely by him, but are to be shared with idle relatives of various kinds, the incentive to work receives a serious check. Lastly, the fear of the malicious criticisms of a host of relatives makes a man a coward and has also a visible injurious effect even on the nerves of those who

do not become cowards. Every Hindu's ordinary expectation from his relations is merely that they may not pursue him with their lying slanders and envious bad wishes. It may be that the joint family was a very necessary and useful institution in former days; but now it is as old and decrepit as a twenty-year old cow, and much more of a drain on the nation's resources than that. So it is that it is slowly dying and is being replaced by a family corresponding more closely to the British type. It will be a real service to the country if we were to consciously bring about this reform instead of allowing it to come about unconsciously; for then we can get the exact form of family we want, instead of being made to carry on with the one we get. Man, in the upper grades of civilization, always tries to get what he wants, in the form he wants it. Thus, where primitive races are content to use water for irrigation only where it is readily available, advanced nations make water available where they want it.

Doubtless, many young Indian wives will be anxious to know the position of the mother-in-law in England. They may be somewhat surprised when they hear that the mother-in-law who causes trouble and misery in an English family is not the husband's mother, as in India, but the wife's mother! That is why a mother-in-law's death is a joyous event for an English husband, as for many Indian wives. The predominant partner in an English family, being usually the wife, it is her mother, sisters and brothers who honour the family with their frequent visits, if not permanent residence. In India, the predominant partner, being usually the husband, it is his mother, brothers and sisters who crowd the family. It must not be, however, imagined that the wife's mother oppresses the husband in England to anything like the same degree as the husband's mother oppresses the wife in India. The cases of oppression are far fewer and of an entirely different kind, causing in

most cases merely mental worry. In India, of course, it is far from unusual for a mother-in-law to beat, brand or starve a daughter-in-law and to get her cast off or superseded by another. These miserable women have been, in their own days oppressed by their own mothers-in-law, but, like convict warders and freed slaves, their sufferings only make them eager to make others suffer even more. Truly, only free men can realize the dignity of liberty and the nobility of treating others better than they were treated themselves. The mother-in-law's oppressions in India are steadily becoming less and less and are bound to disappear soon. Even the counter-campaign of the oppression of the mother-in-law by the daughter-in-law has begun in some quarters.

Still, while the mother-in-law's oppressions in England are more or less a joke, in India they are a dreadful reality. Every movement of the newly-married bride, even her conjugal relations with her husband, is, in many houses, regulated by the hag, who is a steady enemy of her daughter-in-law's learning singing or reading books or sitting and chatting with her husband or attending innocent entertainments. She kills all the joy of youth, and blights the young woman's life. It is largely because of difference in age and lack of education, and not of set villainy, that she does this. The latter cause alone may be removed. Since the former will still persist, it is highly necessary for the happiness of the newly-married couple that they should have a separate home where only they and their children will live. The parents of the husband as well as of the wife will, of course, visit them often, as they do in England, and, having no authority, are sure to behave well.

To Hindu husbands who say that they cannot live apart from their parents, I shall only reply that the same argument will apply to the wife's parents also, if her feelings too are

consulted, and that it is best for all concerned that husband and wife should form a separate unit with their children. No unpleasant necessity will then arise for the husband to sacrifice his mother or wife, as he does now, in quarrels between the two. I must emphasize that this separate living need not, and should not, prevent him from rendering pecuniary or other help to his or his wife's parents whenever necessary and possible. I am sure that, then, our young wives will embrace and extol their mothers-in-law, instead of wishing for their death, as they do now in many cases. Of course, by the arrangement I suggest, our wives may lose the invaluable service rendered by their mothers-in-law as midwives, and in looking after the children, most of whom love their grandmother more than their mother. But nothing good is got in this world without some sacrifice; and the wife who aspires to be free must be able and willing to shoulder her burdens herself, like all free people.

A thing which amused me very much at first in England was the clear-cut distinction between a husband's possessions and a wife's, even among loving couples. 'The clock is mine; the stand is my husband's,' said a lady to me. 'That cupboard and these two chairs are mine; the remaining furniture in this room is his.' 'Why do you differentiate between your things and your husband's?' I asked in surprise. 'What nonsense! Why shouldn't I? If he dies, I must carry my things away. Surely, I am not going to allow them to be included in his testate or intestate property!' said she. 'We in India have no such distinctions' said I loftily. 'That is because you swallow your wives' property. What property have they, poor things! But wait till we get at them, and I bet you will have all these distinctions, and more' was her crushing retort. Indeed, behind our pseudo-spiritual unity of property there is clearly discernible the male's monopoly. He freely and shame-

lessly uses his wife's money which he calls 'our money', and thus escapes even a sense of obligation, whereas if the poor woman were to utilize his earnings, even to buy flowers, without his permission he is all ablaze with anger at the 'theft' of 'his' money, and will, in all probability, beat her. Wife-beating is still a practice far from uncommon in our country though in England it is as rare now as husband-beating. There are not wanting some university men in this country to-day who try to justify this degraded practice with the zeal of a mediaeval clergyman.

"Husband and Wife are one" is a fine slogan, but may provoke the retort "Which one?" unless it is really translated into action. Needless to say, there are very few Hindus even now who allow their wives to have separate property. Of course, there is 'Sridhan' which is supposed to be the wife's separate property, but this can be used by the husband, even without her consent, in times of danger, and for charitable and family purposes, and, in any case, can be extorted from her by undue influence or coercion, by threatening to desert her or to remarry or commit suicide. I have known a husband who forced his wife to sell a Stridhan Jewel in order to satisfy a fraudulent promissory note executed by him in favour of his concubine.

However, in the best type of Hindu family we find a delightful merging together of the property of husband and wife which is never found in England. The English practice is, on the whole, more advantageous to women and also leads to some pretty customs like husbands and wives giving presents to one another at Christmas and other times. In India this custom is absent, as the wife has no separate property in reality, whatever may be the theory, and even the husband, after his robbery, has not got the cheek to call his purchases for her 'presents'! The custom is as delightful as the English

custom of thanking husbands and wives for small services done and calling one another by names or by endearing epithets. In India, husbands and wives rarely call one another by names in public, though recently some husbands have begun to do so. Ladies have not yet started the practice. Usually, the husband calls his wife by some such expressions as 'Oh woman' or, more often, 'Here'. These expressions are no more indications of roughness than the English expressions are of love. An Englishman may mechanically say 'Dearest, I have instructed my lawyer to apply for a divorce' just as an Indian may say in the same way 'Oh woman, my heart overflows with delight at this meeting after our long separation.' Still, there is no doubt that the English expressions are more graceful.

There is a growing feeling in England that the family is a worn-out institution which will disappear in a few decades. In fact, the break-up of the family has already proceeded to some extent in England, though not to the same extent as in America. Thus, many husbands and wives spend their nights at separate night clubs, divorces are comparatively easy to get, there are understandings about the number of children to result from the marriage and the time of their advent into the world in a great many up-to-date marriages, and many families regularly take their meals in the hotels and restaurants owing to the refusal of wives to do the cooking. Many married women too have their own jobs to which they attend, leaving the children in the charge of governesses or maid-servants. Decidedly, in modern England, the family is of less importance than society. In other words, the family, which is our centre, falls only on the Englishman's circumference; and society, which is on our circumference, is his centre. Marriage itself is being attacked by some great scholars. It is absolutely out of the question for us to follow England here, though, unless

we look sharp, some of our ultra-Anglicized sisters, posing to represent the vast masses of India's women, may try the experiment of aping, here as elsewhere. It is a wonder to me why England should imitate America in the attacks on the venerable institutions of marriage and family. America is a new nation, with no immemorial tradition of these old institutions, and, consequently, dislikes to follow them, and burns with a desire to originate something and make the world adopt it. Hence, marmonism, marriages of convenience, dissoluble at will, and other freaks. I am confident that, in the end, these absurdities will prove a thorough failure, but, alas, not before plunging the world in misery.

There is a mistaken impression in England that Indian women are slaves without any influence at home. Any man who knows Indian homes will see the absurdity of this belief. I doubt whether there is any country in the world where women have more real influence in the home than in India. Most decisions affecting the home are arrived at by women though they go out under the signature of the male. Our women keep their own names, unlike the English who have, throughout their life, to merge their names in those of their husbands or fathers. Just at the time when some English women are beginning to call themselves by their own names our women radicals are, with that blunderbuss instinct never failing Indians in such matters, calling themselves by their husbands' and fathers' names and producing some monstrosities at which even devils will weep.

I do not pretend that our women are as free as Englishwomen. Nor do I consider such freedom necessary or even desirable in India. I have no doubt that, except for a few odd instances, dancing and night-club haunting will never become popular among respectable women in this land. Each culture has its peculiar features which can never be imitated

by a totally different culture without disastrous consequences of the first magnitude. A certain ultra-radical Hindu lady of brilliant parts and optimistic temperament told me one day, 'Mr. Ayyar, we want to wake up the sleeping millions of India's women.' 'Pray, don't' said I. 'Are you afraid?' she asked. 'Yes, not for myself but for you' I replied. 'These millions of orthodox, conservative women, if woke up, will surely swallow you up in a fury of indignation at your ways, which they will consider to be highly immodest, and India will lose some of her charming daughters.' She took a hurried leave, and has never reopened the topic to me. The need to educate our women is imperative so that the tremendous influence which they exercise in our homes may be guided by wisdom, instead of by ignorance as very often at present. It is a question of educating our masters.

