

SOUTH INDIAN CELEBRITIES

VOL. II

SKETCHES

BY

K. M. BALASUBRAMANIAM

WITH

A FOREWORD

BY

Dewan Bahadur K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

Retired District Judge

1939

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DEDICATED IN DEVOTION

TO

MY REVERED FATHER-IN-LAW

RAO BAHADUR

CAPT. S. K. PILLAI

L.M.S., L.R.C.P. & S. (Edin.), L.R.F.P. & S. (Glas.)

RETIRED PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE
SURGEON-GENERAL, MADRAS.

"The secret consciousness
Of duty well performed ; the public voice
Of praise that honours virtue, and rewards it ;
All are yours."

—FRANÇOIS.

PREFACE

FOUR years and more have fled by since the humble author of this book "greeted the public with the garnered fruits of his first harvest". As I pointed out even then, the inspiration for that book emanated from A. G. Gardiner. The itching for sketch-writing is an infection that was raging in the literary world for some time and more than a youth was caught up by it. And I was one among them. It has well been said that the "fortune of a book depends upon the opinion of the reader". And the fortune that attended my first book was at once favourable and flattering. It was not the coins but the compliments of my patron—the reading public, that I coveted and I was not disappointed. The Press on the whole was kind; it did not at any rate impale me. And one must be thankful for small mercies and I thank the Fourth Estate for that. The opinion of the average reader—that all-powerful literary tribunal—was one of approbation and pleasure. And when my book had elicited the "admiration" of no less a person than the Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, I sincerely felt that I had not written in vain. "To have pleased the great is no small a praise."

Thus encouraged by a kind and discerning public, I once again appear before it with yet another harvest of my pen. Indeed this volume is long over-due and for the delay in its publication I owe the readers an apology. The book was completed in 1937 and the manuscript was lying idle due to my own political activity. The sketches were given their final touches and brought up to date as they want to Press just now. The present

volume treats about eight other celebrities. "The proper study of mankind is man" and I delight in the study of man's character and in sketching it for the public. "Judge not others lest thou should be judged" is a Biblical commandment that is good and operative in its own way and in its place. But people in the kingdom of politics and pure literature are plainly exempt from its jurisdiction. The very essence and soul of public life consist in candid criticism, only there should be no malice in it.

I have attempted in this volume, as indeed I did in its predecessor, to hold "the mirror up to nature." It is Chamfort, the great French writer, who defines 'celebrity' as "the honour of being known to those who do not know you". I do not know if this cynically enigmatic definition should suit the subjects of my study. But my sincere and strongest endeavour in this work has been to draw pictures of these great actors on the stage of public life as accurately as I possibly can. Complete detachment and holding the scales without swerving by a hair's breadth are easier professed than practised. And I do not, indeed, dare not make any such pretension. One stroke here might be a little severer, one touch there might be a trifle bolder and the picture might be here and there a little overdrawn in consequence. And such features in the portraits are but incidental almost inherent in the art. "To decipher the man and his nature" is the hardest of human endeavours; it is mostly a subjective scanning. It is not an objective operation, calm and cold-blooded like the vivisection of a carcass or the analysis of an atom. Even where I seem to be "erring in my emphasis" the only test I would ask to be applied is "what does

the man in the street think about it?" If he pronounces approval I stand acquitted and if he nods his dissent I confess my 'failure'. I call it 'failure' advisedly and not guilt, for '*mens rea*' is the one thing I have eschewed with care. "*Fari quae Sentiat*"—"To speak as you think", was the significant motto of the Earl of Orford; it was the favourite maxim that was stamped on the works of Horace Walpole. I have done no better than follow that golden rule. And in thinking about my subjects, I have scrupulously placed myself in the position of an average, dispassionate man. Nothing more, nothing less. Pascal says elsewhere "the best books are those that everyone thinks he could have written himself." Whether or not my books could lay any boastful claim to the quality of the 'best,' it is certainly my sincere claim that I have attempted my best to extort from the average reader an exclamation "O! this is just the thing I would have written." The success or failure of this work is dependent on the response I get from him. The motto of the Earl of Orford "to speak as you think" and the manner of portraiture of A. G. Gardiner have combined to produce this volume and here I present it to you, kind reader, for your rapturous applause or rejection!

I sincerely thank Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Shastriar Avergal for having given a Foreword to this book.

MADRAS, }
8th June 1939. }

K. M. BALASUBRAMANIAM.

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SIR C. P. RAMASWAMY AIYAR, K.C.I.E.

“Sachivotama Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar”—sounds like the notes of a soul-swelling Organ. The charm that is the name and the sweetness of its cadence suffuse the air with fragrance. “It comes o’er the ear like the sweet South, that breathes upon the Bank of violets, stealing and giving odour.” Pronouncing that name in its full is painting a picture that is glory. It is but a foreword to the book of fabulous romance. It is an eloquent index to an exalted career. The romantic splendour of his fame finds its resounding echo in his name. It speaks of his feats in two continents and proclaims his exploits with princes. It thrills with a ring of the Tuetonic names of mail-clothed knights of the medieval tournaments, who, seated on their saddles, swept the lists like tornadoes. It maps out the routes of the magnificent meteor that shot up in the skies of a stupendous variety. It is in one word a lyric of letters and a sonnet of syllables that linger on and resound to the echo.

‘The best that ever happened to me’ said H.G. Wells, ‘was to be born’. This is but the gleeful and optimistic efflorescence of a great man of action who has drunk the cup of life to its dregs. Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar could justifiably echo this boast. He was ushered into the world ready booted and spurred to ride the mare of destiny. Sir C. P. started his life with two enormous advantages. He was born with the blessings of talents and bright parts and he was born a Brahmin. To be born a Brahmin in India is

to be born with a silver spoon in the mouth. It is to be born as it were into the governing family. It is to be born with a pass-port to the seats of power and influence in this world and to the paradise itself in the next. This gifted race of "God's Men" has converted this country into a paradise of Posts and Elysium of influence. The key to this paradise and its crown and throne are the closest preserves and the sole monopoly of this cunning tribe. The Secretariats of Bombay and Madras and the Seats of power at Delhi are the strongest fortresses of their influence. Politics in more than one province is what they pre-determine and journalism in India is their sacred Jerusalem. They hold the rest of India in fee to them. Their subtle power and influence pervade every sphere and the ultimate verdict on men is what they actually pronounce. The air is thick with the accents of the conquering Brahmins. You can no more quarrel with their sway than with the heat of the sun or the height of its altitude. Fort St. George is their wash-pot and over the Native States do they cast out their shoe. Hence Sir C. P. started with such advantages and shot up the horizon like a rocket, shedding his trails of glory. He had all that could strengthen his nerves and everything that enhanced his powers. He was born under the best of stars.

Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar has a staggering store of power to spread his life into diverse spheres and sustain its expansion on high. He is always loving his life with a gusto and living it with rhapsody. His blatant and superficial pragmatism reminds the world of his existence by the roaring thunder of his hoofs. He plunges with delight into flooded streams of office and splashes and swims like a whale through the soaring waves of power.

Roses, roses, all the way' lie strewn and scattered, perfuming the day. He drives full steam ahead and dashes into the ports of States. Soaring on the broad wings of sublimated ambitions Sir C. P. sweeps the larger skies of Dewanships. Like his late prototype Lord Birkenhead, he loves high living more than high thinking and moves in an atmosphere of magnificence. His society is the society of the rich and the great, and his friends are the "jolly fellows who mix their Statesmanship with the Gaieties of the Empress Ball Room." "I had arranged to spend the Christmas with my family at Blenheim", is the regal way in which Birkenhead opens the book on his visit to America. Such an easy familiarity with the splendour of life never fails Sir C. P., too. The mansions of Muhammadabad and the Palace of Patiala are his ordinary rest houses on his sojourns to the North. The personality of Sir C. P. is of the palace and the princes. He bears the look of a birth in the purple. It is attractive, impressive and absorbing. He looks the perfect knight to the manner born and acts it with unfailing precision. His person and paunch are reminiscent of Bonaparte's. Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar is the handsomest man of Madras as Edward Marshall Hall was in England, according to Collin Brooks. The poise of his head is imperious and his face is imperial with his bright eyes, keen nostrils and a scornful proud mouth set above a strong chin. Below the thick eye-brows his enormously big eyes protrude and shine with beauty. The unusually large pupils on the broad obtrusive eye-balls sparkle and splash with splendour. His are the heavy-lidded eyes at once dreamy and merciless. His head is cropped no doubt, though baldness has begun its conquest. He adorns his head with a turban of altogether immaculate

white whose conical, artful front crowns his expansive forehead. The close long coat that now-a-days covers his body gives him a charm and dignity that captures our imagination. He is of that infinitesimal few for whom the buoyancy of youth and the brightness of the spring never dim. His personal look by itself is a handsome fortune. It is with such an armoury of captivating glamour and aristocratic aroma that Sir C. P. carries his systematic conquests into the drawing rooms and dining halls of De Luxe palaces of Princes. To such a sumptuous store of sweet and natural gifts Sir C. P. has added a gamut of enchanting arts. He is not a stranger to the histrionic arts; he had acted on the stage at least as a youth, but all that art of acting was but an artless child's play, when compared with his conscious acting on the stage of Public Life. "On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting, it was only that when he was off he was acting." He always poses for the movie and always acts in the talkie. He projects his personality across the foot-lights and the fierce and glaring lime-light beats about his person. His calculated airs and considered part of a Cæsar give all the sensation of a movie. He has much of the Byronic instinct for melodrama. His gamut of emotion is the variegated rainbow, each colour of which is emphasised at intervals. The oriental magic of Disraeli which wove around the Queen its wondrous incantations and cast its glamorous spell on magnificent courts, Sir C. P. too has to a certain degree of perfection. Though he is well nigh sixty, he refuses to be pensioned off by time. Though old age has left its visiting cards on him in profusion, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar treats them with scorn and dashes on with gay debonair. He has never yielded.

to anybody and he is not going at this time of his life to yield to such a thing as old age. His features are still instinct with a spirit of the combat. "To do great things" said Vauvenargues "a man must live as though he had never to die". Sir C. P. revels in the intimations of immortality and thus he is enabled to do great things.

With his startling success at the Bar, and his stately membership of the Cabinet Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar was swaying the destinies of this province. Having outgrown in ambition the bye-ways of provincial politics, he majestically strode like a Colossus the high ways of All India Politics. With a shot at the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly and a sweep into the Cabinet of Willingdon at Delhi he attracted to himself the gaze of an amazed people. The cup of power in the India Government C. P. drank to the full both as its Member for Commerce and Trade and as its Member for Law. With no more to conquer in British India, he wended his way into the Durbars. Greeted by Travancore with gaiety he gorgeously sat on its saddles. Its Legal Adviser for some time, he smelt the stink of public odium and mildly pretended to stand aside. The time of his re-emergence struck and he triumphantly rode into the State to the beat of drums and the blow of bugles. The accredited Dewan of Travancore Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar is browsing on his glory that is green. "Where O'Flaherty sits is the head of the Table" and where C. P. presides is the seat of glory.

He wears an armour of panoplied courtesy when in the Company of Princes and Patricians as much as

in the Company of the plebians and the poor. He carries with him the sun-shine of the South Wind and the breath of flowers while "joyously riding in the Hyde-Park to the admiration of fair Amarillas" or at the Gymkhana grounds in the joyous company of the great. His equestrian skill he marvellously exhibits and thoroughly enjoys it himself. But when once he is roused he could roar like a lion and make the rafters ring. He could strike at his foe with the certainty of the Nasmyth hammer or send him spinning down with a scornful flick of his finger. In jocularity and sense of humour he is equally rich. The summer lightnings of humour play about his formidable brow as when he crushed his youthful interrupter at a meeting of the students of the Presidency College. When he told them of his own part in the play of Sakuntalam while he was a youth, a voice broke out in jest "and what were you then?" "Let me comfort my interlocutor" leapt this humourist on him "that I was not then a pretty girl". The audience was dissolved in laughter. Equally so, when doubting Thomases crossed his path and questioned his wisdom or ways, Sir C. P. launches his thunderbolts,

"To prove his doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks".

He could be blunt like the but-end of the gun or subtle like the sharp edge of the sword. Blazing indiscretions have burst upon his routes as well as ingeniousness has irradiated his subtilty.

"A Barrister" said a wit "is a loaded blunderbuss. If you hire it you blow the other man's brains. If he hires it he blows out yours." In a purely

competitive profession like the Bar, the highest capacity never fails of recognition if once it can secure a hearing. With laurels of academic victories and a variety of talents and aids, the son of Mr. Pattabhirama Aiyar soon rose up at the Bar. He had very soon made out a considerable name on the Original Side of the High Court. The *cause celebre* soon came in, which almost crowned his life and recognition. In the celebrated case of J. Krishnamurthy, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar appeared for the father and against Dr. Beasant. He made by his marvellous conduct such a mighty impression on that lady that she at once began to take him under her protective wings and friendly patronage. He was her precious find. She was ever proud of him. This blunder-buss began to attack the Government and aided the Home Rule League in those days of the War and distinguished himself well. After the cooling down of the temperature of the Home Rule agitation, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar was for some time in the Congress and worked as its General Secretary. The Montford Reforms came and the indomitable C. P. was returned by the City to the Legislative Council but he sat therein as a Member just for a year, since he was soon appointed as the Advocate-General of Madras. The un-written Law of the Constitution promoted the Advocate-General to the place of the Law Member of Madras, when that post fell vacant in 1923. He became the Honourable Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. The blunder-buss was this time utilised by the Government and it began to blow out the opposition's brains.

Want of atmosphere of dreams makes the lawyer generally an arid figure in politics. The

lawyer who succeeds in politics on a grand scale is rare and with few exceptions he succeeds not because but in spite of the lawyer qualities. Sir C. P. has succeeded in active politics as no other Indian Lawyer has done simply because he adds to his legal acumen, a romantic outlook on life and a rosy vision of humanity. He could efface the lawyer in him and enlarge the politician. Neither the world nor he himself would love to contemplate his career as that of a successful lawyer, though he was one such to a certain degree. The amount of success that attended him at the Bar was more due to the manner of his advocacy than due to his mastery of Law or the mysteries of legal quibbles. For, genuine celebrity and great success in Law block the gates of political eminence, in spite of the case of Jayakars and Saprus. Disraeli had all but hit at the truth when he said "To succeed as an Advocate, I must be a great Lawyer and to be a great Lawyer I must give up my chance of *being a great man*." A Satyamurthy and a Sir A. Ramaswamy are the success in politics that they are, simply because they have studiously deserted the courts. A Srinivasa Aiyangar or a Sir A. Krishnaswamy is a zero in politics simply because he is at the zenith of the Bar. Russel's passion for Ireland obliterated the lawyer; and Sir C. P.'s record of Statesmanship has submerged his success at the Bar. History and he himself would lay his claims to greatness not on the Law Reports but on the Statute Books.

Sastri's standard of Statesmanship spelt his successor's failure in the South African Office. C. P.'s meteoric splendour dimmed the taper of his successors on the Madras Treasury Bench. Law Membership of Madras has never before or since his

time shone with the lustre or thrilled with the drama of his term of office. He was the cynosure of the neighbouring eyes and towering search-light to distant ones. Sir C. P.'s regime as Law Member was a sustained piece of drama, composed of five Acts and crowded with thrilling climaxes and corresponding anti-climaxes. Vice-Presidentship of the Cabinet and the valued Leadership of the House swelled his sonorous voice with the arrogant accents of speech. Consciousness of power and the confidence of his clansmen made him reckless of consequences. Soon he became in office daring even to rashness, self-confident even to negligence and proud even to insolent ferocity: Napoleonic he looked in his superb Knight attire and Hotspur-like he rode in hot pursuit of laurels.

“ A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the dangers,
When the waves went high
He sought the storms ”.

The storm that he so invited and steadily weathered was the systematic crusade of the Justice paper and the poisoned shafts of Mr. A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar. Apparently the relationship of Sir C. P. with the Party in office till 1926 was an almost cordial one. But with the change of tide of that Party and the advent of the Independent Party into power a state of war commenced between the Justice Party and the Honourable Law Member. Apparently it was the honest criticism of the Opposition paper of the Acts and measures undertaken by the Law Member. But it really resolved itself into a personal combat between two great gladiators. The eloquence and the ink of Ramaswamy Mudaliar were engaged in a

deadly warfare with the imperious will and disdain of the undaunted Ramaswamy Aiyar. The two were flint and steel. They met only to clash and strike fire. A. R. and C. P. were the lineal descendants of Henry and Hotspur on the mortal battle-field. It was as though Hector and Achilles had each scoured the battle-field to find the foeman who had challenged his supremacy and had come into collision by a kind of natural law. The one exhausted his wonderful armoury of wits, sarcasm, vilifying abuse and venomous accusations; the other retaliated by eloquent reticence, provoking arrogance and belittling superiority.

“In single opposition to hand to hand
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glend-
over”.

He hurled defiance at the Justice and heaped his ridicule on the party by highly provocative language. As for himself, like the proverbial camomile, the more he was trodden on, the more did he flourish. For all the voluminous out-bursts of the Justice Editor Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar gave him in return with grave look and scorn an electric shock every week and an epileptic fit every fortnight. He dropped down the bomb-shells of deep offensive words which amounted to a declaration of War. “Leader after Leader” he cried out ‘has appeared in a journal which I would not dignify by mentioning the name in the House’. Patagonian words of unpronounceable length marched past in files and poured their poisoned bullets at this insolent foe. The indomitable enemy became more amused and still further provoked the shots. “I am afraid I do

not take either the Newspaper or the resolution seriously" declared the serious Law Member in mock heroic strain. The result was "canons in right of him, canons in left of him, canons in front of him volleyed and thundered." The wound-proof pride of the humorous Law Member wiped out the stains of these shots and he came beaming through it all with perspiring happiness.

These skirmishes of the war of attrition pale into insignificance before the mighty battle that raged around a marvellous claim of C. P. in an immortal clause that has since become classical. While replying to an address at Tanjore, the power-conscious Law Member prefaced his reply with "My Government of which Lord Goschen is the chief". Never before or since has an Indian Member of the Cabinet arrogated a claim so Himalayan and expressed it with so much of ease. It was very strongly condemned in the columns of "Justice". But in proportion to that strength of criticism the whimsical autocrat in Sir C. P. strengthened his desire to repeat it and clothe it with the Parliamentary sanctity. Mr. S. N. Dorai Rajah asked the Honourable Law Member a particular question. In tones of Majesty which left the House speechless the Law Member replied "My Government of which H. E. Lord Goschen is the Head do not propose to do so". This redoubled challenge and repeated provocation to the might and power of "Justice" went like a rapier thrust and made it roar like a wounded tiger. The complacent Law Member coolly enjoyed this fun and contemptuously brushed aside the wild outbursts of the "Justice." But the moment he laid down his office and met his sworn enemy on the platform. Sir C. P.

acknowledged in A. R. an honoured and talented rival. His gentlemanliness and sportsmanship had never better been shown. It was the hearty handshake of a pair of boxers, after a rain of death-blows given and taken with grim looks in the ring.