The more aggressively and contemptuously an Indian talks of women, the more certain I feel that he is denied all liberty at home. An elderly friend of mine was, in public, a most virulent enemy of women's rights, and used to pretend that there was no case where a self-respecting man need or should consult a woman. Knowing his wife to be a woman of strong will, I could not believe my friend when he asserted that he never consulted her about anything more important than cooking. So, one day, when my friend had been approached for a loan on interest, and had gone home ostensibly to verify whether he had the amount, I quietly and unobservedly got into his house after him, and saw him, in a most humble manner, ask his wife whether the loan could be given. I burst out into laughter, to his great confusion, and asked him 'So all your heroics end thus?' 'Let me see you behave more heroically' said he. 'I may, indeed, I think, I will, consult my wife' I replied, 'in everything of any importance, but, as I never preached any phillippics against women, I don't

think I shall make myself ridiculous.' 'Oh, well, when all are talking big, and you know it is all rot, there is a great temptation to join in and out-do the rest,' said he, 'and they will never pay a surprise visit, like you.' 'Why?' I asked. 'Because they will know that all people will consult their wives, for the peace of their homes and the goodness of the cooking, and, so, will not think it worth while to verify this well-known thing,' was his astonishing reply. English people, seeing that women in India are not introduced to males, and do not dance or attend night clubs, rush to the conclusion that they are oppressed by the males. I do not for a moment deny that there is injustice done to women in India in some cases; but, often, the injustice is done for the fancied benefit of women and not for any advantage accruing to the male, and, almost always, the females themselves are willing parties. The purdah and early marriages are examples of such injustice.

The history of the purdah is somewhat interesting. In Ancient India, the purdah was extremely rare, and was confined to royal ladies on ceremonial occasions, and even so was confined to a few royal houses in Northern India. When the Arabs conquered Sind, early in the eighth century, the sinister institution received a big fillip. In the sandy deserts of Arabia, delicate female eyes required the protection of thin veils in order to escape from the sand particles flying about. So, the rich ladies wore veils of Dacca muslin. The poor ones of course, could not afford this luxury, and, so, went without it. As, in all countries, the poor people are those who supply most of the concubines and prostitutes, and as these were in Arabia without any veil or purdah, the Arabs came to regard purdah females as respectable, and those without purdah as women of easy virtue. When they conquered Sind, they found all the Hindu ladies unveiled, and, so, regarded them as loose women, and began to make improper advances. To protect

themselves from this horrible danger, the respectable Hindu ladies of Sind and the adjoining provinces adopted the purdah which also satisfied the jealous instincts of the males. As the Muslim conquest advanced, so did the purdah. In those provinces, like Madras, where the Muslims were never able to have a secure hold, the pernicious institution never exists, except among rich Muslims who want to imitate their brethren in the North.

So too, early marriage, while it was not unknown in Ancient India, was of very rare occurrence and became a widespread institution only after the Muslim conquest. In early days, only among royal families was early marriage known and that too but rarely. The rule was for the maiden to choose her own husband at a Swayamvara. Rarely, when great political interests were at stake, politicians arranged for early marriages in the spirit of Edward I of England. When the Muslims invaded the land, they had a habit of carrying away Hindu females as booty, a thing unheard of in Hindu and Buddhist days. There was greater resentment among the Hindus if a married woman was abducted than if unmarried women were the victims, and the Muslims did not want to provoke the Hindus more than they could help, and, so, paid their first attentions to unmarried females. The Hindus took advantage of this, and began marrying off their girls at ridiculously tender years. Where the Muslims were unable to effect a permanent conquest, as in Malabar, even the Brahmins marry their girls normally only at the age of eighteen though the immigrants from the east prefer an earlier age. In provinces which were under the heel of the Muslims for centuries, like Gujerat, the girls are married in some cases even before they are five years old. Alas for the Hindus, a device adopted as a war measure became, in course of time invested with religious authority, and has become one of India's major problems in

these days when the State guarantees the safety of all. The curse in India is that anything old is *ipso facto* sacred and fit to be preserved. Hence, the defence of such abominations like the Devadasi system, the purdah, early marriage, untouchability and enforced widowhood.

A question is sometimes asked of me by some friends as to whether conjugal affection is stronger in England or India. It is very difficult to answer. But I should think, on the whole, that the love of the husband for the wife is much the same in both countries, and that of the wife for the husband greater in India. The existence of legal monogamy in England and legal polygamy in India need not concern us very much, as, in reality, husbands in England are not more faithful to their wives than their brothers in India. An English husband displays more chivalry towards his wife than an Indian husband, but this I attribute to the Englishmen's general chivalry towards women. There is a proverb in England that where poverty steps in at the door love walks out of the window, and the proceedings in the divorce courts tend to support this. Such a proverb will never apply to the love of the Indian woman towards her husband. The greater the poverty, the heavier the adversity, the sweeter and the stronger becomes the Indian woman's love. In prosperity, an English wife will make the home more comfortable than an Indian wife; but, in adversity, she will be nowhere before her Indian sister. And, as we in India have been plunged in adversity for centuries, and are likely to continue to remain so for some generations more, we are far better off with our Indian wives than if we had married Englishwomen. It is a pity that we keep such a noble set of women for the most part uneducated, and that we make the lives of a great number of them, the widows, a hell on earth. No Englishman will ordinarily eat anything without giving a part to his wife; no Indian woman

will ever eat anything without giving the major portion to her husband. Many Indian men, and a few Englishwomen, have not got this affectionate consideration for their partners. In a few years, perhaps, all these delightful differences between India and England may disappear, leaving a drab monotony behind till such time as the inhabitants of Mars or Venus come into contact with us, and we can make fruitful comparisons between their husbands and wives and ours.

Early marriage, as an institution, must go if the nation is to prosper. But it will be a colossal mistake to imagine that no early marriage can be happy. Some of the happiest marriages I know of are early marriages. The European system of love marriages is not without its flaws. Love often cools in a few months, and the erstwhile angel becomes a stupid thing escape from which is the next goal. Hence the cry for easy divorce on such classical grounds as incompatibility of temperament. Once this reform is conceded the incompatibility which is now discovered in a few years will be discovered in a few hours after marriage, and the divorce courts will be so flooded with cases that no country can afford to keep the army of judges required for trying them, and, so, all countries will rather abandon the institution of marriage than try these cases. The defect with early marriage is not so much that it is not a love marriage as that it is a marriage between two physically undeveloped persons. In fact, Eugenics is ready to give love the go-by as easily as any Hindu marriage, and compel a woman to wed the man whom the eugenists consider suited for her, and we are assured by many eminent men that the hope of the world lies in Eugenics. Nor is the Hindu idea that the prime object of marriage is the production of children less noble than the English idea that the prime object is sexual companionship. In practice, of course, both the objects are combined in both countries, and only the emphasis differs.

I grant that the Indian emphasis on children leads to the oppression of barren women, and also to old men indulging in polygamy in a desperate attempt to get children and prove their manhood. But the English emphasis also is wrong, and leads to children being regarded as inconvenient and unwanted by-products, and also to love rapidly cooling after a certain age. Both the ideas must be given equal emphasis if the ideal is to be without flaw. A wife must only get greater love from her husband when she becomes a mother.

I should certainly say that, for the welfare of the Indian family, no girl should be married before she has completed sixteen and no boy till he has completed twenty-one. The boy or girl may be allowed to choose the partner, provided the parents are given an indefinite veto. Or, the parents may be allowed to choose the partner, provided the boy or girl is given an indefinite veto. Thus, settled on the wings of love, and provided with the brakes of discretion, the marriages will generally be happier than is the case now either in India or in England. A young girl, left to herself, may, in her inexperience, choose a flashy vagabond of depraved character and will repent her choice for life; the parents, left to themselves, may choose some money-bag or big pot of most calculating and repulsive habits whose love will be mere lust, without any poetry or even decent prose. Then again, some provision is absolutely essential for divorce in horrible cases as where the partner is mad or is suffering from leprosy or syphilis or other incurable disease or has married again. At present a husband in India gets relief if his wife falls in any of these categories except the last, which is impossible for her, by simply marrying again. The unjust law gives no relief to the wife.

Another horrible thing now in our country is the rule obliging every Hindu woman to be married. This not only

hinders advanced studies by women, and prevents them from taking to such meritorious professions as nursing and midwifery and doctoring, but also produces some peculiar abominations. One of these is the horrible custom of marrying away even idiots, lunatics, the deaf and dumb, etc. The miserable fathers take the easiest method of disposal, and marry them off to professional wretches who take a few rupees, perform the sacrament of marriage, eat sumptuously for four days, and then go away in search of more marriages, and never return. This is the worst mockery of the holy institution of marriage that the human mind can think of. In Ancient India women could become *sanyasinis* or nuns; now, this safety valve has been closed by some cunning priest who cared more about marriage fees than human happiness.

The iniquitous custom of demanding cash payments from the parents of girls for consenting to marry their daughters is partly the result of the rule compelling the marriage of every girl while leaving the male to do as he chooses. Of course, other reasons also contribute, as the denial of shares to women at partition, and the unseemly competition among parents for eligible bridegrooms. Hindu women are given no shares at partitions but have to be supported by the family and married away decently when the time comes. In a poor family, with many daughters, this will mean that the girls will not only exhaust all the property but also involve the unfortunate brothers in heavy debts. On the other hand, in a rich family the sisters never have spent on them anything like their share. Hence the best way of fighting the dowry evil is by giving shares to girls, equally with boys and refusing to give anything more. This will have two advantages. The portion of the girl will remain hers, whereas the dowry is now being swallowed up by the rapacious husband and his even more rapacious relations. And marriage expenses will go down, as

the bridegroom will no longer have other people's money to transport armies of ever-hungry and never-satisfied relations to eat up the substance of the unfortunate bride's father and digest the gluttonous eating by scandalizing him and his people. An English marriage is less expensive, comparatively, than an Indian one, but appeared to me to lack the sublime impressiveness of a Brahmin ceremony. Besides, a party costs as much as four days' feeding here.

As regards the treatment of widows, we Hindus are perhaps the worst people under the sun. By giving an exaggerated importance to marriage and treating it as more important than life itself, instead of regarding it merely as one of the ten sacraments of life, as enjoined in our Sastras, we regard the termination of a woman's marriage by the death of her husband as a greater calamity than her own death, and many fathers would hear the news of their daughters' deaths with less sorrow than the news of their widowhood, though, often, the widowhood is an escape for the poor woman from a brutish and disease-ridden partner whose only graceful act might have been this involuntary early exit from life. Ancient Sastras have enjoined on a widow only a pure and saintly life; eating pure fruits and bulbs, wearing white clothes, adorning her hair with pure white flowers, she is to be a mother to all orphans, and a centre of piety, and is to accrue merit for herself and her dead husband so that their married life in the next birth may be more happy. A nefarious combination of three persons, the priest, the barber and the reversioner, led to the poor widow's being degraded from this dignified position and made to shave her head as a telling outward symbol of her degradation. The barber gained thereby four annas per month; the reversioner often got the management of the property, with its opportunity to swallow, as widows with shaven heads would be more unlikely to move about and

manage their properties than if their heads were not shaven ; and the priest found it easier to persuade a shaven-headed and despised widow to perform costly religious ceremonies as those would be the only occasions for the poor thing to shine socially and have some little joy in her life of eternal darkness.

The treatment of the widows by the Hindus is atrocious in the extreme. She is made to shave her head in many cases, regarded as an evil omen, as a creature who has caused by her wicked actions in past births the death of her husband, made to work like a slave, given the dirtiest of clothing and the remnants of food, called bad names and forced to remain a widow for ever, even though in many cases she may be a virgin widow, that is, one who has never known married life but has only gone through the marriage ceremony. I have always wondered at our inhuman oppression of the widows who are among the noblest and most useful of India's children. Several unscrupulous persons have depicted these women as sunk in immorality. A blacker lie never was uttered. A few widows may be immoral, as a few unmarried women in western countries, but this is no reason to condemn the whole tribe. It is a mistake on the part of the Hindus to forbid re-marriage for widows. It is far better to allow those who want to re-marry to do so than to see them lead lives of immorality and even commit infanticide. The denial of the right to motherhood to unmarried women in England, and to widows in India, has led to some members of both classes indulging in infanticide to conceal their shame. I am convinced that most of the real widows of India, apart from the virgin widows who are no widows at all, will refrain from remarrying even though society allows them to do so. Such voluntary abstinence will be a matter of legitimate pride to us whereas the present enforced widowhood will only be a prolific source

of shame. In the realms of morality, a thing brought about by compulsion loses almost all its value. Indeed, the advocates of enforced widowhood seem to think that if the ban were removed all the widows will re-marry. Herein they only display their colossal ignorance of the innate idealism of Hindu women, and judge these noble women by their own standards. It need hardly be stated that most of these advocates of enforced widowhood are persons who will unhesitatingly approve of a fifth marriage of a seventy-year old veteran male with a girl of twelve! It is a tragedy that most Hindu women have also been made advocates of enforced widowhood by the cunning propaganda of interested males. Even the majority of widows are for enforced widowhood just as the majority of untouchables believe in untouchability, and a long-conquered race believes in the rule of the conqueror. Man is so conservative by nature that he gets attached to old institutions, however pernicious. Our advocates and champions of enforced widowhood have not even utilized these widows for India's uplift. If they had at least educated them, and made them the nation's teachers, midwives, doctors, spinners, weavers and tailors, I could have forgiven them; but they have done nothing of the kind. They have caused as much suffering as the Egyptian kings did to their slaves, but have left no pyramids behind. Theirs has been the infliction of a barren suffering for the joy of inflicting it. If only India's widows and pensioners had been properly utilized for national service, we would have had long ago universal education and an appreciable reduction of the appalling infant mortality. High as the infant mortality is now in our unfortunate country, we should not forget that it would have been infinitely higher were it not for our widows who save many lives by their nursing and midwifery although they are untrained. Even when the ban on re-marriage is raised, there will be an army of widows who refuse to re-marry; and

let us see that they are trained and made the nation's teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives, spinners, weavers and tailors.

Last remains the consideration of the treatment of children. In an English family the children are drilled and disciplined to an extent which surprises and may even 'pain' Indians. Little children will never come and peer at visitors or take any of their things like sticks or hats. They will not create any noise in the drawing room. In many rich families they will see only their governesses and servants constantly, and their parents but rarely. They will, when present at dinners, never ask for fruits and other delicacies but will rest content with what they are given. In India, of course, we have the other extreme. Children will bawl out constantly, visitors or no visitors; they will ask for whatever they want in the loudest tones possible; they may embarrass a visitor by constantly meddling with his things; they are, most of the time, clinging to their mothers; and they may be seen quarrelling and fighting among themselves. Mothers in India often carry even their small babies to cinemas, theatres and other public places where they will create the hell of a row and spoil the entertainment for the other people; any woman protesting at this noise will be labelled by her sisters as a barren woman who has never known what it is to have a baby. No wonder that an Anglo-Indian witness before the Cinema Commission deposed that if the noise at cinemas were less, more Europeans and Anglo-Indians would frequent them. Most of this noise is created by Indian children, including tender babes.

The great Indian Law-giver said that a child should be treated as a king till its fifth year, as a servant from its fifth till its sixteenth year, and as a friend after sixteen which is the Hindu year of majority. At present, in India, children, especially males, are more or less treated as kings till they are

five, though the Indian parent's conception of royal treatment seems to be to fill the baby's belly till it protrudes like a gourd and to allow the baby to beat or pinch any older person. From five to sixteen no consistent policy is followed; sometimes the child is treated as a slave and sometimes as a master. After sixteen, no parent treats his children as friends. Assumed superiority on one side and real contempt on the other are the result. It will be to India's lasting good if the parents were to follow the Law-giver's advice, clearly understanding the real meaning of the terms King, Servant, and Friend.

At no time in the near future is India likely to abandon either marriage or the family. Hinduism and Islam are firmly attached to both; and unless these religions disappear from the land, of which contingency even the most enthusiastic Christian missionary is not exactly hopeful, these institutions will continue to flourish, though perhaps not in their present form. Changes and modifications are essential and are indeed the proofs of life; but violent uprooting of long-established and vital institutions is nothing short of racial suicide.

In conclusion, I have only to add that I was born and bred in an Indian family and that I have had the good fortune of living with English families for over three years. I have enjoyed life in both, just as I have enjoyed the smell of the English rose equally with that of the entirely different Indian jasmine. It will be, therefore, with real grief that I shall watch the break-up of the English family if ever that contingency comes, which I hope it never will.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE SECRETS OF ENGLAND'S GREATNESS

**W**HAT are the secrets of England's greatness? Why is England to-day, one of the mightiest powers in the world, judged by her possessions and fighting strength, and why is she second to none among the nations in the literary or scientific or any other sphere? The disgruntled and superficial Indian is apt to give the reason as mere possession of physical strength and the ability to thrust her yoke on others. Even her literary and scientific eminence was attributed by one of my respected friends, now deceased, to her political superiority being used to compel nations to acknowledge an eminence which simply did not exist. "This wretched Milton is acknowledged by us as a great poet only because of Britain's supremacy in India and her control over our universities. So too, it is ridiculous to hold that Shakespeare is the greatest poet and dramatist ever born. And, yet, could you or I have held a different opinion and expressed it and have hoped to pass? I tell you, power and the wealth acquired by it are the foundations of all greatness", said he. While I had to admit the truth of the particular instances quoted by him I pointed out to him that there were many countries like France, Germany and the U. S. A. which were fanatically independent and yet admired Milton and Shakespeare and acknowledged England's literary and scientific eminence. "And, in return, England acknowledges their literary and scientific eminence, and admires those whom they consider their best poets and dramatists", said he. "It is a question of log-rolling." This same obstinate friend was of opinion that every victory of

England was due to fraud, and that all the improvements in England were effected with Indian money. With persons with such warped views it is difficult to argue, as they are not amenable to reason. They carry their prejudices through life without seeing any reason to modify them, and, indeed, strengthening them by constant asseveration which takes the place of proof with some minds. However, I had one victory over this friend. 'If England got all her victories by bribes, why did not her enemies try to bribe her generals and defeat her?' I asked. 'An English general will never betray his country' said he unguardedly. 'Is that not a thing to be proud of? Can you say as much of Indian generals?' I asked, and he acknowledged his defeat by silence.