Apart from such isolated episodes, the Law Membership of Ramaswamy Aiyar had two major issues that entailed a titanic battle. The Mettur Project and the Pykhara Scheme are the most eloquent monuments of C.P.'s marvellous office. If they are hailed as historic success, he is the man to be praised for it. If they are hissed at as Himalayan failures, he is the person to be thanked for. But in those days of doubt when these two projects were still in their infancy and could not unfold their benefits, they drew forth the deadliest of attacks and provoked the dirtiest of controversies. The untiring pen and ingenious intellect not undipped in personal animus of A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar wove around these projects woeful themes of disaster which made the country shudder. The Mettur Project was called a "scandal," the Pykhara scheme was styled a "mirage." Both the measures were painted as disastrous failures in the best of lurid colours. They were described as a plunge through nothing to nothing, a stupendous guess at the future. But all these creakings of ill-omen were wasted over the optimism and self-confidence of the Law Member. "Craisel Lachie" was his constant watch-word and like 'stand fast Smith' he all but earned the sobriquet of 'stand fast C.P.' He drove full steam ahead with his schemes and promised the Province plenty. He boasted and averred that his Mettur Project would make the plains stand thick with corn and the deserts to

bloom with rose. He promised this Province that light would flood it in abundance and light would be the rate per unit of electricity to be consumed. He staked his reputation on the twin schemes and cast the dice for ever. Every year that passes on unfolds the soundness of his scheme and pours out the benefits thereof. The name of Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar will continue to live in the country as eternally as the elements of light and water he has helped to regulate and flow.

Sir C. P.'s eventful career is studded and strewn with situations that vary in importance and value from the smallest to the stateliest of Assemblies. From the Corporation of Madras to the Council of League of Nations, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar has swept the skies and swam the seas with majesty. The evidence he has given before some Committees and his indispensable membership in others would alone be sufficient to earn him a place in history. The South Borough Commission, Meston Committee on Finance, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Reforms 1919, and the Butler Enquiry Committee have been benefited by his enlightening evidence, while the Delhi War Conference, Assembly of the League of Nations, The Indian Round Table Conference, Federal Structure Subcommittee, Committee of the Chamber of Princes, Joint Select Committee of Parliament 1933, and the World Economic Conference have been adorned and served by this august person. He had been to the League of Nations twice and was elected Rapporteur to the League of Nations Committee on Public Health. His experiences of Conferences, Committees and Commissions are of the ripest type which is rare and refreshing. No Assembly or deliberative

Body which is open to an Indian has escaped his enlightening membership. The only cruelty that fortune has shown him was to have denied him the chance of Acting Governorship which is so waywardly wasted over Sir Usmans and Kurmas. No other place would have crowned his career better. No other person would have enhanced the reputation of Indians with greater dignity, in it.

He is as much a man of letters as he is a Statesman. His is one of the few richest libraries that any individual has and it annually gets enriched. His love for the Muse of Literature and Arts is no less intense than his love for the life of romance and power. His scholastic brilliance is reminiscent of Gladstonian double-first class; he stood first in the Presidency in English and scored off a Prize in Mathematics in his B.A. Degree examination. He is as best a scholar in the English language as a man of action ever was and his oft-quoted authors and favourites are Rudyard Kipling, Blake and Shelley. French and Sanskrit literatures fascinate his intellect and lend his outlook their flavour. "He was a man of lively parts and quick observation, a man of the world among men of letters and a man of letters among men of the world. Mere scholars were dazzled by the Ambassador and Cabinet Councillor, mere politicians by the essayist and historian." Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar is undoubtedly a man of culture who can be the ornament of any nation. He has represented the University itself once and was elected its Fellow in 1912. The range of his reading and the soundness of his scholarship could rarely be found in such a combination and that in a politician that surrounded a good part of his career with the thunder of action

and smoke of the battle-field. Amidst all his legal engagements and his political pre-occupations the indomitable Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar finds time and inclination to fire off his learned discourses to more than a single University. By the Krishna Rajendra University Lecture on 'Federalism' he makes a great impression at Mysore and a contribution to the literature on the subject. His grand-eloquent Convocation Address to the Graduates of the Delhi University gains him a niche in the Educational World. He takes up the honour of the Tagore Law Lecturership of the Calcutta University and treats it to the feast of the South Indian intellect and thrills. Politics and Constitution, Finance and Literature form his favourite subjects and his contributions on such topics are interesting and valuable. His speeches are the flowers that blossom on the literary soil, the flowers that smell with the sweetness of the sublime culture though not shine with the variegated colours of the rainbow. There is always in abundance in the oratory of C. P. thrilling notes and sweet phrases that are the peculiar features of a literary mind. His is a manly and impressive style that is mastered and manipulated by his marvellous mind to serve all his purposes of platforms and Councils. He does not burst forth

"Into glossy purples that outred
All voluptuous garden roses".

But like Morley's his English is pure and undefiled, refreshingly free from the market place language and the much worried cant that mar the tone and eloquence of many a popular speaker. The phrases that he uses and the idioms that he employs flash

out and fall with the same picturesque effect as his personality. "Dictatorship" he said once "is the spear-head of the Nation's will". It is the perfect picture of words that shines with his colour and sounds with his music. That is the typical C. P. touch. He is never overwhelmingly fluent to the detriment of clarity and precision. He forges his thunderbolts in the burning furnace of his mind and casts them out with calculating rythm and considered effect that never miss the mark. His melodramatic pose with his turbaned head held and swung at all possible tangents, the burning torches of his eyes broadly sweeping the audience and all the while his hand supplementing in articulation, render him a picture of rare fascination. Irony, cultured humour and even purple patches occasionally brighten his style and adorn his manly eloquence. He can narrate an anecdote with absorbing interest and especially anecdotes in which his ego is involved. The strongest characteristic of Sir C. P. Ramaswamy is his monstrous consuming ego, which ever protrudes itself and never for a while is struck out. He prepetually suffers from an eternal swelling of his being at all the wonders he performs. He is mightily conscious of his importance not merely here but in Europe. "I was returning to India by Air" he declared in one of his speeches "from one of my trips to Europe". Here his sense of self importance urged him to confide to the audience how many times he had honoured the continent with his august presence. At once he added in striking paranthesis "And I have been to Europe thrice. The aeroplane halted for a while at Budapest and we took coffee in a restaurant. I was specially favoured with a spoon of sugar for my coffee, for they do not have sugar

for coffee and I drank it with delight to the envious gaze of my fellow passengers". Except for the importance of his self that the restaurant manager indulged him with, the anecdote is nothing. But that is again the C. P. touch, to wit. "I was offered a place in the Bench of the High Court thrice and thrice I rejected it" he said once presiding over the moot club of Law College, reminiscent of Cæsar who was thrice offered the Crown. Again a C. P. touch. Like John Redmond of Ireland, Sir C. P. would "make the multiplication table sound as impressive as a funeral oration and the alphabet would fall from his lips with the solemn cadence of Homeric verse."

"If moral probity were a *sine qua non* in French politics the mortality among French Statesmen would be high," says a writer. The same may be said about Indian politicians though to a less degree. Nepotism and jobbery are the nefarious sins that men in high position are accused of committing in their official life. Such a charge was levelled against Indian Ministers before the Joint Parliamentary Committee in 1934. Though it was rebutted with ready resourcefulness the truth is too well known to be missed. The jobbery of a Bobbili or a K. V. Reddy is too universally known to be glossed over or got rid of. Not that the rest of us are free from the taint, if taint it be. It is only that these eminent personages set the standard and give the lead to the lesser ones. Hence without putting an excessive valuation on his standard of public morals, I am disposed to think that C. P.'s is not below the average of his class. Nay, he has in addition the redeeming feature of a rare brilliance and a kind of detachment too. The gravamen of the

charge against Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar as Law Member of Madras was that he gave away jobs and distributed his patronage to men of his clan and caste. The Justice paper even went to the extent of publishing a facsimile of a letter of recommendation from him. With all this and including this particular case, it can never be maintained that the patronage of C. P.'s regime smacked of the promiscuity of Lord Halsbury's regime in England. I seriously maintain that the "jobbery" of Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar was of a more reasonable and even pleasing type than that of a Sir K. V. Reddy or of a Rajah of Bobbili. It was the genial and good humoured and practical favouritism of a Lord Fisher, the high priest of efficiency. "Favouritism" he is said to have asserted "is the secret of success", i.e., favouritism for the efficient not for the personally or socially preferred. There is a further test of the benefits of such a favouritism. Lord Fisher said and the same could be said by Sir C. P., "If I haul a man up over the shoulders of his seniors that man is going to take care to show I have not made a mistake". It can safely be asserted of all his proteges that they have taken sufficient care to show he was not mistaken. That is the only and sufficient justification for his sin which was so alluring as to resemble a virtue. Not even the charge of rank communalism can ever be sustained against him. For it is a well-known fact that not a few non-Brahmins have won preferments and promotions in life at his hands. The only non-Brahmin Tamilian who once in its history ascended the Olympic heights of the High Court of Judicature at Madras owed that elevation to the 'Brahmin' C. P. Was not again the City Civil Court adorned by a non-Brahmin Tamilian, thanks to the good will of this then ruling Law

Member? The late Mr. Bhavanandam Pillai who had owed his rise to Sir C. P. has bequeathed the copyright of his 'Tholkappiam' to the latter, as a mark of his love and gratitude for him. To this singular fact undying testimony was unreservedly borne by that guardian of non-Brahmins the late Dr. Natesa Mudaliar.

Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar is a gentleman, whose qualities of gentlemanliness glow with the greater lustre for his eminence. His is not that little mind which ill affords to run an empire. His gentlemanliness is not an artificial flower or ornamental bouquet plucked and stuck up in his coat for the occasion. It is in his blood; it was born with him together and has grown with his growth. He is the sworn antithesis of a snob. He is confidential with a Duke to the same extent as with a dustman and will give either of them the civility of a wink in the most agreeable manner. He spends himself royally and will be as cordial with the Duke of Gloucester or the Nawab of Bhopal as with the humblest of Kittus and Subbus in the kitchen of his household. He is the most affable and easily accessible of a man of eminence one could meet with. For in spite of his Brahmin birth, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar has the least of the communal Brahmin in him. His courageous heterodoxy and cosmopolitanism make him commingle with all castes and communities and he will 'eat with them and play with them' with ease and delight. Personal courage and daring pluck are the last qualities of a typical Brahmin. But Sir C. P. has of them in a surprising measure. Whenever his verbal threats and roaring rodomontades failed to cow down an insolent audience, more

terrible methods he would resort to and mostly with success. A Right Honourable Sastri conquered a restive Kumbakonam audience by his classical passiveness and cool demeanour. But a Sir. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar struck terror into and silenced a rowdy audience of Madras by a daring show of his pistol. It was a remarkable piece of prowess and personal courage that not merely cowed down the audience but conquered their heart by its brilliance. Yet he has the softest heart and a singular gamut of domestic affections.

He is in a word not merely a statesman but a stately man. He has come to assume a portentous gravity in unison with his past and progressing age. Nevertheless the lark in his soul or the love in his heart has not deserted him. He reminds us of a greater man of history whose description by Macaulay does honour to Sir C. P. What Macaulay says of Cromwell wonderfully applies to him: "He was emphatically a man. He possessed in an eminent degree the masculine and full grown robustness of mind that equally diffused intellectual health. Never was any ruler so conspicuously born for sovereignty. He had nothing in common with that large class of men who distinguish themselves in lower posts and whose incapacity becomes obvious as soon as the public voice summons them to take the lead. Rapidly as his fortune grew, his mind expanded more rapidly still. Cromwell exhibited in his demeanour the simple and natural nobleness of a man neither ashamed of his origin nor vain of his elevation, of a man who had found his proper place in society and who felt secure that he was competent to fill it." It is but an anticipatory epilogue to Sir C.P.'s life from the pen of Macaulay.

Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar is the Dewan of Travancore and the guardian-angel of that glorious little State. He commenced his régime and commemorated it with a historic social reform that has set the country ablaze. By a Royal Edict reminiscent of Asokan times, the young and progressive Prince of Travancore has wrought a revolution in Hinduism. The State-owned temples were flung open to all sorts of subjects without let or hindrance. The centuries' old system of soul-less worship of God was smashed to powder and pieces by the magic touch of this Monarch. It at once arrested the advancing tide of the proselytising Christianity in the State and it unavoidably provoked the wrath of the Pontiffs on high. If it saved Hinduism from decay it also sowed the seeds of trouble in the State. A stroke of his pen has achieved in a second what was altogether impossible for centuries of ceaseless attempts. And in this act of High-Souled Reform the share of the Dewan is no small. Apart from the story of the Prince having put off this Reform till the period of a Muslim Dewan expired, which may be true or which may be false, Sir C. P.'s influence is certainly perceptible. Assuming this story to be true, it nevertheless cannot be gainsaid that Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar must have been consulted if not as a Dewan at least as the Legal and Constitutional Adviser and the trusted friend of the Durbar. The State of Travancore is certainly in the capable hands which will unlose any situation or policy familiar as the garter. The cultural renaissance and religious revival that carry the State in the vanguard of progress have a good Pericles at the helm. The need for a separate University is felt by the Educational Paradise of Travancore and the possibilities and chances are at

once explored by the busy mind of its Dewan. Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar confers with intellectual giants like Sir C. V. Raman not merely with a view to establishing a separate University but also to re-orientate Secondary Education so as to bifurcate the literary and scientific aspects of study. By this means of reform middle-class unemployment might be solved. Whatever might happen in the wake of these efforts one thing is sure and undoubted. Nay, he himself has declared in a speech at Calcutta that the next political advance in Travancore could be only Full Responsible Government.

The present phase in the history of Travancore is hardly a pleasant one. The Travancore State Congress practically declared war on the Dewan by presenting a Memorial to the Prince. In it were contained the most damaging and unworthy allegations against the person of Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar and he is not the type of person that would swallow it and simply suffer it. Revolts and repressions inevitably followed each other and a sort of civil war went on inside the State. Incendi- arism and insubordination by the irrepressible elements among the masses called forth the cudgel play and the cruel shootings by the Military and the Police. The demand of the State Congress for constitutional reform is a perfectly legitimate one; not even the Dewan's weighty arguments could negative it in all fairness. But the State Congress activities from beginning to end had several blots in the escutcheon. The leaders had obviously no control over the following and the movement, by its several acts of barbarous mischiefs, forfeited its claims to satyagrahic sanctity, even to

the extent of being repeatedly reprimanded by Gandhiji. Again the personal allegations against the Dewan by which the State Congress swore hardly advanced the case of the latter for self-government. And Sir C. P. Ramaswamy rightly stuck to his guns and would not yield an inch before the State Congress withdrew those "unfounded allegations". For once Gandhiji was fair to Sir C. P. and pleaded and persisted that the allegations should be withdrawn. Nay, he went to the extent of saying that he could not believe in the *bona fides* of the movement unless they withdrew them. Finally, the prison-bars, the persecutions and the pleadings of the Mahatma had the cumulative and the desired effect of sobering the State Congress Leaders into withdrawing the allegations. The unbending Dewan at once yielded and released all the prisoners and retained his prestige. Till this was done, not all the howling of the British Indian neighbours nor even the Pontifical pronouncements by Gandhiji against his repression could cow down or conciliate the Dewan. His bold and manly retorts to Gandhiji's accusations and his pertinent though painful reminders about the saint's past 'failures' will live down the memory of the present generation. Whatever may be the ultimate outcome of the present contest, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar has certainly come out with flying colours for the nonce. He is the most discussed Dewan of an Indian State and the boldest.

RAJAH SIR ANNAMALAI CHETTIYAR OF CHETTINAD

The Nagarathars of ninety-six Urs are the eastern Jews of the ancient Palastine. With their far-flung net of financial concerns a few of the Jews had held the Continent in fee. Even so in India a handful of Nagarathars are having their sway of hundies. South India and the Far East are studded and strewn with their "kadais". Small Shylocks and stately Rothschilds exercise a financial empire and eat away the properties by the interests. The pound of flesh and the interest in bonds are their watch-words; penurious living and pious devotion their ways of life. The ruthless methods of banking of this rigorous race of businessmen is at once a legend and an ancient tale of wrong. They are proverbial for their callousness in collection; they are a by-word for penny-wise parsimony. By compound interests and colossal tricks they have completely swallowed and digested countless landed aristocrats and millions of petty mirasdars. They build huge palaces provoking the envy of princes but contented themselves in crawling in some of their darkest corners. They gave away in thousands to fat and fleecing purohits, but grudged themselves the luxury of gorgeous dress and feasts. They preyed upon the thousands in order to pray to God. Hundreds of temples could ring their bells only when thousands of families did wring their hands daily. They cared not for the humanities of this world. They caricatured the divinity of God in the carved sculptures of the temples. Mammon was



their High Priest whose lessons on life they mumbled. Their conception of heaven and its gates was that "the golden opes and the iron shuts amain". They paved the high way to heaven with the fearful skulls of families; the milestones that mark their progress are made of solid gold. They are a peculiar race of paradoxical utility. They sacrificed means to the end.

Such was the state of this singular tribe. But such it could not be for long. Soon arose the sun of resplendant glow and lustre upon the sinking horizon of awfully benighted Chettinad and bathed with its benevolent light and beaming rays of warmth these bullion-ridden souls. There emerged a prophet from among these Arabs, darting his arrows and stones on their diabolic idolatry. Old order changed yielding place to new. The height of the temple towers is no more to be deemed as the height of the heavenly ladder. The ornaments of the idols in temples are no more to be augmented as the ornaments of their souls. The tortuous path to heaven, they wisely realised, could not be lighted up by the blazing torches and the flashing fire-works. They understood from this 'prophet' that the millions that are thrown up are a monstrous Mammon show. This benevolent pioneer would perforce beat out a new track and a novel one, as beautiful as it would be beneficial. He would explore fresh fields and pastures new. He would not cast astray the God-given talents of countless millions into the sands and on the stones. He would sow them with scrupulous care in the fertile soil of humanity and the flourishing fields of education. Before he broke this new ground the biggest members of his caste were so many bundles of currencies or so many bars of gold,

utilized for honours but never themselves honoured. The ignorant members of his caste had no means of acquiring the mysterious keys to the minor gods on earth who alone could make or mar. But this Messiah of wordly wisdom taught his race the tricks of achieving the worldly honours. He weaned them from the "vices" of "stone-age" and initiated them into the mysteries of worldly powers. He showed them the steps to the earthly throne and supplied the secrets of heavenly bliss. Thus the Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiyar rose and redeemed the Chettiyars. He gave them a new conception of wealth and a novel means of spending it. He has revolutionised his community and revitalised it for ever. He has for ever opened up for them a new era of possibilities.

The greatest and most enduring monument of Rajah Sir Annamalai's royal life is the glorious University at Chidambaram. It is named after its donor as a *quid pro quo* of his gifts. Though it is a fact that the Government too have contributed equally, yet the munificence of this mighty philanthropist is certainly a marvellous one. More than the amount itself is the ingenuity of the mind that conceived this benevolent idea and conquered a title by constraint. I do not merely mean the hereditary title of Rajah that he and his family are honoured with, but I mean a real title to the remembrance and gratitude of the renascent India as a whole. Palatial mansions were built and adorned and the peerless Goddess of Learning was enthroned. With the torch of wonderful culture the worthy Goddess Saraswathi is lighting up the souls of lovely youths. Seated at this shuttle of a University, this sublime maid of culture is weaving

her fabrics of variegated patterns. The Rajah is the Pro-Chancellor by right of his gifts and rightly has he chosen the staff to run the show on right lines. The happiest choice for the honoured place of the Vice-Chancellor has fallen on the Right Honourable Mr. Sastri. None else in India could fill it with better grace and birth-right. The temple that the Rajah builds is the towering domes of a University; the deity that he would propitiate is the dainty Angel of Learning. Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiyar of Chettinad has killed two birds with one stone. By a bold stroke of a benevolent scheme he has at once served the country and served himself. The gratitude of generations, the grandeur of a title and the great respect of contemporaries have all been gained and insured by a generous act of diplomacy. He has demonstrated to his community the double utility of wealth; he has devised a technique of immortal name that defies the record of history. Richer men than he and royal millionaires have lived and flourished in India but no one has given us a University memorably named after himself. Colleges and High Schools cry forth the names of their donors; but where is the instance of a University wedded to the name of an individual, except this Annamalai one? He is a pioneer among University-builders in South India.

Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiyar is certainly a money-lender, in spite of his regal show. His family trade is money-lending and that is his chief business. By all the tactics of his trade and all the economy on earth he has acquired and augmented fabulous stores of gold. An ex-minister and a zamindar once described him as possessed of "un-limited cash". His is not of course the inexhaustible wealth of an

Andrew Carnegie ; nor is it the colossal fortune of a Nizam or a Henry Ford. But he is one of the richest men in South India not merely in name but in ready cash. He is the connecting link between the hundi-kadai Chettiyars on the one hand and the highly developed banks on the other. His business concerns are solid and strong spreading their branches far and wide in India and the Far-East, in Cochin-China and the Straits Settlements, and in Ceylon and Burma and the Malaya States. By means of his net-work of money-lending concerns, well-manned and wisely managed, the wealth of his house is swelling in weight and volume. The Rajah is as clever a businessman as he is a diplomat. Calculating and careful, nothing is too small for him, nothing escapes his attention. The secret of his success is wealth, the key to his wealth is his business and the soul of his business is his economy ; this is the financial Testament of his flourishing business. He is a born businessman. A Director of the Indian Bank and a Governor of the Imperial Bank he directly lords over the banking world in India. The Indian Merchants Chamber of Commerce and ever so many Chambers of Commerce include him among their leaders and eminently thrive. He and his family are wholesale dealers in every thing. They are as a rule loath to take shares in concerns and companies that do not completely come under their sway. Either a Cæsar in business or nothing is their motto. They own the whole show or nothing in it.

Both by virtue of the magnitude of his business and by dint of his political influence Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiyar is recognised by his community as its natural leader. Not that there are no

unyielding Barons refusing to pay their reverential homage to him. For that matter there is a powerful section of his community at once jealous of his eminence and always opposing his 'sovereignty'. Withal that the Rajah is the leader to whom the community looks up when danger threatens their trade and in moments of crisis. They spontaneously turn to him for succour and successfully does he steer clear the vessel of his tribe off the shoals and rocks. Take the case of the stringent measures of Cochin-China that were enforced by the French Government against the banking Chettiyaars and endangered their business. That was a first class crisis reminiscent of the Hitlerite drive against the Jews. But the Rajah is a right-royal diplomat: he rose to the occasion with an inordinate tact and courage and smoothly weathered the storm. He silently sailed to the continent, set the proper men and machinery in motion and set at naught the invidious tyranny. He went, he saw, he conquered. This was the veritable Moses who saved the business of his community. With the least of noise he went and with the best of success he returned. And a grateful community gave him a royal reception on his return.

The very important posts he holds in the various commercial bodies paves the way for greater honours and fulfils his other political ambitions. He was elevated to the Pre-reform Council of Madras as far back as 1916 and he continued to be there till 1920. The change of the constitution ushered in a change in his forum of activities. Rajah Sir Annamalai was repeatedly elected to the Council of State, three times at the top of the polls. That is his appropriate post and there did he find his

congenial place. The calm, placid and colourless atmosphere of the Council of State is the agreeable place for his cool and collected dignity. The Rajah is not a professional politician, though he is more than a match to the cleverest among such. Politics are unto him a necessary evil; it is to be tolerated just to the extent it serves his purpose. It is well-nigh a problem to decide the Party to which he belongs. He may be described as a Liberal and he honours the Justice Party with his occasional nods of recognition. At the Tanjore Confederation the tact of his House was in evidence and he was physically present there. But he did not condescend to disturb his placidity by dabbling in that race for leadership. After the Rajah of Panagal's demise the crown of the Party was proffered to him, though informally, and courteously cutting was the refusal by this Cæsar. He does not mind if the diadem were offered to his darling son, Muthiah. He would even fain procure for his son this amusing toy to play with. He could not in consonance with his professional atmosphere and the Brahminical influence reconcile himself with the rank communal colour of the Justice Party. And it was therefore a pleasant function agreeable to him, which the Rajah of Chettinad performed, when he seconded the amendment to the Party's constitution moved by Sir Patro. He more or less inverts the Gitaic words of commands and reads: "To the fruits thou hast the right but not to the work therefor". He would fain have the palm without the dust, the plums without the sweat.

The successful man lives under a perpetual challenge. There is always a *prima facie* case against him. About such persons an eminent

English author says, "we are a little envious that he has got what we, who are obviously so much more meritorious would have liked. We suspect that his success is the reward of methods we are too scrupulous to adopt, of a vulgarity we are too refined to stoop to, of a cold and calculating temperament that contrasts unamiably with the fine impulsiveness of our own. And so we watch him narrowly. Does he present a palace to the nation? Ah, we say that he has bought the Government. Now we know why he has the concession in Africa. Does he treat his workmen with noticeable consideration? Just so, that is his artful way of stealing their souls." And as the same author says "in all this distrust, unjust and mean though it often is, there is a sound social motive at work".

But the judgment on the suspected man of success may be truly reversed by one consideration, by a clear question, 'how did he use his success?' That is the test by which we give him his sentence or discharge. His success he could not help, his use of it he could. Even so in the case of Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiyar, his success he could not help. But the use of it he has managed, much in the magnanimous way that constrains a verdict of acquittal from the Grand Jury and posterity. He has endowed his hard-earned wealth in promoting education on a princely scale and for preventing the miseries of the poor people and the sick. There is hardly a charity donation list of Madras that has not his contribution worthy of his status. The Annamalai University caters to the intellectual growth of Young India. The Lady Pentland Hospital for Women and Children at Chettinad looks to the alleviation of the pains and sufferings of

the sick people and the children. The Wellington Club at Madras adds to the social amenities.

Few millionaires indeed are so individualistic and self-assertive as the Rajah of Chettinad. He is a type by himself who has everything for himself and that in his own way. The very palace of his is worth more than ten lakhs; it is the best equipped and the most luxurious mansion in this province which adorns the northern bank of the Adyar river in the vicinity of the sea and adds to the æsthetic elegance of the scenery. The very personality of the Rajah is of a rare and princely type. He is of medium size but of magnificent build. His head is one of the very few of the royal specimens; it wears a look of portentous proportions and princely grandeur. The large, massive and well-shaped face that is clean-shaven and bright impresses the on-looker with its excellent charm. Bright, long eyes, beautiful elevated nose, powerful lips and a clenched mouth curved at either end mark out his countenance as that of a significant personality. The head-gear of his again is quite characteristic of him. Majestically huge and marvellously white, the South Indian turban of the Rajah sits over his head with stately eminence. The fine long close-coat with the dhoti or his ceremonial wear of suit lends him an aspect of a true-born Rajah.

Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiyar has been honoured by the Madras University with the honorary degree of LL.D. Whether or not in reality the Rajah is a well versed doctor, it is undoubtedly true that he looks and speaks like a lovely flower of culture and a scholar of liberal education. He speaks English with taste and chasteness in a

simple and unaffected way that certainly echoes his refinement. The platforms and the noisy forums he studiously forsakes but on ceremonial occasions and in choice gatherings he delights his hearers with his dainty toasts and dutiful vote of thanks. Like all men of action he studiously cultivates silence, though often his silence is superbly golden and significant.

The influence of the Rajah is so indefinable and infinite that nothing is too difficult or too big for him when once he has made up his mind or set his heart on it. Is it a separate seat for the Nagarathar Community in the Assembly? He knows how to get it, even in the teeth of influential opposition. Around the University named after him has sprung in existence a colony by name Annamalainagar. The notice-board at the Railway station at Chidambaram indicates the existence of this colony. He transformed everything into "Annamalai" in and around Chidambaram. But the rarest privilege that the S. I. Railway has indulged an individual with is in his case only. A special station called Chettinad has been built in the vicinity of his house and a special and exclusive waiting-room for the Rajah and his family has been built in that station. I wonder if even the Pithapurs and Bobbilis enjoy any such privilege in their respective stations. This is specially a Chettinad touch.

Though as a rule the Nagarathars are parsimonious, they could nonetheless be never excelled in the art of feasting. On festive occasions they lavishly spend money and revel in luscious feasts. More proverbial and monarchical is a feast in the

Chettinad House. The very leaf of plate will be from six feet to ten. Savouries and sweets, fishes and flesh, fowls and fruits, vegetables and varieties of mutton will be found in their variegated preparations in files of bewildering array. No animal that is delicious and worth eating will be absent from the tables dressed in hundred different shapes. Such a fabulous display of the dishes is more a parade of their pelf than anything else. This is the pleasing counterpart of the proverbial feast of pass-over. Withal, it is the honour and the social nature of it that is the soul of such feasts. *Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas*. And Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar delights in the art of playing at such host. Whenever he does not overwhelm the Governors and Viceroys with his imperious dinners and elegant lunches, the Rajah of Chettinad lavishes his hospitality over his loyal Indian guests and smothers them with his sumptuousness. "Millionaires who laugh are rare". But the rare millionaire at Chettinad reserves his laughter and wreathed smiles to such festive occasions; he regales his choice guests with a regal measure of sweet words. Even his mortal enemies, when once they fell a victim to his hospitality, become for ever Samsons shorn of their Locks. Such an unaffected humility, so very pleasing manners and so embarrassingly officious attention to the most humble in society are the peculiar weapons of Chettinad with which he stoops to conquer his foes and humble them into his helots. The tactful feasts of Chettinad have completely tamed the Shrews of opponents and conquered many a bitter foe. He is a born charmer of the human race, a Princely Pied Piper. The subtle way of conquering is the surest way for him. Deadly strokes are of no avail when diplomatic blows can win. And when perforce he is

dragged into troubled waters by any uncompromising opponent, he keeps on fighting with the best of face and grace until he is forced into the belief that discretion is the better part of valour, and that compromise is the costless way of succeeding. After the most protracted trial of the great civil litigation by one of his kinsmen, when circumstances and prudence demanded surrender, he did not hesitate to stoop to conquer. That is again a Chettinad touch.

The Rajah of Chettinad almost fulfils the definition of a great man by Bismark. "A really great man is known by three signs—generosity in design, humanity in the execution and moderation in success." And Chettinad has all the three in abundance. If according to Milton, "those only are great things which tend to render life more happy, which increase the innocent enjoyment and comforts of existence or which pave the way to a state of future bliss, more permanent and more pure", I am sure that the things done so far by the Rajah are great things. If he has done nothing else than establish the Annamalai University that alone would entitle him to enter the Temple of the Great and enjoy an enviable immortality. The country will ever owe the Rajah of Chettinad "the debt immense of endless gratitude."

SIR K. V. REDDY NAIDU,

K.C.I.E.

The first of April 1937 promised to be the proverbial All Fool's Day. Acceptance of office by the Congress would have amply justified the attribute of first April. But the fire-eating patriots of India deliberately denied themselves the fickle pleasures of a Fool's paradise. They wisely left such immortality into the hands of wiser men. The wily demand of the Congress and the wary refusal by the Governor had woven around the constitution a wicked Gordian knot, too wicked to be unravelled, too weird to be disenchanted. The Congress Comus had enchanted the Lady of the Constitution and riveted her frame to an apparently endless deadlock.

“ Without the rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the lady that sits here,
Bound in strong fetters fixed and motionless”

This was the constitutional plight in which the constitutional Governor found himself, though in this painful plight he did not continue long. From amidst the clouds of deadlock flashed forth the lightning bright that lit the Governor's path and lightened his burden awhile. When everyone had failed him, the valorous figure of a warrior valiantly rushed to his rescue. If, like the Angel in the “Comus” disenchant he couldn't, Alexander-like at least, he cut the knot asunder. He cut the knot with the sharp edge of his courage and the blunt end of his conscience. He cared for the Crown so much



that he dared his countrymen courageously and called it an act of patriotism. To carry on His Majesty's Government he formed his Council of Ministers and called it a piece of loyalty. Who could this warrior be and who so brave as he? And who does not know it's Sir Kurma Reddy?

By this single stroke of bold acceptance of office Sir Kurma has earned a certain place in history. It is no place of enviable brilliance but of poor-souled bravery. His is an act of desperate heroism that is hardly popular and positively harmful. Job-starved Toadies and power-mad Pauls might jump at the offer. But politicians with an ounce of reputation to lose would have fled from the temptation. So had it happened in Madras too. A "C. R." would not touch it with a pair of tongs, at any rate at that moment. A Sastri would not see it with a pair of glass and a Bobbili would not honour it with a nod of his head. But a Sir K. V. Reddy would raise an altar for it and religiously kneel and worship at it. There are only three parties in the country and the respective spokesmen of all the three sternly rejected the offer then. But what was poison to a "C. R." and a Sastri was the very meat to the Kurmas and the Palats. By accepting to work what all the rest had spurned at Sir Kurma had shown beyond a shadow of doubt that he belongs to no party and had belonged to none. Even after laying down his office after a brief spell, he is occupying only the cross benches in the council. "Patriotism is not the monopoly of the Congressmen" Sir Kurma heroically told us and proceeded to explain himself thus: "I accepted the responsibility of running His Majesty's Government not because I arrogantly felt that I alone

could step into the breach and save the situation but because I felt that I owed a duty to the country and because I felt I could not willingly allow the Congress to wreck the constitution, without throwing in my little weight with that of persons who respected law and order."

Never was the act of an Indian politician more ruthlessly condemned by a nation. Never before had a profuser crop of no-confidence resolutions flooded the country and filled up the Papers. Biding the "pelting of the pitiless storm" of public opinions and rage, Sir Kurma Reddy sensuously revelled in that "ecstasy of woe" and "died of the rose" of power in its "aromatic pain". The undying epithets that Pitt had poured on Carteret came trippingly from the tongue in connection with Sir Kurma. "Every patriot has his price", "the State is given as a prey to the Statesmen" are some of the doctrines of political philosophy which seem to have been common to Walpole and Sir Kurma alike. For months it had been raining execrations. But like the Princess in the Arabian Tales Sir Venkata Reddy stopped his ears tight, and unmoved by the shrillest notes of abuse and the awful mudslinging, walked on without once looking round, straight towards the Golden Fountain. He was all tongue and no ears.

A heterogenous band of hardly eminent men herded themselves together and hailed themselves a happy family. The sliken chord of selfishness alone constituted their cementing factor. The amazing feature of that amusing team was that not one of them represented a general constituency. One of them represented a microscopic minority for which

even the ceremony of an election was avoided. The second represents a Muslim constituency while the third represents a Christian one. One of the rest was voted for by the Jennies, while the last of them hails from the depressed classes. These are the sectional democrats that sat in the cabinet and spoke for the province. The painful cup of flouted democracy became full when a nominated entity of the Upper House began to captain this motly crew. "Last came and last did go the Pilot of the Gallelean Lake." Sir K. V. Reddy neither belongs to a party nor is backed by one. The other provincial ministries could have hardly excelled this uniqueness.

The Interim Ministry in Madras was the modern edition of the "Seven Tailors" *minus* one. It was a ministry of no talénts and all mediocres. They were the lineal descendants of the English Rockingham Cabinet, literally answering to its description by Lord Macaulay. "The oldest man living could remember no Government so weak in oratorical talent and official experience. The general opinion was that the ministers might hold office during the recess but that the first day of the debate in Parliament would be the last day of their power". "It is" said Charles Townshend "mere lutestring, pretty summer-wear. It will never do for the winter". An apter description of the Interim Ministry none has given. In the immortal words of Winston Churchill "They were a class of Right Honourable Gentlemen—all good men, all honest men who were ready to make great sacrifices for their opinions, but they had no opinions. They were ready to die for truth, if only they knew what truth was. They were weary of office; they

wished anything would relieve them of its cares; but their patriotic duty compelled them to remain, although they had no opinions to offer, holding their opinions undecided and unflinching like George the Second at the Battle of Dettingen, *sans peur et sans avis*".

Sir K. V. Reddy is supposed to have belonged once upon a time to the Justice Party in Madras. As now, so before, he was never of the party though of course in it. The only party he knows and the only party he has ever recognised is that under his turban—that of K. V. Reddy. No doubt he was one of those numberless gems and pearls that were dug out from the depths of dark obscurity and provincial backwaters and that floated on the crest of foaming communal waves and flashed across the shores and found a market value. A successful member of the mofussil Bar and an efficient hand in Local Self-Government, Sir Kurma Reddy was not an unfit choice to adorn the Justice Ministry formed in 1920. He was easily acclaimed the cleverest. State-Aid-To-Industries Act is the certain *magnum opus* of his singular period of office. So far he was a good party-man. In 1923 the second ministry was formed by that august statesman Panagal; Sir K. V. Reddy expected a place in it, as of right. But exigencies of party and equitable division of spoils excluded Mr. Reddy inevitably from office. And now broke the slender thread of a never-too strong tie of party loyalty and discipline. Crossing the floor without compunction he cast in his lot with the opposition. He swelled the ranks of the rejected renegades and strengthened the hands of the disgruntled dare-devils. The monstrous, consuming Ego of his has a complete mastery over him. Its mandates he obeys by impulse.

“As a man, he seems to be excessively selfish but very sober, wary and far sighted in his selfishness, and he seems to know better than most people know what he really wants in life and to pursue what he wants with much more than ordinary steadiness and sagacity.” Finding his party of no more use, Sir Venkata Reddy fished out in the waters of official favours. With itching hands and watering tongue, he waited for the chance of his life. And it was not late in coming. The unusually lively and historic Session of the Justice Confederation at Coimbatore offered him an opportunity to out-herod Herod. He and his friends vehemently protested against the proceedings of the Confederation, which had permitted its members to join the Congress and passed a resolution condemning Lord Goschen. By repudiating both the resolutions and seceding from the party as the righteous Right Wing, Sir K. V. Reddy showed off his independence and splendid loyalty to Government. And such signal services seldom go in vain. Sir Kurma was appointed to succeed Mr. Sastri as Agent-General in South Africa. After his return from South Africa yet another period of waiting ensued. As a member of the Council of State he was for sometime baiting for the favour of Government. Yet another chance offered a still better reward. Sir Kurma was appointed Law Member to the Government of Madras. Once inside the holy shrine, he worked his way with wonderful care and reached the sanctum of the throne. Retirement, promotion and rare luck conspired to make him the Cabinet's vice-president and the clever leader of the House. Lord Erskine went on leave and the lucky Reddy acted for him. The same primrose path to the Provincial Satrap's throne Sir Usman and, Sir Kurma trod in quick

succession. The second of the Indian Governors of Madras, Sir K. V. Reddy is easily the first in ability. He rose above the heights of Usman and eclipsed his imponderable self.

Culture enough he has with which to commerce on high but "the finest flower of human culture" he can never be. He has not even the Indian culture at its best. His is a tall and well-built figure of dark complexion, dressed in dark-blue suit, ever with a double-breasted coat. A crown-like, broad and well-shaped turban glowing with the white of the glittering snow, is perched on his head with its front a bit raised and it lends him a perfect grandeur. A pair of sharp eyes of penetrating look pierce through the spectacles of bright rimmed gold and make him a picture of magnificent Statesman. Among the Madras Publicmen none could look the Governor's part and none could act it well with grace, as much as Sir Kurma, save of course a "C. P." Unlike his Indian predecessor, he availed himself of his lift to the full and drank the cup of power to its dregs. Systematic tours and special saloons impressed his office on the public mind; State Balls and varied ceremonies lent his regime a glamorous splendour. He has always an eye to the effect and he never missed the chance of displaying his fireworks from the dizzy elevation even on the horizon of his native Ellore town. The rarest of human privileges of revisiting one's native place when resting on the summit of power, Sir Kurma created and sumptuously enjoyed. "I am reminded of those early days" harangued this acting Governor at Ellore, in eloquent vein reminiscent of historic persons of eminence. And a wonderfully elated people cheered their hero to

the echo and sang his anthem in chorus. He looked like the Governor to the manner born. He also presided over the annual convocation of the Andhra University as its accredited Chancellor. This K. V. Reddy the Chancellor, and that C. R. Reddy the Vice-Chancellor, meeting together on the self-same platform made history for a while. Each adventurer exploring the Everest in his respective sphere met the other in a mementous forum, moved by a mighty hand. They compared notes and complimented each other, crowned as they stood in their respective careers. The congregation knew not this communication in silence. The obtrusive and oppressive Andhra in the acting Governor would have devoured this agreeable sight with ravenous delight. It was a flow of manna and a feast for his soul.