I do not deny that part of England's greatness is undoubtedly due to her great military, naval and aerial strength. But these themselves are the result of certain qualities of her citizens which have little to do with fighting qualities proper. So it is that though the Indian is potentially as good a soldier, sailor or aviator as the Britisher he is still with all these qualities undeveloped. It is by no accident that nations become great. A physically formidable nation has certainly some good qualities like a physically strong individual though that does not mean that it is superior all along the line to the one it conquers. Thus, the barbarians who conquered the Roman Empire were simpler and sturdier peoples than the effeminate and demoralized Romans. The Huns, the Mongols, the Turks and the Mahrattas had all, in their conquering days, these virtues. With the English it is not these primitive virtues we find but some others more suited to these advanced days. If the Indian wants to understand why such a small country like England was able to conquer India, and is able to hold it with a small army, let him cast off all silly prejudices and preconceptions, and study the people of England and

their civic virtues practised in everyday life. My aim below is to describe some of the most outstanding of those qualities.

There is in England a public spirit the like of which is not to be seen in India. Several thousands of people render services of the most valuable nature every day honorarily. Many fire brigades are manned wholly by such workers. With a noble disregard of personal safety, these shop-keepers and others get up blazing houses and rescue hundreds of unlucky creatures who would have otherwise perished. In one case one of these volunteers had, in the course of the rescue of a baby from the second floor, got severely burnt, and was confined to bed for fifteen days. I asked him 'What are you paid for this job?' 'Nothing, it is honorary' said he. 'Then why do you do it?' I continued. 'Somebody must do it; else, the country will go to dogs', he replied. He was a petty retail shop-keeper who would, in the course of his trade, try to fleece his customer as much as he could, and yet he cared for his country's good, a thing which even trained idealistic social workers in India sometimes forget. In this country, public spirit is at so low an ebb among the ordinary people that recently a child of ten was drowned in a Madras tank in the presence of more than fifty adults none of whom tried to get into the tank and attempt a rescue. Contrast with this the heroic self-sacrifice found in such cases in England, and we at once get a measure of our degradation. It was not always so with us, and even now, when trained, our citizens do show that they are no whit behind any nation on earth. But, alas, there is no training in social service in our schools which are too busy with scoring passes to worry themselves with anything else. The self-sacrifice of our flood and famine volunteers and the brilliant record of our scouts show our inherent possibilities. If we are to rise to our full height we must get rid of caste prejudices and regard all as equal. At present it is

a shameful fact that if a depressed class man were lying on the road in a precarious condition few high caste people of the old school will render him any aid. This warp in the mind must go if Mother India is to take her rightful place among the nations.

Even where we see a desire to do honorary work in India it is often with an eye to fame or a title that the volunteer proffers his services, and not from pure philanthropic motives. He keeps a minute record of the good things he did, and the evil things which he could have done but did not do, and exhibits them periodically to every visitor and especially to government officials and newspaper correspondents. I know some most cultured and educated Indians who have got printed an exhaustive list of their good deeds and also the words of praise uttered in respect of them by government officials and national leaders. The modern Indian's avarice for testimonials, and his uncanny skill in getting them are something amazing. Prominent people in this country also attach little weight to their testimonials and freely grant them to all kinds of absurd and undeserving persons. In fact, whenever an Indian gentleman is unwilling to give a subscription or donation, he is requested by the mendicant at least to give a testimonial, and generally cheerfully gives, it, as the easiest way of getting freedom for himself and passing on the pest to others. Sometimes, a modern Indian will not scruple even to claim credit for an act he never did. A particularly bad instance was that of a cultured Indian who arranged with another to fall into five-foot water and then saved him and duly published this in a prominent daily.

In England the missionaries, the hospitals and schools collect enormous sums of money with the aid of honorary workers. We also in India have now begun to follow, though rumours of swallowings are common; but that is inevitable

while a system is in its infancy. A more serious evil is that the ordinary Indian does not care to see that the subscription is applied to the purpose for which it was given. So, some sums collected for public purposes find their way into unscrupulous men's pockets, and nobody worries, though several know. A minor evil is that some big people put down huge sums without the least intention of paying them, and, indeed, on that understanding. The subscription-hunter agrees to this trick in order to get good subscriptions from more honest people who will be sure to pay. These habits are fast disappearing with the rising into prominence of a new school of leaders.

Almost all the hospitals of England are maintained by public subscriptions. India had the first hospitals maintained by citizens. The great hospital at Pataliputra was wholly maintained from the contributions of the municipality and wealthy citizens, and was the first thing of its kind in the world. There is a beautiful tradition which says that the hospital even refused, with thanks, the princely aid offered by the Emperor Asoka on the score that, thanks to His Majesty's beneficent rule, the citizens were able to run the institution themselves, and, so, the money might be diverted to the purchase of medicines and drugs to be exported to the less fortunate neighbouring countries like Syria and Egypt. And so, it seems, was done. Well, things are far different in modern India. The cry is everywhere for government help. The rich rarely support hospitals or schools. Many of the biggest colleges and universities in England owe their existence to private munificence which, though equally abounding in Ancient India, dried up in later years and is only slowly reviving. Honorary philanthropic work among the poor and the sick and the degraded is largely left to Christian missionaries from

foreign countries although it is some satisfaction to see Indians gradually taking an increasing part in such work.

Englishmen exhibit their public spirit also in aiding the police in detecting crime. A certain Englishman arrested a miserable old hag who was stealing a withered cabbage from a big nursery owned by a wealthy man and handed her over to the nearest policeman and duly gave evidence against her. The wretch was fined twenty shillings and in default sentenced to undergo simple imprisonment for two weeks. Some persons in court took pity on the beggar and subscribed small sums towards the fine. The man who arrested her subscribed half a crown! When questioned as regards his apparently inconsistent conduct, his reply was 'I arrested her as a citizen, since she had committed theft, but I have also humane feelings, just the same as others, and, so, subscribed towards the fine. I see nothing inconsistent in my conduct.'

In India, people are most averse to discharging their elementary duties as citizens. I have known a highly educated man run away, after seeing the corpse of an unfortunate woman who had committed suicide, instead of giving information to the police, as he did not want to be dragged as a witness at the inquest. Many respectable men in India are so afraid of giving evidence against notorious depredators that they request the police not to cite them and even offer some bribe for this favour. Illicit exactions are constantly being paid by Indians of all classes from reluctance to create a row or file a complaint. At almost every ferry the charge levied from passers-by by the contractors and their agents are far more than the legal dues. In England this kind of blackmail cannot be practised though perhaps the tip system, which is universal, is a still worse form of blackmail albeit pretended to be a voluntary largesse. Public nuisances in India are enormous owing to the reluctance of the average Indian to proceed

against his neighbour in other than purely individual disputes. The horrible state of sanitation, even in our towns, is due to people allowing their neighbours to pollute their side of the drain, and taking the same liberties with their own side. The honorary justices and jurymen of England cannot be said to be altogether satisfactory, but ours are even worse though I have not yet heard of any Indian jury destroying the *corpus delicti* in court, as a recent American jury did by drinking up the incriminating liquor and then finding the delinquent not guilty.

A remarkable way in which the public spirit of Englishmen manifests itself is in the periodical searches for missing persons and rendering valuable assistance to the police in murder cases. It does one good to read that a fleet of cars scoured Dartmoor, or some other desolate region, free in order to trace out missing persons. When will such a thing be possible in India? Again almost undetectable murder cases have been detected, sometimes after years, owing to the co-operation of the citizens. All the clues and suspicions of the police, as are communicable, are published in all the newspapers, and those citizens who have any information at once get into touch with the police. Two sensational seacoast murders were detected thus. The many little acts of help which the citizens render one another are not the least among the manifestations of this public spirit.

Another sterling virtue of the Britisher is his respect for the law and trust in the courts. A striking instance within my own experience will show the great respect for law which the Britishers have. I was in the non-smoking compartment of a train about to start from Oxford for London. There was an English non-smoker also in the same compartment. Another Englishman got in and began to smoke. The English non-smoker objected. The other said 'Shut up, you are a crank.'

The non-smoker quoted the railway regulations. 'Damn the regulations!' said the other. A tussle ensued, the non-smoker trying to eject the smoker with as little force as was absolutely necessary, and the other resisting the ejection in an equally constitutional manner. Hearing the hubbub, a number of men with pipes and cigars in their mouths came from the neighbouring compartments, and, ascertaining the cause of the quarrel, pulled the smoker out. 'He is a crank' he cried out. 'So he is' said they 'but the law is with him, and the law must be obeyed.' The great respect of Englishmen for law courts and their implicit confidence in them was well illustrated during the trial of Bottomley. While the trial was on, he had thousands of supporters who believed in his innocence and hotly argued out the point with opponents. The day after his conviction all were equally convinced about his guilt. His former opponents said 'We always said so' and his former defenders merely said. 'We didn't think so. He was too deep for us.' Not a single person presumed to question the correctness of the judicial finding.

Perhaps, an even more striking instance is this: A certain English general was brutally murdered by two Sinn Feiners in the heart of London opposite his own house. The police and a howling mob soon reached the spot, and the policemen arrested the two murderers. The mob, which had witnessed the last stages of the murder, wanted to lynch the murderers; and the policemen, who were Englishmen and felt as much indignation as any among the mob, protected the murderers from mob violence though they got some minor injuries in the process. 'Why do you prevent us from doing justice on these murderers?' asked one of the mob. 'You know that they committed the murder, and they themselves have proudly confessed it.' 'All true' was the brief reply of a policeman. 'But the law requires that a court should be satis-

fied that these men committed this murder and should sentence them as it thinks fit, and the law must be obeyed.' Other instances of this confidence in the courts were two murder cases in which the courts awarded death sentences though the evidence was all circumstantial and, to the lay mind, far from convincing. Still, all the newspapers and citizens accepted the verdict without criticism, and their confidence was justified, for the accused in both the cases owned up their guilt just before hanging. I wish that a day would come in India when our public will have as implicit a faith in our courts, and our courts will become so able, impartial, fearless and honest as to merit it. The security of tenure of the English judges is largely responsible for their fearlessness and impartiality even where the Crown is a party.