Sir Venkata Reddy is a typical Andhra rather than a typical Indian. A protagonist of the Dravidian culture, his patriotism is anything but national. His patriotism is not even provincial. It is limited to his linguistic area. He can hardly look beyond that bounded horizon. He is a 'chinese wall' of clannish exclusiveness. Dislike for the rest and decided love for his clan divide his heart's allegiance. By temperament and training he is unfit to be a nation's august plenipotentiary. Hence the staleness of his South African term. Sir K. V. Reddy scruples not to adorn with his own good people every place in Madras from the dinner tables to dizzy sinecures. "In the purest age" says Macaulay "there will be abundance of jobbery". With the purest person also jobbery is no sin. Sir Kurma's saturated philosophy of jobbery applies to award no less than to acceptance of office. Friendship for this patron is a free pass-port to favours.

Sir K. V. Reddy roams in the woods of politics not in search of salvation but in search of situations. A story is told of two Irish Placemen who were discussing appointments. "I don't mind confessing" said one "that *ceteris paribus*, I prefer my own relations." "My dear fellow," replied the other "*ceteris paribus* be damned." I think I hear Sir Kurma laughing in joyous agreement.

The exchequer of Sir Kurma's mind is neither rich nor poor. It has enough of the evil unto the day thereof. It is not the fertile mines of the Golconda, brimming with rubies and flowing with bright emeralds. Nor is it a Sahara, entirely barren of fauna and foliage. It is not a Bank of the Rothschilds, with chests full of gilt-edged securities swaying the markets of the world. But it is a middle class bank of the *marvari* type with capital enough to lend and credit enough to borrow. His mind is a B 1 soil with a bare single crop. Yet it is his mighty luck to have put his sickle to a profuser harvest, far in excess of the fertility of the soil. Yet it is his infinite fortune to have enjoyed a windfall in office, out of all proportion to the shares of talents he holds. His voyage on the waters of high political life was without the chart of a purpose and without the compass of a philosophy. The favourable gales of opportunism dragged his vessel into dazzling ports; his fiery passion for selfishness anchored his vessel around Treasure Islands.

South Africa is said to be the grave of reputations. This might be true of Europeans, mostly so of Lord Milner whose tomb of reputation towers above the rest. As for Indian politicians it has not been so. South Africa was the cradle of the saintly

reputation of a Gandhi. South Africa was the nursing Home of the stately reputation of a Sastri. Sastri's powers of sweet persuasion and sonorous eloquence, gentle humour and generous statesmanship were drawn out and developed only in that land of woeful racial wars. After a crowded period of office, abounding in achievements and altogether healthy, Sastri returned to India with laurels on his brow and thanks on Indians' lips. He had recuperated his health and reputation alike and left behind in South Africa living monuments of his term. Never was an incumbent more unlucky in his predecessor than was Sir Kurma in the Right Honourable Sastri. "To equal a predecessor one must have twice his worth". Sir K. V. Reddy could not equal his predecessor for the simple reason he has not Sastri's worth. Sir Kurma's tenure of office even if it produced some results, was certainly a chapter without charm. To an average Indian citizen his South African episode is completely a sealed book. He conquered not an inch of ground for his fellow country-men; he carved not the least of niche for his name in South Africa. No achievement worth the name was noted down in diary; no accession of reputation swelled his breast with pride. It was all a tame affair, mere marking of time. South African office neither reduced his prominence nor raised his prestige. It was simply a tropical rest-house. If not his tomb of reputation, neither was it his temple of fame. Hence it was a false bravado that Sir Kurma indulged in on the floor of the House during the debate on the India Act. Some one interrupted his simple, prosaic speech and said "You succeeded Sastri". He felt it perhaps on the spur of the moment an aspersion on his undoubted merits and assuming a heroic pose retorted "Yes, I succeeded

Sastri and I succeeded him well". This amazing arrogance stupified the House and drew forth no cheers. Succeed Mr. Sastri he certainly did but he did not succeed him well. Sastri is a sonnet of sonorous sound and rythm; but Sir Kurma Reddy is a simple heroic couplet. Sastri's is the soulful music of the divine orbs. Kurma's is the doleful noice of the shrill notes of the pipe. And it makes all the difference.

Sir K. V. Reddy is no orator but certainly he is no mean a speaker. Effective, sober and occasionally eloquent, his is a style of Victorian verbiage. His parliamentary eloquence does not blaze into sudden flashes of dazzling brilliancy. He seems to have enjoyed a certain amount of celebrity, at least in the early days as a speaker of eminence. By dint of his 'gifted tongue' he went to England representing the Dravidian Association for giving evidence before the Joint Select Committee of Parliament in 1919. Withal, he is only a second-rate speaker at his best. The back ground of his speeches is a faked consciousness of power and an imaginary possession of genius. He brings his palms together and puts them in each other's grip at rhythmic intervals and raises his right hand a little. He sways his body forward and backward, stooping in front a little and strikes out a theatrical pose of sombre look and studied gravity. With a voice that is loud enough and not over musical, Sir Kurma speaks in a monotonous, dragging manner with sudden jerks and pauses. He is not very fluent. But he has enough of flow and speed to escape a fall or a faltering.

As Leader of the House and Spokesman of the Treasury Bench Sir Kurma rose amidst tense

excitement and pindrop silence to reply to the debate on the Government of India Act. The general level of the opposition speeches was strikingly high and its tone effective. Many a point of constitutional weight and worthy consideration were raised and elaborated as defects of the Act. They called forth a superior debating skill to meet them effectively. A marked capacity for subtle legerdemain of sophistry and hairsplitting logic could have pulverised the case of the opposition. And such a power was certainly expected of Sir Kurma. And Sir Kurma rose to speak but alas, he never rose to the occasion. He had lost his moorings and found himself in the vague and wayward currents of shibboleths and generalisations. Not a striking period was forged nor a point was answered. The dull, ineffective, verbose speech left the House chill and lulled them into a stupor. Sir Kurma had lapsed into the boring strain of a pedantic pedagogue and harangued the House on the benefits of Pax Britannica. Police forces and post offices, law and order and light tramways were the pregnant arguments of the Government spokesman in favour of the India Act. His reputation as a speaker leapt down to zero degree and left him to chew the cud of his performance.

Humour he attempts in general ; its success is not always certain. Genuine, successful humour needs the laughter of a kind soul. Word twisting and lip-deep smiles make no headway with the masses. Geniality alone could generate geniality and in that precious commodity Sir Kurma is poor. The first glimpse of his trait of humour that he indulged the public with after his resumption of a place in the Madras Cabinet was with reference to buttermilk for prisoners. The echo of the tragic battles waged

around the sea of buttermilk had hardly died from our memory and to this melancholy matter he applied his icy wit. "The first thing the Honourable Members will ask me will be to supply buttermilk to prisoners and I will have to answer with the usual 'No'." At a particular St. Andrew's Dinner Sir Venkata Reddy replied to the toast of India and made a humorous speech which was a better success.

A partisan Andhra, a doting father, and a scrupulous Hindu, Sir Venkata Reddy is a Vaishnavite to a fault. In these days of sickening pursuit of social reform and religious revolution, Sir K.V. Reddy studiously sticks to orthodoxy. Extremism in any sphere—religious, social or political—is anathema to him. To be sure, he is not one of those hypocrites who follow religion only when "religion walks in silver slippers, when the sun shines and when the people applaud". Methinks he is to Vishnu what Sir Rajan is to Muruga. His very name Venkata links his heart and soul to the Lofty Diety at Tirupati lording over the universe. Venkata Reddy's orthodoxy and simple faith are really bordering on the fanatic. He gladly leads the Holy Procession of Umbrellas made in pious dedication to the Diety at Tirupati. Immediately after the Interim Ministry was formed this favoured Bhakta of Perumal flocked to the Hills with his family and sent forth his fervent prayers and thanks.

Remission of Land Revenue to the tune of seventy-five lakhs is alone the brilliant record of his office. Heaven itself might shower on him its choicest gifts and goods; and even His Majesty's Government might confer on him a peerage. But

the hearty thanks and hilarious hallelujahs of his grateful countrymen he certainly cannot have. He had of late the chance of his life to prove to the world at large and his countrymen that he too is capable of sacrifices and sufferings but unfortunately he has missed it. As the President of the Provincial Anti-Hindi Conference held at Conjeeveram, Sir K. V. Reddy boldly championed the cause of the historic Dravidian culture and its hoary group of languages and proclaimed in unambiguous words that he too would march into the Penitentiary, if the Congress Government persisted in its compulsory introduction of Hindi. That even in a Sahara of selfishness pleasant oases of pulsating life and sacrificial incense could flourish and relieve the dreariness, could very well have been demonstrated. But unfortunately that was not to be. With the majority of publicmen precept and practice, promise and fulfilment are in perpetual clash with each other; and Sir K. V. Reddy has not gone to jail. When History shall prepare his eternal Balance Sheet, neither his reduction of land revenue nor his stoppage of resettlement could successfully plead with their claims for the gratitude of posterity. Without being a great man, Sir Kurma Reddy has held the greatest offices in our Province.

MR. S. SATYAMURTHY,

M.L.A.

"The most successful politician" said Franklin Roosevelt "is he who says what everybody else is thinking most often and in the loudest voice". Judged by this test, though a questionable one, the most successful politician of Madras is Mr. Satyamurthy. "I can't help it", said the Lord-High-Everything-Else, "I was born sneering". Mr. Satyamurthy could equally well say "I can't help it, I was born shouting". He shouts at the top of his voice the shibboleths and slogans of Swaraj, whenever he spares us the music of his sneers at his foes. His name is synonymous with noise. He is the noisiest of politicians in the south as much as in the north. He is a megaphone on two legs and even when he whispers the noise travels to the four corners of the province. Coarseness of fibre and hardness of integument are his main qualifications for politics. He is an intellectual bruiser of an excellent type and calibre. He is the bully of the South Indian politics, "as bully as a bull moose". He catches the beat of his countrymen's pulse and crying out his war-cries and beating on his big-drums, carries on the grim fight from battle to battle.

"Rough, tough, we are the stuff;
We want to fight, and can't get enough".

Wherever there is the crowd, there is this warrior proud. With all his volubility, few men of



distinction have less to say. You will search his speeches in vain for one true vision, one flight of imaginative sympathy, one note from that elemental string of humanity that 'old Abbey' used to touch with such thrilling power. It is all sounding brass and tinkling symbols. It is as though Martin Tupper has come to life and taken to politics. He is the loudest drummer-boy of the Congress.

Mr. Satyamurthy is a celebrated speaker of South India with a strong claim to a place in the sanctum of the oratorical muse. He is the most virulent speaker and certainly one of the best. Eloquent in its loftiest sense he is not and any one with a negative genius can never be. But his studied rhetoric certainly succeeds in rousing the fierce and false passions of mankind. He has neither the sober and stately eloquence of a Sastri nor the Niagara flow of an "A. R.". The style of Mr. Satyamurthy is peculiarly his own with nothing in common either with the epigrammatic and sententious flow of a Ramalinga Reddy or with the imperious strain and elegant aroma of a C. P. Ramaswamy. Neither depth of thought nor originality of utterance distinguishes his oratory. The strength of his eloquence lies in his smashing blows and sabrerattling. The "swash-buckling swagger" of strikingly martial strain constitutes his forte and lends his speeches its colour and strength. Eternally blatant and brawling, he wrecklessly brandishes his sword and revels in the thrusts into the flesh of reeling foes. He knocks on the heads of his nefarious enemies like Giant Despair in Pilgrim's Progress. He has the quality of 'damnable iteration' in him. Mr. Satyamurthy's voice is none too pleasant. It is loud no doubt; but it is far from being musical. It

is coarse and bronzelike and it resounds to the echo. His sentences are usually short and unusually sharp. He digs out his words from the depth of his lungs and pours them out in a military array in his ponderous voice, with a prolonged pronunciation. He never minces his words. He is remarkably emphatic and even impartial in his distribution of emphasis. Each of his sentence is by itself an idea, entirely self-sufficient. The last word of every sentence has apparently felled a foe, has obviously ruined a character. Hence it ends with a jerk and emphasis of a perspiring hero. The blow of every utterance falls with the certainty of a nasmyth hammer. It is equally fatal. The genius of looking supremely earnest Mr. Satyamurthy has and that is the spell with which he mesmerises his audience and makes it his slave for the nonce. He usually touches the vibrant chords of jealousy and hatred on the organ of human passions and releases those floods of feelings against his foes. With the singular advantage of being out of office, he satirises "the job-hunters of the Justice Party" and works up the mobs with his wily insinuations into maddening fury and maniacal hatred. With the wordy picture of poverty painted in lurid colours he weaves his magic incantations and weans away the public from loyalty to the Government. He is always at his best while attacking the Government or accusing the "communalists".

With his close-khaddar coat of coarse texture and plain, his ordinary face with the orthodox marks of holy ashes and sandal paste, with his habitual turban of white-laced khaddar and the long-laced upper cloth encircling his neck, Mr. Satyamurthy constitutes a picture of an unimpressive

pedagogue that has apparently strayed out of his class room and has arrogated to himself the political platform. His spectacles of thick and black rims certainly make him respectable but never imposing. But other and stranger causes than these make him a power on the forum and the mounted dais. He is a Brahmin, at once with the Press and public opinion at his feet. He is a Congress-man which *ipso facto* imparts to him an inviolable sanctity of motives and means and eternally protects him from any sort of imputation, charge or accusation. He had been to jail and this "residential qualification" clothes him with a hallow of a selfless martyr, who wears the badge of suffering. Above all he has got an unlimited license to use the name of Mahatma Gandhi, that magic mantra of "Open Sesame" which flings open the gates of popular hearts and allegiance, and which facilitates the depredations of many a false patriot. Mahatma Gandhi is the seductive music of this Pied Piper of Madras politics which has lured the uninstructed into the depths of nationalism. That name is the magical locks of this mighty Samson and shorn of such locks, he is simple and feeble like a child.

Complex and multicoloured is the armoury of his styles and carefully does he use it on different occasions. His is not the same style in all places and situations. You can as well expect the summer to last all the seasons of the year. He is an oratorical thermometer that adjusts itself to and reflects the diverse temperatures of the different audiences. At one of the meetings of the European Association he was asked as to how it was that the impression conveyed by him to the student audiences at beach meetings was entirely different from

the impression conveyed by that evening's speech. Mr. Satyamurthy is reported to have replied that the drawing room style of speech was unsuited to and different from the beach style of oratory. His beach style of oratory is exhibited on the sands of the beach and employed with a deftness and courage that will amaze the audience and transport them into deliriums of joy. The other style of oratory he often enough exhibits in the Congress House and Gokhale Hall where his own party-men and Boswellian admirers throng the platforms and overflow the halls, ready to roar with cheers even at the feeblest of jokes and thus encourage him into the most vituperative vilifications of the opponents. This style is his favourite one, abounding in cheap sneers, slanderous charges, thundering invectives and slaying sarcasms. This is only a little more dignified and a little less virulent than his beach style of oratory. Then comes his Council style of oratory. On the floor of the Legislative Council or Assembly Mr. Satyamurthy rises in his seat on the opposition benches and sends forth his systematic knocks on the Treasury Bench, thundering in patriotic vein about "the inviolable birth-right of the Indian Nation to be free" and "the insult by the Government being avenged by the people". There is then his drawing room style of oratory which is sparingly employed on special occasions and in secret Select Committees. The European Association is indulged with the soft music of such a silken style, when he will "roar you as gently as any sucking dove or a nightingale". His "Buodoir" style of speaking he still more sparingly employs to please and placate a select gathering of ladies and gentlemen in the Hotel Bosotto or the Hotel Cecil. The best and subtlest style is his bed-room

oratory and he regales with his lyrical music only the regal persons of the rank of Viceroys and Governors. It is so unlike his other styles that they will be struck by the wonderful metamorphosis of the roaring lion into such a sucking dove. He lulls the mighty occupants of the Viceregal gadi into a sense of sweet security and makes them wonder for all time what a gentleman he is! He is a *chameleon* in styles with a palate of diverse hues.

Mr. Satyamurthy is a man of many views as much as he is an orator of many styles. He is a thorough-going nationalist eternally athirst for freedom and endlessly working for that end. But his views on men and matters vary with every day if not with every hour. The only things on which he has clear cut and unchanging opinions are three: they are, 'Swaraj' must be achieved; Justice Party must be buried; and Satyamurthy should be a Minister. Whatever might be the fate of his opinions on other things, his opinions on these three are essential and immutable. Even of these three the last one is too important to brook even the delay, which the achievement of the first two will inevitably entail. He is impatient with time and impatient with everything else. With his eyes on this triple goal steadfastly fixed, he wanders in the woods like Alice in the Wonderland. Sometimes he is seized with the demoniac frenzy for Swaraj and abandons himself to the sway of his ardent muse of oratory. Next time he dreams of the ghost of the nefarious communal party and nothing could suppress his cravings and rantings that rush out to rebuke the ghost. His ego gets instantly fretful and heaves out a sigh of mortification, mad after a place in the Ministry which looks like a 'Will O'

the Wisp' and the wayward mirage. All those storms of passions alternately blow into his soul and afflict it with a commotion that upsets his mental poise. He falls a prey to the consuming passions of indignation at his own powerless state and envy at the pigmies in power and lets forth his tongue unchecked to exhaust his burning lava. He becomes an inspired Oracle and beams out mysterious opinions just on the spur of the moment. About the same man or anent the same thing he gives out a series of glaringly opposed views, each of them couched in entirely different style from that of the other. He is a throbbing bundle of eloquent contradictions, a *chameleon* of views and styles in varied colours. If the Dr. Jekyll of his patriotic self dazzles the country with his daring effrontery to the rulers, there is the Mr. Hyde of his ambition billing and cooing the Britisher. "Down with imperialism and drive out the Europeans bag and baggage" cries forth this Demosthenes to a frenzied audience on the beach. Here is the veritable lion roaring with the majestic flow of its mane. Just a few days more and a cordial invitation is got from the Europeans of Anamalai to regale the planters with his refreshing eloquence. In the cool atmosphere of the hilly forum, the thermometer shows a sudden fall and the temperature of his speech is amazingly zero. He is all affection for these friendly 'aliens' and would drink with them, and speak with them though he would not pray with them. He disclaims socialism as the creed of the Congress and defines its goal in none too terrible a manner. Independence gets dwindled into Dominion Status when elevated to the heights of Anamalai Hills and the favour of their inhabitants. The lion on the beach slowly changes shape and

licks the hands of the Whites like a little Pussy. Mr. Satyamurthy is unashamed of it all. In lurid colours he pictures the painful tragedy of Amritsar, illustrating by eloquence the heartless ways of the White race. Just a few days more and the Justice Ministry provoke him. He comes out with his load of curses and contrasts the Britishers' kindness with his own brethren's cruelty. To an amazed nation he announced that "an Englishman will shoot with more mercy than the Justice Ministers". To him, anything is good, nothing is too bad to damn the Justice Party with. "Swaraj is the goal of the Congress" he swears by his most sacred Gods; "Congress is the only party and the Government is its opponent" courageously declares this anti-communal hero. But, while adducing his evidence in the Court, he vows and assures the country that the fight in this province of Madras is between the Congress and the Justice—the Justice Party is its only enemy and its annihilation the goal of Congress. In ancient Greece it was a point of honour to leave one's country and cleave to one's party. His party is greater than the nation for this paragon of patriotism. He is mightily proud of such monstrous contradictions; he is never ashamed of them.

"Do I contradict myself?

Very well then I contradict myself:

I am large; I contain multitudes."