Unity in crises is another great civic quality of the Britisher. In times of crises, when the country's honour or safety or prestige is at stake, all disputes are postponed for the time being and a united front is shown towards the foreigner. Thus, when Mustapha Kemal Pasha was threatening to fortify the Dardenelles, and close the straits, there were keen differences in the English press about the desirability of going to war for this. In the midst of this war of words, the Cabinet sent a stiff note to Kemal Pasha and despatched two squadrons from Aldershot to the Dardenelles. I was surprised to find in all the morning papers photos of the troops sent and leaders to the effect that, now that the nation had committed itself, all differences would cease till the crisis was over. As one Englishman told me 'Now our business is to defeat those damned Turks if they are unwise enough to force a war. After that, we shall see who was right in the discussion.' The consequence of this attitude was that Kemal Pasha wisely climbed down and the crisis was averted. In India such differences would have become acuter in the face of the crisis, and the

opponent would have scored. Till we have learnt this unity in crises we will not be able to conduct our own foreign policy. The first requisite for this is a passionate love of the motherland, as passionate a love as the Englishman has for England. It is sheer nonsense to adopt the League of Nations or any other association as a substitute for the motherland in our affections. Nationalism has its evils if carried to excess, but we can never be useful members of a league of nations unless we are first a united and homogeneous nation. Those who advise us not to think nationally, but only internationally, are not our friends. We must think nationally before we can think internationally. An Indian talking of internationalism now may make a cynic compare him to a beggar advocating communism. This love of our motherland must not be a mere verbal passion but must carry with it the readiness to sacrifice everything for her glory and the resolve never to betray her. All the children of the motherland must be equally loved, the demon of communalism being thoroughly exorcised. From the time of the infamous Ambhi till to-day there has not been any real nationalism or patriotism of this type. However, there are now signs of their coming. Once we become in reality a nation, there is no danger of our overlooking the claims of internationalism. No Indian can oppose the good of the world when that is not really opposed to India's just claims. I observed everywhere in England a tender love for the motherland, or the fatherland as the Englishmen like to call their charming land. This did not prevent some of England's most ardent lovers from taking a prominent part in the league of nations. The same policy will suit India.

A not less noteworthy characteristic of Britishers is their love of orderly progress and hatred of all revolution. This quality was clearly exhibited when the triple alliance of miners, railwaymen and transport workers threatened a strike, without

waiting for further arbitration and with intent to coerce the nation to accept the miners' demands. But the nation was determined not to be coerced. Volunteers enrolled in thousands to prevent riots and to attend to transport of coal, etc. This determined attitude made the railwaymen and transport workers back out, and only the miners struck. There was a prolonged strike by these brave men, but finally they were starved out. When the mine-owners wanted to take advantage of their defeat, and impose harsher terms on them than those offered at the beginning of the crisis, the nation insisted on the original terms being adhered to. This showed its sweet reasonableness which is essential for any country if it wants to prevent a revolution. During some other strikes, volunteers have transported coal, preserved order and attended to other vital needs of the nation. Even the bulk of British labourers are not for revolution, and have little sympathy for Bolshevism or a social revolution brought about by violence. If they believe in class war at all, which is doubtful, they believe in waging it with the sole aid of strictly constitutional weapons like the capture of parliament and the municipalities.

Another great asset of England now is the absolute freedom of her citizens from religious prejudices in matters political. In days gone by, Englishmen were far more intolerant than the Indians of to-day and with less justification as England had only sectarian differences and not such vast religious differences as exist between Hinduism and Islam. But now things have radically changed and, though here and there we may hear stray opinions against Papists and Jews, the nation at large worries little as to what religion a minister or official belongs and whether he has a religion at all. In fact, some of the most prominent officials in the British Empire recently, have been Jews, a tribe which was horribly persecuted for centuries by Englishmen. Now Englishmen only look to a

man's character, and not his religion. So, there is not the slightest danger of the followers of any religion siding with national enemies. In India we are still having bitter religious hatreds. We may well take a lesson from England in this matter:

The thirst for knowledge and the desire to utilize it for the country's benefit is another predominant trait which should not be overlooked. Englishmen realize that the moment they become intellectually stagnant their greatness will be a thing of the past. So, learning and research are encouraged both by the State and by private citizens. In experiments the Englishman is careless of loss of money or even life. He will envisage the wreck of costly aeroplanes and submarines with a cheerfulness which the Indian, who claims to be less material, cannot muster. Unless we also acquire this generous disregard of life and wealth we will never discover anything great. It has been well said that every brick in the palace of liberty is cemented with human blood. The discoveries of radium have caused mutilation and death to many noble souls: aviation has also levied its heavy toll; and millions have had to sacrifice their lives for securing social, economic, political and intellectual liberty. There is compulsory education in England up to a certain standard, and advanced and specialized education in all branches exist for those who need them. The health of the students is cared for by expert doctors who examine them periodically and send the results of the examinations to the parents who are bound to get the diseases, if any, treated. Model suburbs are laid out under the supervision of experts, and beautiful parks created to serve as lungs for the great cities. Committees are appointed from time to time to report on such diseases as venereal disease, their extent, causes, and methods of prevention and cure. Commissions are appointed to consider the best methods of increasing trade

and manufactures and encouraging home industries, and most people buy home-made goods in preference to cheaper and equally good foreign articles without however loudly tom-toming their intention to do so as Indians are doing. From the far outposts of the empire the Englishman sends his orders, even for clothes, to English firms, and though the slogan 'British goods are best' has been diplomatically withdrawn from post office seals it is enshrined in the hearts of Englishmen who constantly act on it and preach it in season and out of season to their non-British neighbours. Above all, experts go into the working of educational institutions from time to time and suggest valuable changes. The citizens take a lively interest in all these reports and daily grow more and more educated, prosperous and powerful. They take a pride in their empire and by their civic virtues ensure its safety. Thus, if England is mighty and powerful it is because of the strong civic virtues of her citizens. If these disappear, which is most unlikely, that day will disappear her fighting strength as well as political power. In a word, England's power rests not on her soldiers or aviators, or even sailors, but on her citizens.

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## CHAPTER XXV

### WHAT INDIA SHOULD LEARN FROM THE WEST AND WHAT IT SHOULD TEACH IT

**H**AS the West any lessons to teach India? Does it need any lessons from India? Can we learn anything of value from westerners, can they learn anything of value from us? These are questions worthy of being answered at the end of a book like this, though the answers are bound to be imperfect. For all practical purposes, India may be taken as a typical representative of the East, and England as a typical representative of the West.

Some westerners have told us from time to time what we have to learn from them. These include honesty, brotherliness, morality in sexual relations, real religion as opposed to superstition, learning in the arts and sciences, courage, physical, mental and moral, kindness towards all living creatures, the dignity of labour, a robust optimism and a will to reform the world. Let us examine these claims dispassionately.

No one can seriously hold that the West can teach honesty to the East. The village servants in India, who are paid ten shillings six pence per month and get no pension, are entrusted with hundreds of pounds of government money for being transported across wild jungles to the government treasuries, and rarely is there a case of defalcation. So too, the equally miserably paid postal runners and postmen are entrusted every day with hundreds of rupees worth of Money Orders and Value Payable Parcels and discharge their trust with an honesty which has excited the admiration and wonder of many an English official. I do not think that any western

country can beat this record of some of India's poorest and most illiterate children. This honesty did not begin with the British rule. The British only utilized the system they found before them. No doubt, I may be told that western commercial honesty is greater. It is not greater in all western countries. It is certainly greater now in England and Germany if we regard relatively fixed prices and same quality as tests. But if we are to take into account the monstrous swindles perpetrated on the public in western countries, including England and Germany, such swindles as are caricatured in Tono Bungay, we shall hesitate before praising the honesty of western firms. Add to this the fact that even in England there are sometimes different prices for different customers, and that in France and Italy merchants are as unscrupulous as in India, and we can but agree with the Sanskrit poet who said that a merchant must tell a lie if he is to amass wealth. Is there any country in the world where merchants don't utter lies for selling their wares? What are most advertisements but shameless lies in black and white? If English and German merchants have recently learnt to make goods correspond to sample and to charge each class of customers much the same price it is only intelligent self-interest which makes them do so and not any passion for honesty.

The atrocious lies indulged in by western diplomatists are additional proofs that the West is not exactly fitted to teach anybody honesty. Lies are so common in diplomacy that a *dementi*, though it denotes the same as denial or contradiction, connotes that no more credence need be given to it than is usually given to the "honest men sent to lie abroad for the good of their country", to quote the learned authors of the King's English. If further proof were wanted to show the colossal unfitness of the would-be teacher of honesty, the horrible campaigns of lies spread by both parties in the Great

War should be enough. Indeed, when I was in England, a learned and pious gentleman was writing in the papers on the value and necessity of white lies for the peace and well-being of humanity, and did succeed in proving his point to some extent. If you are tired of attending on your sick wife who is ailing for several months and if she were to tell you 'Darling, I am causing you endless trouble', surely it is more gracious and proper to utter a white lie 'It is no trouble at all for me, dearest; it gives me endless joy to be near you and able to nurse you' and bring a joyous smile on the wan lips, than to say the brutal truth 'Yes, you are causing me the hell of a trouble; I wish you would get better or die'. So too, if you accidentally trod on your neighbour's fat toe, and took a devilish delight in it, still, for the sake of peace, it is much better to say 'Oh, I am awfully sorry' than to blurt out the truth 'I am devilish glad I did it,' and it would be better also for your neighbour, though he suspects your secret delight, to reply to your white lie by another white lie 'Oh, it doesn't matter' than to speak the truth and say 'You rascal, you gloat over it: come, let me punch your head'. Still, when all is said, a nation which preaches the necessity for white lies is not the best conceivable teacher of honesty.