Mr. Satyamurthy is the most destructive of critics. He is the greatest abuser of our time and the most offensive speaker. He revels in the act of rousing the hatred of the people against his rivals and foes. He is certainly a Hero of a hundred platforms. Throughout the country he has toured

and the hamlets of Tamil Nadu have at one time or other echoed and re-echoed his hard shouts in the air. For his equally facile mastery over his mother-tongue adds to his enormous power on the platform. He has a decided advantage over many of his compeers, whose ability to talk in their own mother tongue is worse than nothing. Mr. Satya-murthy is as good a success in his destructive task as he is a failure in his constructive speeches. Roaring laughter and repeated cheers will regulate his Philipics against a Bobbili or the British Government. But a dumb sufferance and dullness alone are produced on the audience by his 'Ten Year Plan' speeches. He is stale and commonplace, a machine-like repeater of memorised items. He is at his worst. For his mind and tongue have neither the fire of original genius nor the illuminating flash. You could easier expect the scissors to stich and a needle to cut than expect Mr. Satya-murthy to construct. He is a gifted iconoclast, a prophet of negative platitudes. "These people do not exhaust the possibilities of ministerial talents" is the type of his characteristic negations. "I am a patriot" is altogether absent and "He is a traitor" is the life and soul of his eloquence. He has no comfort in fixed principles; as soon as anything is settled in his own mind, he quarrels with it. "He has no satisfaction but in the chase of his foes; he runs a question down, worries and kills it, then quits it like vermin, and starts some new game to lead him to a new dance and give him a fresh breathing through fog and brake, with the rabble yelping at his heels and the leaders perpetually at fault. He thinks it is as good as cudgel playing or singlestick. He likes the cut and thrust, the falls, the bruises and the dry-blows of an

argument. An argument does not stop to stagnate and muddle in his brain." His ideas are served up like pan-cakes hot and hot. Fresh theories give him fresh courage. He is like a young and lusty bridegroom that divorces a favourite speculation every morning and marries a new one every night. He is not wedded to notions, not he. He makes the most of the last thought that has come in his way, seizes fast hold of it, rumples it about in all directions with rough, strong hands, has his wicked will of it, takes a surfeit and throws it away. His facility for forgetting old ones is more remarkable than his forging of new ones. He does not pretend to consistency and cuts a principle with as much indifference as Antipholus of Ephesus cut Ægeon of Syracuse.

Mr. Satyamurthy is great in attack, not in defence. So long as the audience is sympathetic and cheering, he is a bravado and a fearless hero vomiting fire and sword against his vile and venal foes. But this wordy courage has no corresponding personal courage in him. In this he is the opposite of Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. No doubt when he is interrupted with a hostile question, he musters courage enough to give a crushing retort. But when he apprehends personal violence or vile abuse from an unruly section of the audience, he turns tail and literally runs away for life. In more than one place he has never been suffered to open his lips. Many are the occasions when the mere consciousness of his opponent's presence has made him mumble a soul-less speech and disown his wonted courage. Like an over-grown schoolboy he is used to have it all his own way, that he cannot submit to anything like competition

or struggle for mastery; he must lay on all the blows and take none. He is a Big Ben in politics who will fall upon others and crush them by his weight but is not prepared for resistance and is soon staggered by a few smart blows. He has been all but assaulted on many a platform and he has many a time sneaked away from the infuriated mob. He is so provoking and so much hated: he is so much lacking in personal courage. He has himself confessed that he cannot face a hostile house. There are occasions when Mr. Satyamurthy definitely scores against his interrupters and dashes their reputation to pieces. Once he was addressing an audience at Trichy on the need for promoting vernacular in schools. A jealous Tamilian in the audience, thinking that wide scholarship alone would warrant one to speak of a language asked Mr. Satyamurthy "Have you read Tholkappiam?" Instantaneous was his retort and crushing in its immediate effect though the reply was as irrelevant as the question. He asked the questioner back "Have you read Chaucer?" amidst a roar of laughter that shamed the indiscreet questioner.

But there are equally good occasions when he puts a question in the Assembly only to be put out with damning retorts. Sir James Crerar was asked by him once as to what was the kind of report the C. I. D. had made against himself, *i.e.*, Mr. Satyamurthy. The reply was a sword-thrust to the defiant questioner. "The Hon. Member" said the Home Member, "is not so important as to deserve so prominent an attention."

Himself the most thick-skinned, he cares very little for the sensitiveness of his enemies. Whatever comes uppermost he vomits with glee and gusto.

When Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar was for a time absent from the Assembly, Mr. Satyamurthy volubly charged him with "gallivanting" in the land. Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar roundly threw up the cap of gallivanting in England and it flew and fitted the head of this fulminating patriot. He freely draws upon the fables of the Hindu Mythology and compares the Justice Leaders with the bloodiest of cruel monsters. He uses without the least compunction the third person singular in Tamil with reference to them—the greatest insult and the most ungentlemanly. The result is the bursting of boisterous volcanoes of infuriated Justicites and indignant Non-Brahmins. He did not spare a renegade of his community Mr. Sethuratnam Iyer, whom he described as "the actor playing the part of a woman". He described some other occupant of the Treasury Bench as being unfit to unloose the shoe-strings of another great man. He scruples not to call one a fool and when called upon to withdraw, he cunningly says "I shall withdraw". He explains it away by adding that he used the word in its 'Pickwickian sense'. He calls this one a Ravana and that one a Rakshasa and calls forth the cheers and the indignation alike. Though he talks a ton about encouraging Tamil, his views on the Tamil scholars rarely reflect his sympathy. "The Tamil Pandits do not deserve to be paid more than thirty rupees a month" he once declared at the Annamalai University and provoked a storm of protests.

Mr. Satyamurthy's view of the public is that of the philosopher who cried "The public, the public, how many fools does it require to make the public!"

He gives the least credit to the commonsense of the crowd and perhaps he is right.

“ He'd undertake to prove by force
Of argument, a man's no horse ”

Nay, he even goes to the extent of proving that man is a horse. At a meeting at Manamadurai, he gravely assured the gullible atoms of humanity collected there that if the Congress succeeded in the elections, rains could be summoned at any moment from the heavens and the dry river Vaigai would inundate the country all through the year. Apart from the absurdity of this promise, it has a peculiar ring of irony in view of the present famine conditions and scarcity of water obtaining in the province under the Congress regime.

Mr. Satyamurthy is a citizen of the Pudukottah State by birth. He is the son of a vakil and comes of an orthodox family of Sastris. He never forgets, amidst all his politics, his religion and his rigorous code of conduct. He is a typical Sastri. His small and central tuft of hair speaks to his scrupulous religiosity. His holy ashes and sandal paste marks proclaim his love for the hoary customs. He reminds himself often and the rest of the world that he is a venerable Brahmin by reference to Gita and by reciting high sounding passages from mediæval Sanskrit. He is a political Jekyll and a social Hyde. In all his wanderings into the wordy world of shibboleths you can never detect even a distant hint about social reform. What are his definite views on the Temple Entry question? He is delightfully vague in the public and is dangerously opposed in private. What again is his opinion on

inter-caste marriages? No one knows. What about the institution of Devadasis? He loudly pleads for its retention and quotes scripture for his purpose. He has unmistakably declared that he is for child marriage and that he would defy the Saradha Act by performing his girl's marriage below the age. But all his license to indulge the obscurantist in him Mr. Satyamurthy has got from a sympathetic public. Is he not at any rate better than a Malavya who carries his religion into England to the muddy extent of taking with him clay and Ganges water? This sandal-paste Sanathana of a Satyamurthy is more agreeable perhaps than the mud-and-water Sanathana of a Malavya!

Mr. Satyamurthy is enough of a scholar to be surfeiting in a sense of self-importance. His knowledge of English is great, acquaintance with Tamil strong and scholarship in Sanskrit sufficient. He orates in two languages and knows the literatures of three. He is constitutionally incapable of comprehending the insufficiency of his equipment or the inefficiency of his intellect. He has been to England twice, first in 1919 representing the Congress and then in 1925 on behalf of the Swarajist Party. He has established at the Head-quarters of the Empire a reputation as a speaker. The southernmost Ceylon or the northern province of the Punjab has satisfied his vanity by sweet words of praise. The Madras and Annamalai Universities have showered on him the honour of membership in their respective Senates, Syndicates and Academic Councils. He has given evidence for twenty years before Committees and Commissions. Constitutionalism is the other name for his conspicuous gifts of tongue. For twenty years and more he has been suffering

his talents to go to rust, ploughing the sands of his fortune and the Congress and sowing the seeds of future seats of power.

By a daring piece of revolt he had conquered the very Mahatma and constrained him to follow him! If, in 1924, he joined the ranks of the Swarajists under the banner of Chittaranjan it was more due to convenience and taste than due to conviction. His powers are not for the contact with the police rods or for gloomy musings behind the prison-bars. They are essentially and exclusively of a parliamentary type. After the death of C. R. Das, this unlucky prey to ambition was fretting and fuming in secret, following the lead of Gandhiji with a fatal lack of belief in it. The amusingly pathetic indecision of his to go to prison in 1930, his final determination to do the deed after making sufficient arrangements, and his Pickwickian way of courting prison by giving away a pamphlet or two are chapters in his life of a chagrined soul in despair. He demands "A" class and falls ill, gets transferred to the hospital and somehow gets the premature release and joins his family. Again, political needs impel him on to enter the gates of jail to acquire "residential qualification". But he gets finally fed up with this drama of insincere sacrifice and eternal suppression of his self. The moment Gandhiji dissolved the Congress in 1934, Mr. Satyamurthy heaved a sigh of relief and sped up to Patna to resurrect the defunct Swarajist Party. Boses and Jawahars were fading in foreign lands and behind the prison-bars but the orphan of the Congress was fathered by the Swarajist Party. Gandhiji, to make the best of a bad bargain turns the very Paul into his domineering disciple and blesses the

venture with bell, book and candle. "Parliamentary mentality has come to stay;" proclaimed the Pontiff of the Congress, "it is the modern Dharma in politics." The victory is thus the victory of Satyamurthy and well can he be proud of this achievement. The fashion of elections is being passionately practised; Councils and Assemblies are filled with the same august persons who had once occupied the prisons in India. A parliamentary transfer of the Congress ex-prisoners has actually brought the Congress in possession of the plums of office and ministry. It was this sweetest prospect that was keeping the spirits of Mr. Satyamurthy unflagging and alive. It was his

"Stern tyrannic thought that makes
All other thoughts its slave."

His whole life of the past three years was devoted at every step and minute to shape this end and accelerate this moment of acceptance of office. "If a P. T. Rajan and Kumaraswamy Reddy could be a minister, why not I?", he childishly consoled himself on the platform. He was impatiently looking forward to the epoch-making era when the Bobbili Ministry would go the way of the dead and a "C. R." and himself would adorn the Treasury Benches. At Vellore he cried out with the anguish of an expectant candidate, "I will die of broken heart, if I do not become a Minister." There was comedy as well as pathos in that cry. It was the unashamed cry of a soul writhing in agony at its starvation and neglect by an ungrateful world. Discipline he cast to the winds and delicacies he never cared for. He defied the Congress President Pandit Jawaharlal on the sands of the beach at Madras and daringly threw

out a challenge to him. "I will fight to the last ditches" he said "to see that the A. I. C. C. decides to accept office." As with Macbeth his ambition for the crown has sent a steel into his soul. To see and enjoy as the State's Minister the delectable sight of being saluted by the very hands of the Police which had handled the lathis against volunteers, he avowed with a childlike pride and simplicity was the *summum bonum* and ambition of his life. But alas! he found his political Yama and undertaker too near his own house. His irresponsible bravadoes had already manufactured an army of possible revoltors and one minute more of his eminence would have sown disruptions in the ranks. The shrewd "C. R." emerged from his voluntary exile, stepped in with his ominous smile and "kicked him downstairs with such infinite grace, you might think he was handing him up". "Would you be good enough to stand aside and oblige me with your constituency?" asks this wily leader and his requests are worse than commands. With equally good grace and a forced smile on the face, Mr. Satyamurthy obliges his leader by standing out and saluting. But who does not know the blood-dripping pluck of his heart from its seat it has cast to Mr. Satyamurthy? In one word, he fell ill.

It is his unlucky lot to be often enough the object of aversion in his own Congress camp. His actions and words alienate a section against himself. Twice no doubt he became the President of the T.N.C.C. and both the times he got in by manouvres. But more than twice he was defeated as a candidate for that post. Once at Vellore and now at Madras he has been rejected for the presidentship of the Tamil Nadu Congress. These defeats demonstrate

the weakness of his grip on the members. Nor is he happier when successful in such elections. After his election at the Conjeevaram Conference he applied to Gandhiji in all humility for the latter's blessings. But Gandhiji roundly refused to oblige him and sufficiently gave him a bit of his mind. "You are a tempter, if you deserve to succeed you will succeed" were the unenviable words of certificate of character the Mahatma used in reply to his request.

He assumes on occasions convenient attitudes at a heavy cost to his principles. He wonderfully accommodates men in power when there is a veil of secrecy. His opposition to the Annamalai University Bill in the dyarchic Council and his opposition along with some of his partymen to the Mody amendments to the Labour Legislation in the present Assembly would illustrate the statement. In spite of his Marathan speeches in the Assembly against the Criminal Law Amendment Act, his attitude towards the Madras Government which enforced the self same Act in this province will hardly do him credit.

Mr. Satyamurthy is a man of histrionic talents and has a strong love for music. The Suguna Vilas Sabha counts him as one of its assets among its stars; the melody of music gives him a peace of mind which even his hearty political game hardly affords him. He is ever proud of his bright little daughter. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever and he succumbs to the charms of beauty. He is singularly frank and communicative. He encourages the young and aspiring and grudges not his compliments to the deserving. He has therefore an eternal appeal to the youth of India, in spite of his fiftieth year.

What is to be the ultimate verdict of history on the life of Mr. Satyamurthy ? What is his permanent contribution to the Congress and to the country ? What is the leading feature of his philosophy of life, if he has any ? These are interesting questions which are interesting to answer. But suffice it for the moment to say that he is a great instrument of fight on the national side though he is not its brain or heart. To temporary electoral battles his talents and tongue might have contributed but to win the war of freedom what has he done ? He has no permanent philosophy or the passion to die for a cause. He lives to serve and serves to live, all by himself. Personal disappointments are apt to poison the well of his being ; his patriotism is often enough put to test. "He is heat without light, volition without direction, passion without purpose. He flashes from nowhere to nowhere—a trail of fire that bewilders the night. His words boil over in a flood ; but they turn no wheel and grind on corn " He is, like Garvin, "an emotion on two legs " fascinating but dangerous. He is hypnotised by his own visions, a Pied Piper piping through the desert with purposeless shouts. In spite of it all we hear him shout in hilarious tones "I can't help it ; I was born shouting ". Whether he shouts against Ministers or shouts for a ministry, the sound and the sensation are the same. And Mr. Satyamurthy is a shout and a sensation, a sound and fury signifying nothing.

THE RAJAH OF BOBBILI.

"No matter whether you are praised or abused, get discussed" said Lady Oxford and Asquith. The Rajah of Bobbili is the regal illustration of this Margotian dictum. Almost to the last minute of his laying down of his high office the Rajah of Bobbili was filling the minds of all as much as he was filling the columns of papers. Justicites and communal jingoes were jubilantly singing hallelujahs; Congressmen and chronic traducers were continually chanting the hymn of hate. To the soap-box orators of stupendous mental vacuum and corresponding moral poverty the singular name of Bobbili supplied the eternal theme. He was anathema to them. For five long years he was the favourite target of attack to the foul-mouthed demagogues of politics. Half the Congress adventurers paid their meal and milk scores by heartily abusing this Rajah. The abolition of Taluk Boards, his nominations of partymen, his award of jobs to favourites and obviously harmful bifurcations were "the shin of beef and gin" and "basket of coal" to the hungry political adventurers. He endured and survived such outrages with supreme indifference.

The celebrity he achieved and the sense of eminence he created were so staggering and great that the Rajah of Bobbili's became a household name. We find in his name a certain charm and romance, a novelty and a music that scarcely fail to stick up and generate a peculiar sensation. The mysterious reserve, the mighty youth and the majestic

appearance coupled with the legends of his courageous acts have made him the 'man of destiny,' a marvellously romantic figure. Though the most discussed man, the Rajah of Bobbili is the least popular public man. One in a thousand could have seen him and one in a million could have spoken to him. Everything the country knows about him is entirely hearsay. The reputation of Bobbili with the masses was severely left alone at the sweet mercy of two-penny papers. He is and was to the public what they picture him to be. The funniest of caricatures that filled these penny-papers stick into the parchments of the simple man in the street. He was to the public an unknown quantity of abominable politics. There grew up soon the legend of the Rajah of Bobbili the myth as distinct from the Rajah of Bobbili the man. It was this Bobbili of popular myth that swayed the minds of the public and served as food for scandals. Anything was believed about him; nothing was too harsh or unjust. Ravana and Nero are about the commonest comparisons with which the Congress Pymns and Hampdens colourfully caricatured him. And the story-loving simple minds devoured these silly fables and wondered at his depravity! He was very much like the Asquith of war-time, the object of monstrous fables. His name became the symbol of enthusiasm and fiercer hatred. Hatred of Bobbili was with the Congressmen and their crude variety of sentimental nationalists 'a frame of mind, a free-masonry and a kind of eleventh commandment'. Abuse of the Rajah Sahib's unlucky name pursued him in the buses, in the trains and trams, on the platforms and the pials. Mr. Lloyd George himself has told a story of a drowning man and his rescuer. When awarded a public testimonial, the simple,

honest man who had rescued disclaimed any credit for such an act and said "I jumped in, swam to him, turned him over to see that he wasn't Lloyd George and then pulled him out". Substitute the name of Bobbili for that of Lloyd George and the story will be the strongest reflection of the attitude of an average Madrasee towards him.

Fortune favoured Bobbili as it favoured Rosebury with the 'palm without the dust'. If in September 1932 anybody had asked "Who is the Rajah of Bobbili?", everyone would have echoed back, "Who is the Rajah of Bobbili?" None would have known him beyond the boundaries of his Estate and besides his Zamindar friends. Not even the Legislative Council of which he was a member could have known him much or noted who he was. But in October 1932 all this province was his own by virtue of his audacious conquest. He had taken the public by a storm and shot up on the sky like a rocket. 'A Bobbili—A Bobbili'—went forth the cry of wonder from Ganjam to Cape Comorin. It was echoed and re-echoed in every hall and habitation and it supplied the theme of comments to scores and dozens of papers. One formidable push had brought the fortress of Justice into the hands of this Hitler. One thunderous blow had felled the peasant leader and enthroned this scion of landlords. The Tanjore Confederation effected this leadership; it pulled down the simple Munusami and put up this youthful Bobbili. The pandemonium and scene that ensued and marred its proceedings recalled the Surat imbroglio. Furnitures were thrown in fierce hatred, shoes were hurled out with shrieks and imprecations and mud and stones were strewn with maniacal fury and wrath; the

Confederation became a bear-garden of confusion. Behind this sound and smoke, around these clouds and thunder was being effected a revolution which placed Bobbili on the throne. Venality and conspiracy paved his way to leadership, vile treachery and vicious tactics were his steps to the office. The golden key opened the throne room to Bobbili; the iron key shut amain the massy doors on Munu-sami. It was the historic reproduction of the heinous conspiracy which displaced Asquith by Lloyd George at 10, Downing Street, in 1916. There were also the Press Lords and Bonar Laws in this piece of conspiracy, each discharging his nefarious part to effect the common end.