The very western proverb 'Honesty is the best policy' would seem to show that it is policy rather than principle which makes western merchants follow honesty. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not pretend that India or any other country is superior to western countries in honesty or can teach them honesty. My point is simply that they are in no way better than we, in this very important matter, and cannot teach us. All the talk of a westerner's word being as good as his bond, and cheap gibes at eastern perfidy, are mere exercises in rhetoric which ought to deceive no one. The only serious argument which an Englishman can bring is the

comparative absence of corruption in England now and its comparative presence in modern India. I must candidly admit that there is less corruption in the inferior public service, and especially the constabulary, in England than in the same cadres in India. The greatest reason for this is the ridiculously low pay of these people in India. The London constable gets more than fifteen times the pay of his Indian brother; even allowing for the difference in the value of money and the cost of living, this means that he is getting about three times the pay. If we give three times the present pay, and enforce discipline, we can get educated men of character who will stand comparison with the London constables. So too with low-paid clerks and other inferior servants.

Given the same level of pay, I do not think that the Indian will be behind any other race in honesty. The spoils system of America and its periodical prodigies of corruption are unknown to India. I must also add that inferior government servants in France and Italy appear to be no better than their confreres in this country. The peons of India, with their demand for *baksheesh*, are fully rivalled by their western cousins with their insatiable demand for tips. Some of my friends have asked me whether titles and army officerships are not buyable in England. What I heard in England seemed to show that the latter practice is rare after the war of 1914, but that the former is still flourishing. One ingenious English friend said to me 'I admit that these corruptions do exist, but I must give some explanation for their existence. We believe in the party system, and parties require money. When fools are willing to pay for titles enormous sums, why should honest men be pestered? That seems to be the logic. Not one farthing out of the sums paid goes into private pockets; strict accounts are kept, and are open for inspection not only by the members of the Cabinet but also by the leader of the

opposition. So it is not exactly private corruption. The selling of commissions, when that nefarious practice went on, had also an explanation. Army officers have, as you know, to spend far more than what they get as pay. So the sum demanded as price was a kind of guarantee of the man's means. Besides, it was always spent in a banquet given to the regiment in honour of his appointment. Therein it resembled the entrance fee demanded from a freemason. Mind you, I am not justifying these corruptions; I am only explaining them.'

Brotherliness is a virtue practised by western nations only among their own nationals, and so is not the real quality at all. A Christ or a Buddha embracing the whole of humanity as brethren has not yet come from the West. But inside the nation there is more fraternity than in caste and creed-ridden India. And this is rapidly increasing as a direct result of "Total War"

Moderation and morality in sexual relations is a virtue which some westerners profess they can teach us. They charge our country with being steeped in sexual indulgence. It is a queer thing to say of the land which preached *Brahmacharya* but is, alas, not wholly untrue. To see our indigenous doctors spending precious lives in devising medicines to increase lust, our newspapers devoting long columns of advertisement to all kinds of aphrodisiacs, our public men giving certificates of merit to such diabolical traffickers in lust, and our book-sellers stocking and selling all kinds of obscene publications, and, worst of all, our temples portraying on their walls most indecent sculptures will make any Indian bend down his head with shame at the sad fall of our country from total abstinence to sensuality. But that is not saying that the West is better. If the westerner is not so vociferous it is because he is satiated with sex. Dancing and other institutions satisfy to some extent his craving for sex which does not therefore

break out into an 'orgy like the suppressed passion of the Indian. After seeing sea-side life in England and the pleasure-resorts of France and Germany, and considering the social life there in 1914-18, I am by no means satisfied that the West is less steeped in sensuality than the East though it hides its deeds. I found some horrible aphrodisiacs advertised in some western papers also; only, they were called tonics or pick-me-ups. The average English husband is not more faithful than his Indian brother, while the average Indian wife will have a slight superiority in this respect over her English sister though this may be, and perhaps justly, attributed to her lesser freedom and correspondingly lesser opportunity to go astray. The organized prostitution of Paris is every whit as reprehensible as the *Devadasi* system in India. Both are abominations which must stink in every honest man's nostrils. The clandestine prostitution in some other western countries is equally odious. And, what have the westerners done to wean India from sensuality? Nothing except abuse the Indians and add their own quota to the immorality in the country! I am convinced that the West cannot teach India *Brahmacharya* or even sexual moderation. For that we must go to the teachings of our forefathers.

Real religion, as opposed to superstition, is also a thing beyond the power of the West to teach us. It is impossible to prove that Christianity is less superstitious or more sublime than Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam though, of course, it is capable of indefinite assertion and broadcasting. But the West has not got even the original Christianity of Christ who, be it remembered, was an easterner to his marrow. It has accepted the Gospels without the Sermon on the Mount. The most tortuous meanings are sought to be put on simple words, in a desperate attempt to evade following their spirit. Thus, 'Leave everything and follow me' is said by some westerners.

to be an exhortation to dying men! So too, a man is said to be bound to turn the other cheek also to the smiter only if he had already smitten on one, and, therefore, violence even to the extent of shooting him dead is permissible in order to prevent him from smiting on one cheek! The same argument is used as regards the famous advice to give the cloak also. Perhaps enough has been said to show the West's utter incapacity to teach the East real religion.

In the matter of arts and sciences, however, India has a very great deal to learn from the West. India has slept a long sleep of centuries, and has, in the course of it, lost that supremacy in the arts and sciences which at one time was hers. Now she must eat the humble pie and learn reverently at the feet of her former disciples. She need feel no sense of false shame, as knowledge is not one nation's property and she has given enough to the world in days past not to be ashamed to ask for some now. We are woefully behind-hand in the arts and sciences though the old skill of hand and agility of mind have, fortunately, not left us. A single Tagore or Bose or Ramanujam or Raman for a vast country like ours is only a confession of intellectual bankruptcy. We ought to be heartily ashamed of our intellectual lethargy in these degenerate days. We have many thousands of lawyers, some of them among the ablest in the world, and yet not a single satisfactory book on Hindu Jurisprudence has been written, though the Hindu Law-givers and jurists were as able as the best Roman jurists, and their laws have governed hundreds of millions of people for the last three thousand years and more, whereas Roman Law, in its proudest days, governed only forty millions, and has ceased to govern any for the last so many centuries. Cases and rulings are printed in many hackneyed text-books and compendiums to which lawyers are not ashamed to put their names, but a respectable treatise on the growth

of Hindu jurisprudence and the basic principles underlying it, by an Indian, is still to come. The same thing applies to the doctors of the western type. Research into ancient Indian medicine is neglected by them. There are some famous physicians and surgeons among them, but not one has discovered a single new operation or new mode of treating a disease or a cure for a hitherto incurable disease. 'We are a nation of meat-eaters and so prescribe beef-tea and chicken broth and panopepton. We are a nation of drinkers and so prescribe whisky and brandy. I can't see why you, who are vegetarians and water-drinkers, should not have other equally effective substitutes discovered for you by your doctors', said an eminent English doctor to me, and the remarks were as just as they were correct. Our professors and scholars too must share the blame. There is not a single satisfactory book on the whole of Indian history written by an Indian. The same remarks apply to astronomy, chemistry, geography and other sciences. We have to bestir ourselves if we are to catch up the western nations. Fortunately for us, our national awakening has also stimulated researches into our ancient lore. England, France, Italy, Germany and the U. S. A. are the countries from whom we can get the best aid in the acquisition of the most advanced arts and sciences.

I do not, for a moment, mean by the foregoing that India is innately lacking in originality or invention or that her history is one long record of failure, as our western brethren are only too anxious to impress on us. We had our periods of great geniuses; no nation had longer periods or greater geniuses. Charaka and Susruta in medicine; Parasaramuni, Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta in astronomy; Chanakya and Sukracharya in politics and economics; Panini and Patanjali in grammar; Manu, Yagnavalkya, Apastamba, Narada, Jimutavahana and Vijnaneswara in law;

Jayadeva, Haridas Swami and Tansen in music ; Bhaskaracharya and Lilavathi in mathematics ; Sri Krishna, Mahavira, Buddha, Kapila, Asvaghosha and Sankara, Ramanuja and Maduva in philosophy ; Valmiki, Vyasa, Kalidasa, Bhasa, Bhavabhuti, Tiruvalluvar and Tulsidas in literature ; Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka, Samudragupta, Harsha, Akbar and Sivaji among great warriors and rulers ; these are a few given to the world by Mother India, and he will be a bold man who can dare assert that any country can beat this record. To assert of a land that gave to the world these geniuses in addition to the wheel, the cow and the zero, let alone rice, sugar, chess, and sapphire, that it is barren in originality is as ridiculous as to assert of a lady with seven children that she is sterile simply because during the last two years she has not delivered a child, or of an apple tree that it is barren because it did not give fruits in the last season, or of the ocean that it has ceased to produce high waves because many high waves have fallen and a temporary calm has ensued. A period of rest and recuperation is essential to nations, as to individuals, after strenuous work. Even a period of apparent retardation of civilization, like the falling of a wave to facilitate the formation of another, is sometimes necessary to renew the lost vitality. Some nations which have not mastered this secret of life have gone under, like Assyria, Babylon, Carthage, Egypt, Greece and Rome. India, which was old in their days, is young to-day when all of them are dead and gone, and new countries, which were unknown to civilization then, like England and France, are growing old, because the secret of life is known to her and she has followed it. To the cheap gibes of westerners, Indians can afford to reply 'We were when you were not, we shall be when you have ceased to be'. It will be most fatal for the future of our nation if our children were to be taught that we

are an inferior race. The inferiority complex so implanted will be as pernicious as it has been with the depressed classes. Let our teachers beware of instilling such subtle poison into young minds. Let them, while admitting India's poor output in the last two centuries, explain to them our glorious achievements in the past and incite them to emulation. I do not want them to teach that we are superior to other races, but they should also never teach that we are intrinsically inferior to any race on earth.