The advent of Bobbili to power had the thrill of an exhilarating romance; it was highly dramatic. Yet Bobbili was no upstart. If title counts for anything, his hereditary title and highly honoured connections lend him an authoritative claim to leadership. The Justice party had claimed by way of benefactions and donations not a little from the Rajah of Talaprole, Bobbili's father-in-law. Nor was he a stranger or a *novus homo* in office. It was the late Rajah of Bobbili, his grandfather, that had anticipated his grandson by his own appointment to the Madras Cabinet as the first Indian member. He had beaten the track, created the precedent and set a princely example. He left to his successor the richest heritage of his estate and the rarest tradition of Cabinet Office. The Rajah of Bobbili simply trod the primrose path and reached the throne with ease.

The Rajah of Bobbili is the youngest member of any legislature on record, as he is also the youngest Chief Minister. 'As yet a child nor yet a fool to

fame,' the young scion was nominated at the age of twenty-four as a Member of the Council of State. He resigned the membership, to use his own words "as the proceedings of the House were dull and lifeless". Soon after in 1926 he was elected to the Madras Legislature. He assumed the office of Chief Minister when he was only thirty-two. Given the conditions of India, this is certainly a glorious achievement, reminiscent of the Younger Pitt's rarest record of Office.

Those who pass through the regular gradations of a classical education stand a cent per cent chance of being made fools by it. Such a classical education Bobbili did not have and as such has escaped the catastrophe. His was a private education, imparted in the atmosphere of healthy individualism and exactly suited to bring out his best. Brought up and educated far from the madding crowd, the Rajah Sahib of Bobbili had the best of self-development. The constant and vigilant care of a doting grandfather engrossed with the progress and success of the heir to the estate, left nothing to be desired either in his gamut of feelings or in his armoury of intellect. He is the finest flower of Indian culture, a perfect specimen of aristocratic gentleman. He had not, when he started his official career, suddenly and by a flash, a particle of political experience or a pound of strategy or tact. He started with a clean slate, on a clear and colourless sky. He had not the slightest impedimentum of principles. Nor was he anchored by the weight of policies. He kept his ears open and his tongue silent and with his native pluck navigated the waters of office.

On the eve of the Tanjore Confederation, when he performed the function of opening the portrait

of Panagal at Trichy, he was on his legs for the first time in his life as a public speaker and politician. He fumbled and faltered and murmured his typed manuscript speech in a melancholy and inaudible tone and shaking with shyness and nervousness, he dared not look at the audience. This was the figure that he cut on the first occasion the public knew him. But within a period of three years, he had made a progress that is certainly marvellous. The cool and deliberate attitude, the unperturbed appearance, and unobstructed though measured dropping of bomb-like sentences, the off-hand meeting of the charges of the opposition, the indifferent brushing aside of the irritating animosities of ill-tempered opponents—all these things make him an adept in the art of Parliamentary Government. He is quiet and unobtrusive as the criticism wanders around him. Then at the end he interposes with chill incisiveness and enormous gravity and the members feel that an end has come to the vapourings of irresponsible frivolity. The incisiveness may be studied, the gravity a little excessive. Nevertheless, a keen blade has been suddenly run through a bag of idle wind. He conveys no impression of enthusiasm and is as free from passion as an oyster. He talks with a low, smooth and wooing voice that lingers with staccatoes. His is a dragging intonation with a quasi-feminine voice.

A rather shortish figure of lovely, fair complexion, that is neither lean nor fleshy, and that is neatly dressed with taste but never in gaudy attire—is the picture of Bobbili. His hair is carefully parted and is all but nicely dressed up, though its shining darkness is strewn with silvery streaks. His face is full and broad which is beaming with a charm that is fine

and benign, and is brightened by the lustre of a pair of blazing eyes. His heavy lidded eyes that heave their searching look with leisure and rythm are the singular stamp of his family and his specially striking feature. It is an asset to him by itself and his jewelled ornament. You almost miss his countenance for his eyes; they appropriate a place that is abnormal. They are protruding in size and proclaim their existence by their flashes. His vertebral column is a little bit curved backwards and makes his belly protrude much in the Bonaparte manner. A pair of moustaches that is dark and full but almost æsthetically pruned counter-acts his grace that is bordering on the feminine and gives him the commanding look of a Rajput stripped for the fight. He walks with slow and deliberate steps, swinging his frame a trifle to the right and to the left with a rythm. With every step he takes he visibly carries up the body, which causes the swing and the rythm. And he walks like a horse in blinkers, with his unswerving vision to the front.

The Rajah of Bobbili hardly forgot the dual nature of his duty, until he lay down his office. Whenever he appeared in ordinary uniform with hat on, he was to be taken as the Honourable Minister in a commoner's clothes, as such discharging the democratic duties of his office. And invariably on such occasions he himself drove his car. But there were moments and particular occasions which called forth his appearance in the kind of formal dress that is characteristic of a Rajah. A long close coat usually of black hue and the laced little cap that sits with a princely grace proclaimed to the public his aristocratic appearance altogether unofficial. He is now the Rajah, the noble scion of a

historic House. And respectability and reserve envelope him with a rarer grip on such regal occasions.

An interview with the Rajah Sahib was quite an event in itself. There are only two individual personages with whom we do not converse or chat but have an 'interview'. And among the two, an interview with Bobbili was by far rarer and more difficult than an interview with His Excellency the Governor. For, once you fix up an interview with His Excellency you as surely see him at the appointed hour and be done with it for ever. It is just like attending the Blue-Mountain Express, at once punctual and unfailing. But not so easy was the incident of an interview with Bobbili. Fixing up the engagement itself will tire one's patience. After this ordeal, the second-degree method is in store for one. Inside the drawing room with portraits of Rajahs and full of trophies and weapons, expectant visitors have to spend their anxious hours by the watch, eagerly adjusting their shrinking collars and every now and then looking at the mirror. And the climax is yet to come. The visitor from the mofussil already wearied with rehearsing within himself the line of conversation he has to adopt with the Rajah will hail with evident relief the happy face of the clerk who approaches him after hours. 'May I go, Sir', the visitor anxiously puts in, almost expecting an apology from the clerk for the awful delay that was caused. The high-strung, nervous visitor is asked to come the next day as the Rajah Sahib had a sudden call from His Excellency. The interview system of the Rajah of Bobbili has alone done him more harm than all his enemies put together could have done. But one

who knows the whole of the situation and difficulties of the over-interviewed Rajah would in the end be inclined more to pity him than to blame him. He is in this respect more sinned against than sinning. I have myself heard him express his sensitiveness to the senseless complaints of the people on this score but he pictured to me also the vexatious and tedious process of harassing he underwent at the hands of his visitors : the same men repeating their silly requests, by applying for interviews very often, and other kind of visitors haranguing him by the hour on nothing in particular.

The moment a visitor is announced the Rajah of Bobbili stands up and awaits his arrival. A shake of the hand and a sweet, seraphic smile, and a simultaneous sweep of the flashing fiery eyes swallows in your figure, which sticks up to his retina. Instantly the upper lid bangs down with a dignity and directs the lens a bit downwards. All through the time your conversation goes on, he listens to you with attention, darting a full look at intervals and more often doing the talking by himself. The Rajah of Bobbili is a fine conversationalist. He has an engaging way and pleasing manners. You are hardly suffered to bore him with your lectures on the obvious and the dissertations on the commonplace. He has heard and known enough of such. But apparently there is a purpose in his appropriation of the major talk to himself. He is the rarest figure on record of a politician or minister least appearing in the public. To my knowledge, he has appeared in the public and addressed the audience of Madras but once, apart from his Presidentship of the Confederation of the S. I. L. F. that held its session at Madras. Hence with literally

no opportunity of taking the public into his confidence, the Rajah of Bobbili takes every individual into confidence and pours forth his heart.

In spite of such evidence of ingratiating confidence, the Rajah of Bobbili is a mystery. He is a mystery as a man, with the largest reserve of his mind. Except for a little portion, the whole expanse of his soul is the Imperial King's Forests impenetrably fenced with the barbed wire of silence and exclusively reserved for himself and his family. He is clothed in a suit of impenetrable mail. Holmes speaks of the two doors to one's self, one which keeps open to the world and the other through which only the privileged are permitted to enter or which is opened in moments of feeling or general confidence. In the case of Bobbili one feels that the key rusts in the lock of that secret door, though occasionally one or two might open it and peep in. During his journeys on the railways, he scrupulously observes purdah and very seldom exposes his person to the public. But he hardly mixes with the politicians beyond the extent of official needs. He never frequents a club or an association for the simple reason that he shuns the public gaze and shudders at the busy gossips. He heartily loves his polo and little group of equals, much better than the sickening murmurs of the madding crowd. "Manners are intended to keep fools at a distance" and by his studied manners Bobbili escapes the fools. He keeps himself at a distance "sounding the deeps of his heart in some still sanctuary of the recluse".

Bobbili is the Prince among the "pragmatic young men" in Ben Johnson's phrase. From the

mere bud of an inexperienced youth he miraculously blossomed into the most efficient minister. He had unsuspected powers of admirable intellect. He lived every minute and laboured incessantly to learn, digest and assimilate. He achieved within a very short time of his assumption of office an unquestioned title to 'infallibility'. He became a legend of labour. He may lack inspiration; but his powers of application and mastery over details are prodigious. He is the unrivalled master of the Curzonian calibre who could handle the "intellectual hiatus" of departmentalism with a high degree of courage. No matter what subject you raised bearing on his departments and portfolios, you found that this youthful minister astonished you with his accurate details and amazed you with his knowledge of intricate niceties. You almost feel humbled in his ministerial presence when he non-chalantly goes on murmuring the history of the Commissioner of Calicut or the tangle of the Panchayat at Tade-pallegudem. Not a single person nor a sentence escapes his notice or memory. And what an amiable contrast was he to his Congress successor in office who has candidly confessed, "We do not know where our files come and go."!

The days when the Council was in progress were the days of interminable labour for him. And the days when the "infernal" Inams Bill or the Estates Land Act were undergoing their periodic processes of painful births and bloody infanticides and resurrections, were to the busy Rajah Sahib days of no meals and no sleep. He used to work like an amanuensis tirelessly at a stretch for thirteen hours a day. Such a conscientious and pains-taking minister had never before adorned the

Treasury Benches. Adopting the lines of Sir William Jones we may aptly sing of Bobbili,

"Six hours to men, to soothing slumbers seven
Ten to the files allot, and all to heaven".

With such a ruthless and rigorous division of labour during the day of twenty-four hours, the warrior-like Rajah worked at his post for well-nigh five years. He had literally wearied out his body and worn out his brains. So he sojourned to England to enjoy a well-earned rest in the sweet company of his family.

The Rajah of Bobbili is the right royal specimen of a blue-blooded aristocrat. He has most of the virtues and a few of the vices of his tribe. There is no Zamindar without a hobby. And the hobby of Bobbili is horses. He is the Agha Khan of South India with an identical passion for the equestrian animals. Maintaining a stable of magnificent mares and throwing moneys in devotional love over them, the Rajah of Bobbili revels in the possession of such riches. Racehorses and polo horses roam in dozens and scores and are reared with a care and luxury that many an aristocrat might envy. If any of his horses has not so far won the Derby it is because none of them is in England. There was an unconscious coincidence when this "horse-maniac" assumed his office as minister at a time when a member of the Derby family was the Governor of Madras. "A kingdom for a horse" will gladly bid this Richard, not indeed on the battle-field but on the Polo-ground.

He is not merely an idle possessor of horses boasting of their breed and their profoundest speed.

He is an active sportsman, delighted to play with his horses. Polo is his pet game and favourite pastime. Even in the stress of inordinate political work he could surely spare for it an enjoyable hour or two. That is the one thing in the world he could ill spare. I wonder if he gives the balance of one hour in the couplet to Heaven or to meditation. I am inclined to believe, not. But I am quite sure that the best enjoyment of that bare hour would be to play his polo. He is an expert player with many a trophy to his credit. He handles the rifles too with considerable skill and has added to his fame as a shot by his variety of kill. His pet game of polo almost cost him his life but luckily he had a narrow escape. In the course of a play at Mysore this daughty rider was thrown down his horse and it literally rolled over his body and stopped short of crushing him to the dust. After his miraculous escape, he was advised to give up that game for ever or at least for some considerable time. He refused to do the former but reluctantly acceded to the latter. And during the period of abstinence and recovery I could perceive his plaintive yearning to be up and playing the game. But the suspense was cut short and Bobbili now plays the game.

The martial blood of his mighty ancestors courses through his veins. He is every inch a knight, an enormously brave man. He dares the thing and damns the consequences. The forewarning of the storm that was brewing at the Tanjore Confederation was duly conveyed to him and he was even advised to stay back to avoid any possible mishap. But he exclaimed in so many words that he comes of a martial race and retreat was not in his dictionary. Nonetheless courageous

is he in the midst of a political storm. The "Golden Rally" of the "Chettinad Brigade" left him entirely cold and unperturbed and the attack with no-confidence motion saw him face it with singular pluck. At every crisis "hope shone in him like a pillar of fire when it had gone out of all others". He kept his head cool and his temper under control and looked like a Napoleon on the Treasury Bench, non-chalantly riding on amidst a shower of political bullets.

Proportionately with his personal courage, the Rajah of Bobbili has a moral courage and a mighty will that brook no obstacle or opposition. The popular leader of the party he has never been and by his very nature he can never be. But due to the tragic lack of any better or even an equal leader the wiser among his party willingly submitted to his yoke. He chose the better way of ruling over men by being their superior in wealth, intellect and will. He imposes his will over every person he deals with, his loyal followers in the party or the long-connected colleagues in the Cabinet. He must have his way, come whatever may.

No doubt he obliged the Reserved Half by lending his name and weight and even political reputation to carry out some proposals that created a stir in the country. Take for example the abolition of Taluk Boards. It was more an act of his obligation to the Treasury Department than a piece of genuine re-orientation of Local Boards. But he made a first rate bargain out of it. Good (and a doubtful good it proved) came out of that evil. The privilege of bifurcation and the powers of nomination were exercised by the leader of the Justice Party apparently to prop up the waning influence of the

party. Bobbili too was a prey to the temptation of favouritism. But he always had his eye on the possible reactions on the party his appointments might have. Homer himself nods sometimes and Bobbili must have committed blunders. Yet such blunders must have been cases of miscarriage or wrong judgment. When once he had made up his mind to get a person appointed in a particular place he would never rest contented or cowed down till he succeeded. Alarmed by a possible miscarriage in the matter of a particular appointment, he abruptly left Ooty all by himself, reached Madras and got the thing done by appropriate threats and all available manouvres. The loudest of the roaring lions in the Congress opposition then, Dr. C. R. Reddi was made by the timely tactics of Bobbili to mew like a cat and keep the silence of its life. It had the dazzling touch of the diplomatic Panagal.

The eventful regime of Bobbili abounds in legislative output both of good and of evil. The abolition of Taluk Boards was an involuntary measure that sapped the foundations of his own party and cut his feet from underground. Bifurcations of District Boards demoralised the Province, poisoned the fountains of public life and like the monster of Frankenstein destroyed the very author that created it. Appointment of Municipal Commissioners was undoubtedly a better measure praised by friends and foes alike, even by Mr. Satyamurthy. The amendment to the Estates Land Act was all that could be desired, appreciated as it was by no less a person than the late Munusamy Naidu. And the Inams Act is the *magnum opus* of Bobbili. The irrelevant question of its motives apart, it is on its merits the most extraordinary agrarian measure

that any ministry in the dyarchic system has ever brought to the statute book. To have so successfully piloted such a measure amidst all the shoals and rocks of uproarious vested interests and in the face of the fanatical crusades against it, is by itself a title to immortality.

The radical and, in many respects, revolutionary programme of E. V. Ramaswamy was readily approved by the Rajah of Bobbili in its principle and in its entirety. Withal this Bobbili is a failure as a democratic leader. He neglected to cultivate the personal touch with the rank and file of his party which tactical contact alone had crowned the leadership of Panagal with success. The democratic machinery of his party went to rust due to sheer disuse; the gulf between the leader and the led widened with the lapse of time. Repeated electoral disasters proved no warnings to him and did him no benefit by opening his eyes to the real defects. His vessel came to grief through pride of will and scorn of consequences. He saw breakers ahead but he would crash through them; rocks, but he would grind them to powder. Opposition from within and without only strengthened his obstinacy in his methods. Intellect could deal with abstract questions and problems well enough but to deal with humanity insight and sympathy are essential. And Bobbili is singularly lacking in those qualities.

The nefarious piece of intolerance shown in his Estate to Pandit Nehru has not done credit to any. On the other hand it must have injured his own cause irreparably. It was, whoever might have been responsible for it, a piece of disastrously false tactics and bad politics which had its ruinous

repurcussions on Bobbili's own election. The wind of disturbance was sown and the whirlwind of defeat was reaped. Nemesis is merciless, she is always just.

One supreme act of Bobbili after he had laid down his office raised his credit with his countrymen a hundredfold. When the unwelcome crown of the Interim Ministry came to him on its rejected round, he refused to touch it and spurned it with supreme contempt. That single act brought him into line with the 'Patented' variety of patriots like "C. R." and Sastri, even in the usually prejudicial view of the Congress propagandist. It showed the real calibre of the man and extorted the praise even of the traditional foes. Look again at his offer to abstain from letting the trees in his Estate for tapping for toddy.

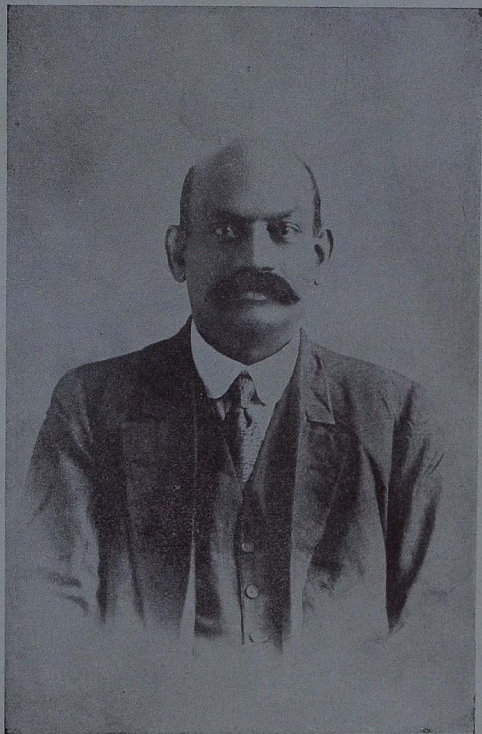
Yet the last act of this brave Statesman can hardly be acclaimed his best. Since his return from England, there had been a perceptible change in his outlook and his attitude on politics which rather abruptly culminated in his resignation of his leadership and renunciation of politics. His disapproval of certain developments in the Justice Party has only tended to mystify his exit. It was without a grace or glamour. But even a Zamindar is at times helpless and even for a Bobbili, discretion may be 'better part of valour' on certain occasions. Whether the Rajah of Bobbili has altogether retired from politics, unhonoured and unsung or whether it is merely an involuntary eclipse that has wilfully enveloped him, we cannot definitely say. But we could certainly say of him in the adapted words of Shakespeare,

"After Power's fitful fever,
He rests well."

SIR A. P. PATRO.

M. Clemenceau once remarked "Poincare knows everything and understands nothing. Briand knows nothing but understands everything". And whoever dares to bracket Sir Anepu Patro either with the one or the other should be a brave man indeed. He knows as a matter of fact every subject from hydro-electric schemes to the hygienic problems of the villages, from the aeronautic questions to the Imperial naval bases. He reads a lot, and I presume, he has read an infinite deal. In spite of his "Studies in Education and Sanitation", in spite of his "Rural Economics" and inspite of his rare knowledge of British municipal institutions and the needs of the Indian agriculturists, Sir Patro does not impress us as an erudite scholar or an extraordinary genius. He is not intellectually eminent; he is only politically prominent. At any rate, a place in the Justice Ministry was not and could not have been offered to him either for his knowledge or for his understanding. Next to the Rajah of Panagal and far and away from him Sir Patro was the tallest of Andhras and the loudest of loyalists and the second prize in the race was naturally awarded to him.