Courage, physical, mental and moral, is a thing which the West can teach us in these days of our degeneracy. At present half the population of India is devoid of physical courage, and cloaks its cowardice under the noble garb of *Ahimsa* or Non-Violence. Non-Violence, as preached and practised by its apostle, is capable of representing the very highest form of physical, mental and moral courage, but in the hands of lesser men easily becomes a synonym for cowardice. *Ahimsa* is, strictly speaking, something different from Non-Violence as it prohibits only unjustifiable violence and permits the use of justifiable violence whereas Non-Violence prohibits the use of violence, on any occasion. In India, at present, the majority of the Hindus have become effeminate and cowardly by long centuries of conquest and non-military life, though even they have the stuff in them to become excellent soldiers, given the requisite training. They can endure starvation for long, and have got good mathematical brains so useful in the artillery and in the air. Machine guns and bombs are no respecters of muscles, and correct aim is far more important with the modern soldier than an athletic body. An Indian sitting in his plane high up in the air can drop bombs with as much precision as any other man on earth. So, even the unmuscular Indians of the plains can be made excellent soldiers if they are trained. Their cowardice can only be

overcome by conscription. In countries similarly situated, that has been found to be the only way. Of course, there are the martial races, the Sikhs, the Pathans, the Rajputs, the Gurkhas and the Mahrattas, but no country will be safe in these days if its citizens do not all take part in national defence. We do not want the above martial races to dominate over the rest; as will be the case if they alone take part in the national defence.

The average educated Indian has little physical courage, though things are improving. In England there is more physical courage. If an Englishman sees a burglar or rowdy committing a crime he is almost sure to go to the help of the victim. An average educated Indian is almost sure to seek his own ignoble safety. There is a Tamil proverb which asks good men to run away from the wicked, and the Indian is only too glad to follow such excellent advice so entirely in accordance with his own inner promptings. Many of us have to develop the courage to go to the aid of the oppressed, regardless of consequences, for death is far preferable to safety bought by cowardice. In the Oxford University, thousands went to the front as volunteers long before conscription was enforced. Such a thing cannot be thought of in Madras. War may be a horrible thing, but it does bring out the stuff in a man. Let us not scorn all the military virtues. Some of them are essential for a nation's prosperity. Life is a continuous war against disease and death. The fighting spirit and the resolve never to go under are very valuable qualities highly useful even for securing the victories of peace. All our boys must be taught physical courage. Strange as it may seem, it is teachable and implantable, and need not necessarily be born with the individual though it will be all the better if it were a quality inherited at birth. The Nepalese have a proverb: The Gurkha is born a soldier; the Gurung is made a soldier.

In the same way we southerners may strive to have, and justify, a proverb 'The Mahratta is born a soldier; the Madrasi is made a soldier.' So much for physical courage.

Mental and moral courage is even more deplorably lacking in our land now. Many a Hindu performs numerous ceremonies without the least belief in them, and merely from fear of the public. Guests, invited and uninvited, stay on in the family, eating up the substance, and the Indian householder, while intensely disliking their stay and making semi-audible remarks behind their back, will never ask them to go away before he is ruined. Many respectable men allow worthless fellows to waste their precious time by insensate gossip which they have no desire to hear, simply owing to lack of moral courage to ask them to clear out. Countless estimable persons give charity to valiant beggars simply because neighbours are looking on and they might be mistaken to be uncharitable persons if they did not give something. Instances can be multiplied. A critical spirit is the result of mental and moral courage, and, it is, no wonder that it is absent in the absence of those qualities. In the realm of physical, mental and moral courage, the West has still a great deal to teach us.

Kindness towards all living creatures is an ancient eastern doctrine originally alien to the West but borrowed and improved on by it during the last fifty years. Theoretically, we are still superior, in the greater perfection of our ideals, though it is very hard to say whether our unthinking, heartless cruelty towards the dumb animals or the deliberate killing of vast numbers of such animals for food in the western countries is worse. As our cruelty embraces only the domestic animals, and theirs all, we are perhaps not the worse. In any event, no case is made out for the West to act as teacher of kindness towards animals, any more than cannibals rearing up babies with meticulous care only to swallow them up as soon as they are fat and plump can.

be regarded as teachers of baby welfare. There are, however, a few individual men in the West who love the dumb creation as passionately as any Indian saint and whose knowledge enables them to minister to their needs better.

India has much to learn from the West in the matter of dignity of labour. The ancient Hindus regarded certain occupations like scavenging, meat-selling, leather-working, shaving and funeral-ground-watching as most degrading for any caste Hindu, but allotted these to certain outcastes. All except the second are highly useful and not at all immoral. Still, a high caste Hindu will rather be an unproductive lawyer, or even a thief or cheat, than take to these professions. The educated members of even the depressed classes are unwilling to follow these ancestral trades, and ape their high-caste brethren in flocking to the unproductive professions. In England there is at present no such reluctance, though shaving and scavenging are not regarded, even there, as dignified occupations. In this country the prejudice is so great even now that I once saw a whole village of caste Hindus suffer the reeking smell of a decomposed body of a buffalo for three days because the local scavenger-caste man had some grudge against the village and would not turn up, though no less than twenty messengers had gone for him, and none of the villagers would stoop to carry the carcass. Finally, some students were induced to remove and bury it. This last act is a sign of returning health. An even more ludicrous instance of this prejudice I met with in a Hindu student in England. He was a nice fellow, and we became acquainted with each other. I asked him what course he was studying for. He coloured and said 'Mr. Ayyar, I am ashamed to say that I committed a terrible mistake. Pray don't press the question.' Finally, I ascertained from him, with great difficulty, that he was learning to make sanitary pots, commodes and the like! From

his shame and confusion one would have thought that he was learning thieving or brothel-keeping. When I mentioned this to him, he laughed and said 'Both those professions are more respectable in our country than scavenging,' and I had to painfully acknowledge that he was right. We have still to learn the dignity of all kinds of honest labour.

The West is, on the whole, robustly optimistic whereas our country is characterized by devitalizing pessimism. We realize the powerlessness of man in the hands of Nature and God, and the utter insignificance of this life compared with the life beyond, and the result is a despair of improving the world and a concentration on the hereafter, and death which is its gate. This realization may produce sublime results in some exceptionally great and powerful minds. But the effect on the ordinary man is most devitalizing. He has not the ability to concentrate on the hereafter or the courage to face death. Yet he has grasped the futility of this life and its strivings only too well. So, he strives neither for this world nor for the next, and drags on a useless existence, with no elevating ideals and full of vicious pleasures which are sure to suggest themselves to an idle brain devoid of ideals. In this path of senseless sensuality, he is encouraged by the thought that even his best efforts could not have carried him far, that the virtues and vices of this petty world matter little to the lord of the countless worlds, and that, after all, what he does must have been laid down by Fate, and, so, would have, in any case, happened. This ridiculous and baneful attitude towards life is not a result of Hindu religious teaching but is brought about by astrology and fatalism. The Hindu theory of Karma does not justify this attitude, as it expressly enjoins on its followers the doing of virtuous actions in order to wipe out the evil deeds in previous births. The *Bhagavad Gita*, than which there is no higher authority in Hindu theology, exhorts man not to pass his days in inglorious

inaction but to do one's duty without caring for fruit and regardless of victory or defeat, gain or loss, praise or blame, for the good of the world. A nobler gospel of service to mankind has never been taught. And, yet, poor Mother India, which was the first to receive it, has now to relearn it from others.

I can conceive of no more useless art than astrology. I consider it as the nearest approximation to pure humbug among all the arts known to man. Even if we concede, for argument's sake, that it can predict the future correctly, the pretentious claim that to be forewarned is to be forearmed is simply unsustainable, since, if all things have been so unalterably and immutably ordained as to be foretold long in advance, it is obvious that none of our efforts will ever be of the slightest use, as the ordained will always happen. So, the only result of such forewarning will be to elate or depress people, as happy or unhappy events are foretold, and to make them cease to strive either to bring about success or to avert defeat, taking refuge in an inglorious inaction and acceptance of things as they come. Many Hindu and Muhammadan monarchs have fallen victims to cunning astrologers, and have lost their kingdoms without even a manly fight because some man foretold their defeat and downfall. I must add that a belief in Fate, correctly understood, does not cause this degeneracy if only with it is combined the healthy belief that the divine will of futurity, which determines events, cannot be sounded with human ropes, especially the ridiculously short and twisted ropes of astrologers. I do not believe in that facile optimism which pervades the West, nor do I believe in that depressing and unidealistic pessimism that prevails in modern India. I believe in the reasoned and philosophic pessimism of the Buddha with its appeal to social service. Hence, here also, it is our ancients rather than our western brothers who have to teach us, though, undoubtedly, an observation of western social workers will be a practical example of the teaching of our ancestors.