A tall and towering personality, yet Sir Patro's is neither magnetic nor magnificent. A strong and well-built body that rises heads and shoulders above those of his neighbours characterises Mr. Patro and lends him a look of Roman austerity. The bold, round face with a pair of thick lips, a broad and rising forehead, a pair of glowing eyes and a bald patch on his head, is still further adorned



by a pair of moustaches that is full and awe-inspiring. Sir Parasuram Patro is scrupulously dressed in a shining silk uniform, the sartorial perfection of which is certainly due to the waist-coat. While in the act of speaking, the over-zealous knight of Ganjam holds the fringes of his open coat with either of his hands and occasionally fumbles into the full pockets of his trousers and swings and revolves his trunk to the tune of his torrential flow. The veteran politician that he is, he wears a look of worn-out greatness and worked-out importance.

Sir Patro is on the wrong side of sixty and he loses his temper at the slightest provocation. Nay, the neglected hero in him is nurturing a grievance against a number of his lesser partymen, and he explodes with a terrific thunder at their most insignificant fault. He is too painfully conscious of his past glorious associations in the party in the Madras politics. Who else has had a more unique record of a place in two successive ministries? Is he not, therefore, on this account at least on a par with the late Panagal? Yet the undiscerning and ungrateful members of his party are averse to crown him as their leader. They overlooked his past and brushed aside his present with an ominous indifference that has sent a steel into his soul. A Munuswamy Naidu with no equal merits was elected over his head at Nellore as the leader and while he was yet fretting under this mortification, a still greater insult to his stately age and majesty was hurled at him at Tanjore by a 'stupid and snobbish party'. A beardless youth of barely thirty-two broke the tradition of leadership and broke Sir Patro's heart by being put at the helm of the party

by the party's own suffrage. Of course he was absent from India in those uproarious days. Nevertheless he had made up his mind to avenge this mighty insult. The roaring Lion of Ganjam is roaming in the woods of his party with a majestic pace and evident restlessness, with 'none so poor to do him reverence'. He pines under a sense of neglected importance and ignored eminence. Lesser beings than himself, beardless boys no less than born idiots warm themselves in the sunshine and blaze of the Justice Party and are reaping benefits with no legal rights thereto. Kumaraswamy Reddis and Kurma Venkata Reddis, Palats and Pannirselvams have been ruling the roost while a Parasuram Patro is pitilessly left to be chewing the cud of his past. The ascendancy of those Cæsars breaks the heart of this august Brutus. The vengeance that he wreaks is quite characteristic of him. He roared in the last Council and pounced upon his party-men and by his thoughtless fluency and thundering invectives tore them to pieces. Leadership in the hands of landed magnates Sir Patro affects to abhor and comes out with Philippics of courageous accusations. He has consciously missed no opportunity of striking at the leadership of the party and the shining lights of the Justice Party. To-day he is seen thundering against the policy of Sir Kurma Reddi, tearing him to pieces for his policy of letting out contracts of electrification to private European companies. Next day he turns round and pulverises the Minister in charge of Education for his mighty record of inactivity and mischievous silence. On the third day he is seen in action on the floor of the Legislative Council assailing the proposed tax on tobacco on purely economic and political grounds. He was, I think the first member to start kicking against the tabacco

tax. Though the proposal was ultimately dropped, it had by that time done enough mischief to the name of the party. The party leader had never cared to convene a meeting and acquaint the members about the new proposal, and if the members had been so ignored, the only course open to a sensitive one like Sir Patro was to act according to his lights. This in short was the explanation he good-naturedly gave me when I opened this topic with him. And perhaps he is right. He criticised the abolition of the Taluk Boards in the most cantankerous manner and kicked the Party's leadership to his heart's content but he had the justification of the ulterior interests of his party for his conduct.

It has been said of Sir Patro that he is a Liberal among Liberals, a Congressman among Congressmen and a Justicite among Justicites. This is no doubt an approximation to the truth. But it was given to him alone to evolve a queer definition and a quibbling technique of 'loyalty rooted in disloyalty.' His past history and his present needs make him prevaricate with patent disingenuity. As sure as anything Patro was invited to the Round Table Conference only as a member of the Justice Party. But he gave an electric shock to his hearers and startled his partymen in India by stating therein that he did not represent the Justice Party. But he soon came out with an explanation and in a Picwickian way began to clear the apprehensions in the minds of his partymen. He was, argued Sir Patro, in the Justice Movement but not in the Justice Party. Surely this is a distinction without a difference, if ever there was one. Nevertheless this serves his purpose of defying the unwanted leadership

of the Justice Party without at the same time foregoing the fruits and benefits appertaining to the membership of that party. He had for some considerable time been agitating for lifting the ban on admission of Brahmins into the party and he had the supreme pleasure of moving such an amendment to the Constitution at the Madras Confederation. Sir Patro is thus a Justicite in his personal politics, a Liberal in his outlook and a Congressman in his sympathy for freedom. "I am large, I contain multitudes" is the explanation he gives if he is charged with inconsistency.

Whenever he attends the meetings of the Justice Party he assumes the airs of a giant who has just strayed from Mount Sinai into the gathering of pigmies, perchance to amuse himself at the expense of the 'boys', perhaps to give them some lessons on party politics and constitution they so much seem to need. If the 'boys' look up to his sage advice that he condescends to give them gratis and thank him for that, well and good. But if they presume to think and act independently of his sane lead, woe unto them. He damns them with his deathlike pronouncements on their unconstitutional existence and disowns with a facile conscience his political kinship with such a puerile lot. The last of the Justice Executive meeting saw a perfect exhibition of Sir Patro's imperious individuality *vis a vis* Sir Mohamad Usman and the party. The wordy dual between the two self-conscious knights of Teynampet and Ganjam amusingly revealed and refreshingly contrasted the different mettle of these two veterans of the party.

The Minister for Education as Sir Patro was in the days of dyarchy, he was monstrously accused by

a Congress bully of "ignorance of English Grammar." An open challenge was thrown over to Sir Patro to define and distinguish between a residential University and a unitary one. The impression he conveyed by his elaborated commonplaces all through his speeches in a way gave colour to such unfounded and malicious charges. The Minister that was charged with a mastery of 'broken English' managed, paradoxically enough to bring to the statute book two University Acts of tremendous importance.

An incident occurred while Sir Patro was in England in connection with the labours of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. In one of the sittings Sir Patro was present as member of the Indian Delegation. A particular witness in the course of his evidence plainly accused the Indian Ministers of the sins of nepotism and jobbery. I wonder what exactly could have been the reaction of this charge on the mind of Sir Patro. Indignantly and impelled by a sense of exquisite patriotism he pounced upon this witness and attempted to nail the counter to the charge. Truth is a very delicate Maid that blushes to adorn the Seat of the High and she is as shy at the St. James' Palace as at Madras. Quite an array of ex-Viceroy's veered round to Patro's rescue and thus a quietus was given to none too false a charge. Yet this incident is not without its humour.

For irony of situation the following incident is hard to beat. In the course of a debate in 1933 in the dyarchic council Sir Patro's gigantic fury was provoked by the demeanour of some member of the Civil Service somewhere, about whom he began to indulge in a scathing attack. Curiously enough the

decent Knight of Ganjam had just then reminded a member of the House that there was such a thing as decency to be observed on the floor of the Council. Hardly had the echo of this high sounding precept died out of the chamber when Sir Patro's curious practice of it was paraded. He blurted out in boisterous tones, sheltered as he was under the roof of privilege, that "many of these I.C.S. men are fools in practical matters". If these words could constitute decency Sir Anepu Patro is the most decent debator. Not content with this delectable and decent point he had scored against an undefended tribe, he went on to add an insult to the injury, by explaining himself with equivocations. "If I said" explains Sir Anepu, "there are fools in the I.C.S. what I meant was there are some impudent persons". In the process of explaining himself, "many" becomes "some" and "folly" is converted into "impudence". This episode, though a trifling one is a typical illustration of the thoughtless loquacity into which he often enough lapses. The courage behind these fulminations may be commendable but hardly its confusing logic.

Sir Patro's style is the old-fashioned one of pompous words and sing-song strain. His voice has a peculiar power and it reverberates and echoes in the hall. His pronunciation of words is full of Andhra accents, the "whwich", and the "govvernments" peculiar to his race, bursting on the way. Literary flavour or scientific structure are few and far between. He never hesitates or halts for the aptest word, any word is good enough to clothe his ideas. He lacks in the power of turning out a telling epigram or torturing the opponent with a phrase. He injures his foes by his full weight blows

of massy clubs. He cannot give them rapier thrusts. Generally he is grave and serious while he speaks, and seems to impress the House that he would never smile "though Nestor swear the jest be laughable." I wonder how many have enjoyed the sight of his hearty laughter inside the House. He comes into and goes out of the Council with the dignity and demeanour of an Olympian. Others go to his seat and chat with him but he would never go to them. If ever he opens his lips, it is only to greet one with a sarcasm or give another a shock. His fierce eyes would glare and stare and occasionally would indulge in a pleasing laughter. He is as a rule too serious to flash out a humorous stroke or avidly enjoy one by another. Either by his sphynx-like silence when hit or by the unguarded replies he gives he lays himself open to the ridicule of the House. Dr. Subbaroyan in the course of the Council debate on the White Paper made a feeble point against the alleged ignorance of the R. T. C. members of the problems of Federation and said, "there was a rush at the bookshops at London and many people purchased the book on Federation" and added that "Sir Patro was one among them". The admittedly laboured humour did not have the desired effect. Rather, the childlike "No" by Sir Patro sent the House into a burst of laughter.

The activities and achievements of Sir Anepu are not merely confined to this province. In his own person he harmoniously combines the double claims of an Andhra and an Oriya. Yet he would fain be taken as an All-India Man, not simply given to wade the stagnant pool of provincial politics but also given to navigating the broad and deep currents of the

national politics. He presided over the S. I. L. F. Confederation in 1926 held at Madura. He is a member of the Central Executive of the Justice Party and an invariable member of every important Committee. He and his claim to his pre-eminence were recognised and rewarded by electing him in 1931 as the President and Leader of the All-India Committee of the Justice Non-Brahmin Movement. His acknowledged prominence in a gathering of All Parties Conference is no less to be admired than his unquestioned importance in a party of All-India scope. In 1930 he was elected at Delhi as Chairman of the All Parties Conference. Sir Parasuram was not merely the Chairman of the Provincial Statutory Committee of Madras, but also a member of the Consultative Committee presided over by the Viceroy. He represented the Non-Brahmins at the Sessions of the Round Table Conference in 1931 and 1932. Till the last electoral storm blew him out of his berth in the Madras Legislature, he had been its member throughout the dyarchic Council. And now, as though to console him and also to keep him engaged in a congenial forum, a discerning Viceroy has nominated him to the Council of State.

Sir Patro as a man is certainly amiable. He is the friendliest of veterans the aspiring youths would love to associate with and could hope to be encouraged by. He has none of the icy chillness of attitude that mars the lives of many another dignitary. The moment you accost him he sends forth a shot of his eyes at you as though he is recollecting all about you and simultaneously stretches out his friendly hands and holds you by your shoulder. If you further enter into his heart, ingratiate yourself and strike

the agreeable note by touching the right chord, you are cordially invited into his colourful mind and confidences. "How wonderfully commendable was your attitude on such and such a question!" you assure him and add "I really think that such and such a Minister is utterly inefficient"—Ah, there you can have the man stripped of all his wonted airs and hard shells and exposing himself in the entire nudity of his innocent soul. He is at such a moment simple and frank like a child and tells you with witty distortions and wilful lengthening of so and so's name that he is the biggest fool alive. A conversation with him on such occasions is just like an exhilarating walk on the beach or an agreeable peep into a picture gallery. He is a sportsman who could give a blow and take it back with perspiring happiness and no venom at all.

Thus we see to-day the weighty figure of Sir Anepu Patro wearing the look of an exhausted volcano and withering in the loneliness of officeless autumn. He has been elevated to the placid atmosphere of the Elders' House at Simla wherein his past experience and fighting spirit are still in evidence to-day. Yet the fertility of his future career with regard to fruits of office is not free from doubts. No great achievement, no monumental record will ever be associated with his name. To us and to posterity Sir Parasuram Patro will always be a member of the favoured tribe or the prize-boys of the bureaucracy who put their lucky sickles to the first and finest harvest in the flourishing fields of dyarchy. He is to-day a veteran in Madras politics, almost the last of the Romans, with the roots of his greatness in the past and the rise in future on the lap of God.

SIR MOHAMAD USMAN, K.C.I.E.

"The strongest reapeth the success, the speediest reacheth the goal"—is the set and simple formula of a super-reasoning mankind. But this irritates the sense of God of eternal mysteries. A stroke of satire on the stupidity of man is sought to be achieved by God. He indulges His sense of the ludicrous by a conscious freak in the creation, opposed to the Rule of Three audaciously propounded by man. He delights in a perverted creation and confounds human calculations. The sun and the moon, the saturn and the mars speed at the bidding of the Providence and post themselves in propitious spots, and bathe in the flood of their grace the birthday stars of some. They cast their horoscopes in a congruous order and create on their birthday a congenial atmosphere. The net result of all is a breach in the law of Nature. Sir Mohamad Usmans are ushered into the world as the solid monuments of the vengeance of a supremely playful God. Thus the explanation and key to the Usman phenomenon is easily found. A God full of humour cast his lot in India and gave him a Muslim birth. And a communal Justice Party just completed the picture.

His colossal trunk and his comparatively tiny head are the favourite themes of the caricaturist. The weighty life and fortune of Mr. Usman are indeed wonderful. He fills the atmosphere with his physical presence. The warmth of love and the sunshine of smiles flee from his arctic presence. A pair of trousers, a long close-coat and a cylindrical



cap are the sartorial hall-mark of this singular knight. A modest moustache supplemented by a beard of sparing growth, and a shining pair of spectacles are all that adorn his countenance.

Some of us have heard of the legend of the Round Table at the Cosmopolitan Club. Sir Mohamad is the King Arthur, surrounded by his knights of a salaaming variety. I am afraid this august order is unfortunately getting depleted. He holds his Durbar every night and every knight his humble homage pays to him. Cringing courtiers and snobbish gentry cater to his vanity and keep feeding him on soft dedications all day long. The exploits of this Arthur with the angelic sword of power are the endless theme of their songs. Pleased with their praise and loyalty, this prince was paying them with honours. This "Little Cato" has been loyal to his senate. Perchance in such a pleasing company Sir Mohamad would suffuse his face with smiles and shake his frame with laughter.

The talented Habibullah had vacated his place in the Madras Cabinet and was called to adorn the Viceroy's Cabinet at Delhi. The Madras Government were casting about for a loyal Muslim and the Justice Party was all agog to reward its ardent Muslim adherent. The wishes of both met in Mr. Usman and made him lucky. All through the critical times which the Justice Party and the Government had withstood in combination, all the Muslims worth the name had arrayed themselves on the national front. But the loyal Mr. Usman stuck up to the Justice Party and stood by the Government heroically. He was the first Secretary of the S. I. L. F. and he presided over the Justice Party Conference held

in 1919. The dynamite of patriotism had not burst his being; the devouring fire of nationalism had not touched his soul. Unemotional and immobile by nature, Mr. Usman stood four-square and firm on the deck of reactionarism like Casabianca. In 1926 he was appointed a member of the Madras Cabinet. By sheer efflux of time, he became the very Leader of the House and the Vice-President of the Cabinet. What with the temporary absence of Sir George Stanley at Delhi, and the reason of his Vice-Presidency of the Cabinet, Sir Mohamad Usman was appointed the Acting Governor of Madras.

The first Indian Governor of Madras, a premier Province of India, Sir Mohamad shall ever be remembered as the creator of a precedent and constructor of History. It is his melancholy eminence that his acting Governorship will go down to history more as a conferment of that right over Indians than as a crowning of his individual genius. He represented on that seat his race and countrymen rather than himself. "Eminent posts" said La Bruyere "make great men greater and little men less". But the eminent post of the Governorship never made Usman greater. By virtue of his Indian birth every Indian rejoiced in his elevation. Because of his Islamic faith every Musalman enjoyed his eminence. In so far as he was a Justicite, every Justicite felt the thrill of elation.

The lifeless member of the Legislature simply lifting hands, and the occupant of the Mayoral Chair by the accident of his political affinity, Sir Mohamad had never deserved such an elevation except for his passivity and simple-minded silence. And silence is his strongest point next to his faith in Allah.

Whenever he broke his silence and spoke, he mouthed only platitudes. And whenever his speech would lack in harm, it would certainly lack in form. It moves you to laughter whenever it fails to irritate. In a typical pre-election speech the other day, he extended an invitation to the Europeans of Madras to co-operate with the Justice Party to work the Constitution. He held forth a promise of a healthy share in the spoils. He is constitutionally incapable of speaking in a different strain. The watchful caricaturist illustrated the joke with the wistful figure of Usman working out with lust the words of Omar Khayyam. The romantic figure of Sir Mohamad, seated at ease under the shade of the tree of the official patronage, with a flask of wine of ministerial posts, a loaf of bread of fat salary and a copy of the book of the new Constitution was picturesquely caricatured as addressing these plaintive lines to the fair maid of Madras Europeans :

“Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bow
A flask of wine, a book of verse and thou
Beside me singing in the wilderness
And wilderness is Paradise to me.”

To crown the joke, the caricature was aptly named the “Rubaiyat of Usman Khayyam”. It was a huge joke at the expense of a huge person.

Sir Mohamad Usman is a Bachelor of the Madras University. And he has the additional qualification of an expert knowledge of the Unani system of medicine. He has a bucolic, unimaginative mind and a buoyant faith in the British Rule, at any rate had till 1937. He has no “figures nor fantasies which busy thought draws in the brains of men”. Success

has not attended his life as per the Rule of Three, or the rigorous canons of logic. He is a classical example of the proverbial conspiracy between luck and lack of talents. It is the legendary crowning of the pet of Providence and the sport of chance. Soaring on the wings of patronage he swept the skies of office and power. From a humble Unani Doctor to the honoured Head of a Province it is indeed a rise and an elevation that reads like a page in the Fairy Tales or like a chapter in the Arabian Nights. His is the Twentieth century edition of the boat-man's rise and romance of the perilous times of Humayun. Of course, it lacks in the mediæval charm and monarchical element of that magnificent piece of drama. Shorn of that staggering wildness, it is the self-same story. The boat-man helped Humayun across the Ganges; Usman helped the Government against the Congress, each according to the crisis and each according to his capacity. The grateful sovereigns in both the cases rewarded their respective benefactors on a regal scale. Except for the temporary annexation to his name of the extraordinary prefix of 'His Excellency', Sir Mohamad has done nothing to immortalise his regime.

Sir Mohamad's Home Membership was extraordinary in every sense of the word. He had the doubtful celebrity and unenviable privilege of passing his first term at a time of great national crisis. The burden of weathering that storm fell to his miserable lot. As a grateful recognition, his glorious term of office was extended twice. He spent in all nine years in office. He had nearly acquired a prescriptive right from the point of view of the length of period alone. And what is the record of his wondrous achievements? The Bucket Shops Act and the

Brothels Act are the first and the last of his magnificent record. They exhaust the catalogue of his legislative output. For nine long years a mountain was under labour and the net result of all is nothing but two mice. And even those mice are not "micky mice". The vice of betting that was extensive was intensified by the one and the offence of prostitution that was barefaced was driven underground by the other.