Now, we come to the question as to what, if anything, India can teach the West. Westerners will pretend that there is nothing of value that we can teach them except it be negative lessons such as are afforded by our diseases like elephantiasis which give scope for medical research and our social institutions, like caste, which may warn them as to what will befall a great nation if it gets itself enmeshed in such a net. Indians will, no doubt, pretend that we have to teach the West almost everything beginning with astrology and ending with *Varnasramadharmā*.<sup>1</sup> Our conceit is only equalled by our appalling ignorance. The West does not need either the doubtful benefit of *Varnasramadharmā* or the real curse of astrology. But there is one thing which India can teach the West in all humility in return for the several lessons received by her. And that is the ancient teaching of her sages that the whole universe is pervaded by Him Who is the One in the All and the All in the One, Who is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the Universe, that all things here below are manifestations of His, and that all our acts should be dedicated to Him in the spirit of sacrifice and dictated solely by duty, uncaring of fruit and regardless of gain or loss, victory or defeat, honour or dishonour, and calculated to bring benefit for the whole world and not merely for a petty country at the expense of others. Let us teach the world the sublime truths that the foundation of the universe is *Dharma*,<sup>2</sup> that he who upholds *Dharma* will be upheld by it, and he who tries to destroy it will be destroyed by it, that the same God is in all, and that the bodies are given to us for serving all created things. Let us wean our western brethren from their exaggerated belief in the might of man unaided by God, and the importance of this world and its concerns. Let us

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1. Vocation according to inborn abilities which are, for all practical purposes, judged by the caste in which a man is born.

2. "Eternal Righteousness."

teach them that this world is no bigger in the universe, than an ant-hill is in this world, that men are in the scheme of the universe perhaps not more important than ants are in the scheme of this world, and that therefore while we should, even as ants do, do our daily routine duty with zest we must concentrate our main attention on the hereafter and do acts of duty guided by Knowledge which, in turn, is guided by Faith and thus gain freedom from life and death.

Before we can teach this sublime lesson, we must learn many lessons from the West and our own glorious past and purify ourselves. Furthermore, we must think of the most stirring personalities in our cultural history, of Savitri who crossed the edge of the beyond in a determined attempt to get back her dead husband to life; of Sita, the model of chastity and patience and forgiveness; of Rama who refused to fight unoffending kings, and gave up the glory of performing a Rajasuya; of Krishna who taught the most soul-stirring truths of philosophy on a battle-field; of Gautama who gave up crown, parents, wife and child for serving mankind; of Asoka who sheathed his sword after a brilliant victory and swore to war no more, and dedicated all his life to the service of suffering humanity; of Sibi who was prepared to give his life for rendering justice to an eagle; of Punna who sacrificed her child on the altar of loyalty; of Meera who, by her infinite faith, saw God face to face; of Kabir who realized the One in the All and the All in the One; and of Ramakrishna who swept the closet of a scavenger. Purified by such thoughts, we must, if we can, approach poor suffering Mother India, her forehead furrowed with a thousand sorrows, her body half-starved and gashed with a hundred wounds, mostly inflicted by her own children, her feet sore with centuries of walking on thorns, her breasts shrivelled by constant mal-nourishment, her brain stagnant as a result of inadequate circulation of the blood, her mind

giddy with weakness, her face pale and anaemic, her lips parched with thirst, her cheeks wrinkled and bloodless, her eyes full of tears, shame and terror, her clothes dirty rags scarcely covering her nudity, her arms mere skin and bone, clutching to her bosom millions of tiny girl widows, Devadasis, untouchables, baby mothers and beggars, the products of her more powerful children's injustice, her skin covered with itches, her stomach aching for food, and her heart filled with black despair. This hag is Mother India, and her present state is the direct result of her children's crimes and neglect. Do not draw back from her if you are her child and have sucked her breasts. Answer her appealing look, approach her tenderly, kiss those warm bloodless cheeks of hers, nourish her well, cease inflicting wounds on her, protect her from her enemies with the last drop of your blood, take the thorns from her feet and make her path smooth hereafter, dress her in seeming raiments, remove the black despair from her heart, by taking charge of the wretches she huddles and treating them affectionately, and you shall be rewarded by a contented smile from your mother, no longer a hag now but transformed into the gracious, beautiful, fearless, world-respected lady of old by your moral reformation. It will be no joke, this moral reformation.

It will require all the courage, ability, tact, perseverance, faith, charity, patience and love that you can command. You will have to overcome the apathy of centuries, fight tyrants, defy society, be prepared for ostracism, assaults, prison and death, and, what may be even more painful, the ingratitude of those for whom you have dedicated your life. Often, all your efforts will seem to have been wasted, and your life will unfold itself before you as one long record of dismal failure. Your fate will be that of your great countryman Bhishma. Like him you will have to fight, refuse to acknowledge defeat, and lie on a bed of arrows, wounded by your own kinsmen and countrymen, waiting for the *Uttarayanam* which never seems to come. At times the battle will seem to be lost and all further fighting appear useless. But, remembering the glorious lesson of the Bhagavad Gita, you should go on doing your duty, unattached, caring not for fruit, and unmindful of gain or loss, victory or defeat, honour or dishonour, pleasure.

or pain, till the goal is reached. Till Indians do this and recover their souls, they will not be fit to teach the West the sublime lesson of their sages. Will they respond to the call? I feel in my heart of hearts they will. Nay, they have already begun to do so. At the call of her twin leaders, Tagore and Gandhi, hailed by Romain Rolland as the Indus and Ganges of India's Renaissance, lighted by the cocoanut fibre torch of the one and the khaddar-yarn torch of the other, Mother India is once more on the march, from the darkness of the Midnight to the Sunrise of the Morning, from her ostrich-like isolation in her corner to the Grand Re-union in the world's Hall of Real Verities. Let us not forget that both the torches of our leaders have been re-lighted in the West, though taken from India's store-house, and that, in their turn, they are giving light to Westerners who have lost their way in the path of life for the time being and are engaged in fratricidal strife. Thus it is always, give and take, take and give, help and be helped, brother calling to brother in time of need, each country on the top of the wheel of culture for a time till the wheel moves on and it goes to the bottom, with a chance of coming to the top once more in its turn.



THE END

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## TRANSLATIONS.

## I. Tamil.

No.		Rs.	A.
1.	<i>Baladitya</i> . C. Coomarasawmy Naidu & Sons, Madras. ..	2	8
2.	<i>Sita's Choice</i> ( <i>Seethavin Swayamvaram</i> ). C. Coomarasawmy Naidu & Sons, Madras ..	0	6
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4.	<i>Brahma's Way</i> ( <i>Vithiyin Koor</i> ). C. Coomara- sawmy Naidu & Sons, Madras ..	0	6
5.	<i>A Mother's Sacrifice</i> ( <i>Thayin Thyagabuddhi</i> ). C. Coomarasawmy Naidu & Sons, Madras ..	0	6
6.	<i>Three Men of Destiny</i> ( <i>Mupperuveerar</i> ). Kalaimagal Press, Madras ..	2	0
7.	<i>Three Famous Tales</i> . G. V. K. Swamy & Co., Kumbakonam ..	0	12
8.	<i>Pazhia Neeti Kathaigal</i> . do. ..	1	4
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10.	<i>Vithiyin Seyal</i> . Kalaimagal Press, Madras ..	0	6
11.	<i>Kovalan and Kannaki</i> . P. Varadachari & Co. ..	0	12
12.	<i>In the Clutch of the Devil</i> . C. Coomarasawmy Naidu & Sons, Madras ..	0	10
13.	<i>Tamil Pathantram</i> . C. Coomarasawmy Naidu & Sons, Madras ..	2	8
14.	<i>An Indian in Western Europe</i> . G. V. K. Swamy & Co., Kumbakonam ..	4	0

## II. Telugu.

No.		Rs.	A.
1.	<i>Baladitya</i> . V. Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Madras ..	2	0
2.	<i>Sita's Choice and other plays (Seethapendli etc.)</i> V. Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Madras ..	0	12
3.	<i>A Mother's Sacrifice (Ratnaprabha)</i> . V. Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Madras ..	0	6
4.	<i>Kovalan and Kannaki</i> . V. Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Madras ..	0	12
5.	<i>Three Men of Destiny</i> . V. Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Madras ..	1	8

## III. Malayalam.

1.	<i>Baladitya</i> . Sri Rama Vilasam Book Depot, Quilon.	1	0
2.	<i>Indian After-Dinner Stories (Satkathasagaram)</i> . Sri Rama Vilasam Book Depot, Quilon ..	1	8
3.	<i>Panchatantra and Hitopadesa Stories (Bharatheeyarute Cheru Kathaigal)</i> . Sri Rama Vilasam Book Depot, Quilon ..	0	12
4.	<i>An Indian in Western Europe (Paschima Yooroppil orubharatheeyante paryatanam)</i> . Sri Rama Vilasam Book Depot, Quilon ..	1	8
5.	<i>In the Clutch of the Devil (Pisachinte pitiyil)</i> . Sri Rama Vilasam Book Depot, Quilon ..	0	12

## IV. Kanarese.

1.	<i>Baladitya</i> . Students' Stationery Depot, Board High School, Kasergode, S. Kanara Dt. ..	0	14
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