Barren though of achievements, the Home Membership of Usman was highly pregnant with sensation. When everything about Sir Mohamad from his cylindrical cap and his cigar to his celebrated office of the Governorship shall have been forgotten, it will be this aspect of his life that will ever be remembered. The Bill of Indictment against him for acts of omission and commission may swell into a volume. And the Grand Jury of posterity will certainly return a true Bill. But the fault is none of Sir Usman's; it is all of his office. Anybody else ought to have acted similarly, if not worse in those circumstances. No one else could have escaped this blot on his escutcheon. Even the 'patriotic' Congress ministry has hardly escaped it to-day. With all the good-will in the world, no Home Member of those days could have possibly escaped sinning and come out unscathed. "Front Benches mean compromises, petty surrenders here, suppression of truth there, equivocation, legerdemain." Love of office and baiting of the public seldom go together and if ever Sir Mohamad is guilty he must be convicted of a bit of stronger partiality for office than was consistent with and safe for his popularity. For aught I know he is himself ruing his past "loyalty" a bit too much, just in the righteous

Wolseyan sense. He almost gave vent to his feelings in his last meeting of the S. I. L. F. He feels the need for the popular Congress ministry and blesses it with bell, book and candle. His belated worship of this Deity is so wild and unreasonable that he breaks all the conventions of sound democracy.

The administration in normal times of the portfolio of Police is a strikingly tame affair, a simple process of signing. The invincible machinery of red-tapism endlessly works out its way and leaves little room for inter-meddling. The only noise of the muskets reverberates in the parade grounds and the only thing that is shot at is one bull's eye after the other. The wheels of society are well oiled and their very routes are covered with velvet. The Member in charge is well content and enjoys his meals and the beach rides. Law and order are preserved with lumps of sugar in hands. But a crisis means a different tale and a terrible affair. The elephantine mob of inured tameness suddenly runs amuck, swings round and powders the chain of the spell of law. It becomes possessed of a nihilistic temper and hurls defiance with reckless despair on law and its guardians alike. The situation becomes pregnant with peril, delicate to deal with and dangerous if neglected. It becomes a live dynamite and unless you destroy the dynamite, the dynamite will destroy you. So in sheer self-defence and discharge of a sacred duty, the Member-in-charge and the Government move in the matter and act. Law and order must be preserved even at the cost of lives and limbs. The prestige of law and peace of society prevail over the claims of personal safety and primordial rights of individuals. The man on the spot becomes the most competent judge, judge of the

seriousness of the situation and the sufficiency of the measures. Lathis break limbs and bullets rain death and the land itself lies desolate with the blood of men and the wail of women. It is a ghastly sight, a blood-curdling picture. But His Majesty's Government has to be carried on. It is the inevitable price which society pays, vicariously though.

But society is a strange judge. The Star Chamber procedure always suits its temper. The accused pronouncing judgment is unknown to jurisprudence. But often enough among nations that passes for justice. The Bill of Indictment is drawn up, the impeachment is made and *ex parte* sentences are passed—all in the twinkling of an eye, by an outraged and avenging mob. The Government and the concerned member are unceremoniously sent to the gallows of undying hatred. The seven vials of wrath are emptied over their heads, and their funeral obsequies pronounced. While the Government in the abstract escapes unaffected, the devoted head of the Member is turned into the bull's eye. He has to assume an innocent attitude, speak nothing, nothing but sweet apologies, and stand on the battlements with stoic forbearance. If he does not, his business is elsewhere. If, however, he succeeds in shooting the wolves and yet 'speaking the silk,' he is surely a great bureaucrat, baked and burnt to perfection.

Identical was the crisis that occurred during Usman's regime and all but the same was his fate. The Salt Satyagraha and the Civil Disobedience struck their sanguinary path across his term of office. He put heart into the Police and they in their turn put the bullet into their muskets. The

painful process of preservation of peace prolonged its agonising course through blood and broken limbs. Sir Mohamad Usman simply crossed the "t"s and dotted the "i"s of the man on the spot and contented himself with mouthing callous apologies. He served as a weapon both offensive and defensive in the hands of the Government. He was a massy club to hit with and a mighty shield to ward off. Tottering and rocking under the tremendous impact of the Opposition, the Treasury Bench was safely anchored and steadied by the titanic weight of his physique and tongue. Not that he carried conviction to the Opposition nor that he escaped conviction from posterity. But it is to Sir Usman's credit that he so successfully played at Strafford in singularly trying crises.

Sir Mohamad was naturally spotted out by the public for revenge and retaliation. His name became a by-word for all that was treacherous and anti-national. His term of office was pictured as being paved with the skulls of the dead and smeared with the blood of the martyrs. The rodomontades of the roaring nationalists described the hands of the Home Member as capable of "the multitudinous seas incarnadining". He was a native Edward Carson to the National Indians. Short of burning his effigy the public of Madras duly sent him through the painful passages of the popular purgatory. But the immobile Home Member was all indifference. With bold disdain, he felt with Byron,

"Ill may such contest now the spirit move,
Which heeds nor keen reproof nor partial praise".

He cultivated callousness as a fine art. Cart-loads of caricatures, columns-full of billingsgate and the

cursing roar of the thousands never touched his complacent soul, not so much as disturbed his equanimity. Abuses ran off his person like water off the duck's back. "They say, what they say, let them say" he mumbled.

By temperament and training, Sir Mohamad is the Prince among reactionaries. He is die-hardism on two legs. His mind dwells in the backwaters and does not sail the broad currents of the world. A pious Muslim he no doubt is; but a communal Muslim he is none. His partiality in life, if ever he had one, is for himself. Mr. Usman has apparently faith only in two things in the world: God and the Government, whatever be the character and colour thereof. "If you would govern man-kind you must be superior to them or despise them" said Disraeli, a great master of men. Sir Mohamad, obviously lacking in superiority affected to despise and govern men. His mind shied and contracted at the slightest contact of liberal policies and democratic ideas. He had built his trust rather too much on the reeking tube and the iron shod and left out of calculation the invincible passions of men. He threw his whole weight against the acceptance of the liberal programme of Mr. E. V. Ramaswami's Party. He resisted every item of improvement that was sought to be introduced by the Justice Party's Sub-Committee. His ignorance of his countrymen is astounding and amusing. On the eve of the last general elections, he solemnly advised the leader of the Justice propaganda not to waste the money and energy on propaganda but to preserve them so that the people could be easily made to vote for the Justice Party. "For whom else do you think" he asked "the people would vote except for the Justice

Party?" As Macaulay says of Crocker "If a school boy under our care were to utter these words, our soul assuredly should not spare for his crying."

The memory of his acting Governorship is to him a permanent source of mental inebriation. "My Government of which Lord.....is the head" is a bombast in King Cambyzes' vein which is unimaginable for and unsuited to the prosaic eminence of Mr. Usman. Yet he too amusingly uses the present perfect with reference to his past office. Requesting him to partake in a proposed function of the subordinate officers of the Presidency, a few individuals approached him. On learning of the nature of the request, he curtly declined to oblige and added with an air of supercilious contempt, "I cannot have anything to do with such petty things, having been the Head of the Administration."

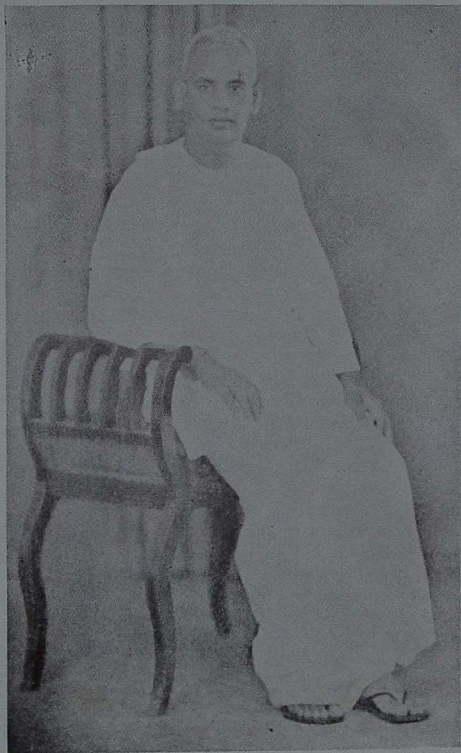
It was his role of the Edward-like Peace-maker in the Justice Party that always lent him an aspect of amiability. After the demise of Panagal, his party lacks in first-rate leaders and the factor of cementing the divergent forces. Many a rift in the lute of the party has attempted to make its music mute. And but for Usman's interventions and without his timely good offices even the present solidarity of the party would have been well nigh impossible. The gigantic rivalry between Chettinad and Bobbili was ended and an *entente cordiale* was effected all due to Sir Mohamad's efforts. He is eminently fitted for such office of arbitration. But, if mistaking this aptitude for political genius, he had been suffered to lead the Justice Party, there is no knowing what would have happened.

The moment the Justice Party was routed and had fallen on evil days, Sir Mohamad began to play for safety and desert his party. He was nominated to the Legislative Council and he naturally sat as the Leader of the Opposition. It was given to Sir Mohamad alone of all the members in the Opposition, to have broken the traditions of Parliamentary Government by supporting every measure of the Government. As Leader of the Opposition he called for a division over a Government measure, and he himself walked into the Government lobby. By a strange metamorphosis or a process of mental alchemy Sir Usman began to see eye to eye with the Congress, all of a sudden on the questions of compulsory Hindi, Prohibition and so on. This piece of treacherous "Opposition" naturally enraged the Party-men who would have certainly voted him out of the Floor Leadership but he himself gracefully vacated the post and is occupying the cross benches. Thus we have to-day the strangest phenomenon of the one time persecutor of the Congress acting as its over-zealous palanquin-bearer.

The world is a book in which the chapter of accidents is not the least considerable. And the chapter of accidents of Sir Mohamad's life is the most considerable of all. Except on the hypothesis of God's playful perversion, the mystery of his career is difficult to unravel. A challenge to the intelligentia of this province and a shock to the arrogance of the West End of Mylapore, Sir Mohamad's life is a marvellous romance of the Dyarchic era. Success in him presents its passive front. His is a success without spendour and a song without music.

THE MAHARAJAH OF PITHAPURAM.

Hosts of Zamindars have neither the inclination nor the imagination to conceive of a higher relationship between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' than the one that the mundane law has ordained and the man-made rules regulate. They delude themselves into a fond belief that by virtue of their inherent right they are heirs to a fortune, which in the view of God they alone should enjoy to the exclusion of others. This is the 'Divine Right Theory' of these Indian Stuarts which negatives the rights of the poor and nurtures the seeds of a revolution. But the Maharajah of Pithapuram is the bold expounder of a different theory. His theory of 'Divine Duty of Trust' is the best and the most beneficial that would avert a revolution and augur well for the poor. "God hath but chosen me as the keeper of the key and the dutiful trustee of the treasures of His own" is what Pithapuram says and sincerely means. And it is but an equitable dispensation of this divine trust that the Maharajah attempts to the best of his lights. The divinity of God is best seen in the humanity of man—this is the sheet-anchor of his philosophy of life. Service to man is tantamount to service to God. The Maharajah of Pithapuram has marvellously equated man with God in thought, word and deed. "The grinding poverty of the masses should go. The sight of unhappiness and misery that oppresses the people around me makes me too unhappy and miserable. So long as this poverty and these preventible miseries continue to oppress my countrymen, so long I shall be denied peace of mind or happiness." This is the pith and marrow of his political philosophy. This is



the sacred goal of his sublime life. Let not the irreverent critic or the habitual dupe put this profession down for the cant and shibboleth of the cunning politician. "God alone is the witness to the sincerity of what I say" swears this most God-fearing leader. And even as he says, pearl-like tears moisten his eyes and bear testimony.

Should political expediency prevail or religious considerations rule over the actions of politicians is certainly an open question. If there are political Hotspurs in hot pursuit of places, riding a coach-and-four in a light-hearted fashion into the regions of religion, there nevertheless are Gladstones and great Cecils for whom Godliness and faith should grease the wheels of politics. The Maharajah of Pithapuram is in the noble company of the latter. He is essentially Godly rather than religious. He does not trumpet forth his religion. He does not wear it on his sleeves. He is a Brahmo, a follower of Ram Mohan Roy. Neither the peal of the temple bells nor the smell of the sacred incense is needed to stir up the innate piety of his exquisite soul. He loaths the pomp and show that piety seeks to revel in, to the detriment of its divinity. And he is a man of strong convictions and inviolable beliefs. At Madura the temple authorities would fain take him in procession with all the paraphernalia and honours of the temple, if only he would grace it with his visit. But on principle he declined the honour and did not pay a visit.

Next perhaps to God, conscience is his guide. It is unto him a deified Oracle whose dictates are infallible. It is the mysterious 'inner voice' of a Gandhi that has made history and unmade it. If all

the world advised a particular course and his conscience dictated a different one, the Maharajah of Pithapuram would ignore the world and abide by his conscience. There is a significant anecdote as to how an elderly gentleman proffered his advice to the young Rajah after his coming of the age and assumption of the Estate, that by reason of his young age and inexperience he should always be led by the experienced advice of his friends and elders. The young scion is reported to have courteously replied "Well, Sir, I certainly would take in all the advice of my friends and elders and give it my utmost care. Yet if my conscience advised me to the contrary I will follow my conscience in preference to the elders." In this creed of conscience, the Maharajah is fortified with a firm belief that the conscience of a truthful soul is the chosen voice of God.

The Family of Pithapuram has been for ages proverbial for its charity and princely munificence. It is the best example of a beneficent Zamindari; it is an eloquent denial of the evils of the system. It has built up a name that will go down to history. And the present Maharajah is a worthy scion of that wonderful Family. He is heir to the throne of an imperishable kingdom, carved out in the hearts of countless souls. His is not merely a corporal estate with crops of paddy, coffers of coins and countless currency notes. His is not like Amanullah's Afganistan, wherein the sceptre in the Ruler's hands changes itself into a sword in the enemies' hands. No sceptre of dazzling splendour but the blazing torch of beneficial tradition lights up his lonely path in life and leads him on towards love and service to mankind.

Everywhere that he visited during the recent political tours, sight-starved mobs in hundreds and thousands feverishly flocked to feast their eyes with the panorama of a Maharajah of legendary luxury. They expected to see a Majestic King, dressed in multicoloured drapery and surrounded by a train of retinue, with colour, sound and plenty covering his imperious route. They were staggeringly disappointed in their wild expectations. Having scrambled and stared in vain for a purple-robed figure with a bejewelled diadem, every villager with evident disappointment asked "Pray, where is the Maharajah?" His simple, immaculate and spotless attire attuned to the colour of the silvery hair of close-cut crop, constitutes a picture of amiable sweetness. His unaffected look and unassuming bearing take his spectators captive from right and from left. The flawless snow-white hue playing about his appearance from top to toe has wrought a mightier revolution in ideas than the mighty crimson hue has wrought in deed in Russia. The Maharajah of Pithapuram has shocked the populace in the South into a sobered conception of royalty which is none the less worshipful for the absence of sartorial splendour. This is his primary contribution to the growth of democracy and healthy ideology. The tearful eyes, the quivering lips and the palpitating heart, with a delivery of words that is dragging, slow and deliberate, in a tone that is quasi-musical with the filtered cadence of the vibrations of a Tamboor exposed to the high winds—this is the soulful picture of the Maharajah on his legs. It sticks on to the parchment of the brains and to the plates of the mental photograph; it becomes ineradicable for ever.

Humility in aristocrats is rare; and rarer still is its open confession. Yet, when you find an aristocrat parading in this wily robe, you feel it does not fit him. It sits unnaturally over him. You imagine it must be a humility with a hook, a sort of 'stooping to conquer'. But in the exceptional instance of Pithapuram it is entirely different. Words of humility drop trippingly from his tongue. There is a spontaneity in his confession of humility that disarms the suspicions of the deadliest of critics. Though by itself, the Maharajah's is a name which carries weight and dignity on this side of the Vindhya, yet he is too humble by nature to sail under his own colours. He must needs invoke the names of greater men and nobler, for whom he has carved out hallowed niches in his heart. His faith in great men is next only to his faith in God. Is it a new venture he embarks upon or is it a public meeting that he begins to address? You can invariably hear him chant the praise of God and speak of the patronage of the Great. The best among such great men are Paul Brunton and Sir Venkatratnam.

The Maharajah of Pithapuram is a typical Andhra who prides in his race and patronises his literature. He is the modern Krishnadevaraya of magnificent fame. He is drunk with the wine of his literature and revels in the beauty of his language. He rapturously refers to his divine language as the Italian of the East. Opposed to idolatry in religion, I am afraid, he is too much of an idolator in language. The Maharajah is too zealous a worshipper of his mother tongue to brook a rival by her throne. Half in jest and half in earnest he once remarked to me that Tamil is a barbarous tongue,

not as grand as his Telugu. I respectfully retorted that I would not return the compliment though I could.

Never has a Zamindar professed greater sympathy and practised greater charity than this saint of Pithapuram. Unlike many of his aristocratic race, he means what he says and says what he means. Playing to the gallery is neither his practice nor his pastime. There is not a charity in these parts of the Country but hath a penny at least of the Pithapuram House. From the beggar to the Birla Fund every man and each institution has benefited by his donations to a greater or a lesser degree. If ever he has erred, it must be on the side of extravagant charity. Pithapuram is the Nuffield of the Madras Presidency.

The charities of Pithapuram are vast and his endowments varied. The Maharajah is a benefactor of modern education. Notwithstanding his Telugu complex, his capacious heart has space and strength enough to entertain any nationality. He loves the Europeans and Englishmen and admires their literature and culture. The Maharajah's College at Coconada, endowed and conducted by his Family is an eloquent monument of their interest in education. Free-boarding and lodging and free scholarships have helped not a few to light the lamps of their souls and lighten the burden of their life.

Take again the Widow's Home at Pithapuram. The woes of widowhood and the worries of their wasteful life are considerably mitigated and wherever possible obviated by this useful Institution. Young and helpless widows are enabled by this

means either to live and die unassailed by hunger and free from want or to start afresh and set up healthy homes. The Orphanage fulfils a still greater need. Hundreds of young people who find themselves adrift in the fathomless waters of life for no fault of theirs, find their princely patron in Pithapuram. He plays the good Samaritan to the helpless wayfarers in life. Was ever in history money so well spent and to much greater ends? Look at this picture of dedication of self to service and that picture of abdication of duty by others!

Pithapuram Estate is one of the biggest Zamindaris in the land. Its yield is enormous. Yet Pithapuram Estate is the most beneficent too; Pithapuram tenants passionately love their master. In comparison with the rents exacted in the sister Zamindaris, the rents prevailing at Pithapuram are tolerably low and far from oppressive. This significant fact was borne testimony to by no less a person than Professor Ranga, the avowed enemy of the Zamindaris and the ardent advocate of the ryots. How many are the estates I wonder that could boast of a similar certificate! Even the wages of his Estate staff and servants are comparatively higher than in the other estates. In commemoration of the happy occasion of his eldest son's marriage, the wages of his servants were raised by the Maharajah on which account alone thirty thousand a year are spent in excess. A splendid example and a high standard for his selfish conferers indeed!

The sympathies of Pithapuram are not merely parochial nor confined to one community. The radius of his sympathy and range of his charities are proverbial and broad. He has the softest corner in his

heart for the under-dog and the oppressed. The depressed classes are his special ward and their welfare his supreme concern. He is never happier than in their company, never so pleased as when he helps them. The Maharajah of Pithapuram had intelligently anticipated the epoch-making Edict of the Travancore Prince, by throwing open his Estate temple to all the depressed classes. It was an unforgettable picture of moving pathos that the Maharajah looked while addressing the pupils of the depressed classes of the *Nandanar Kalvi Kazhagam* at Chidambaram. As he went on speaking to a hushed up and respectful audience, his over-flowing sympathy almost reached a climax. Tears had welled up in his eyes and trickled down his cheeks, his throat began to dry and words became visibly overpowered by emotion. It was all the moving picture of the milk of human kindness in flesh and blood. A thrill went through the audience and they were electrified with a healthy emotion. For such an unnatural human touch in an aristocrat that audience was least prepared. Yet they were bathed in sympathy and they breathed in the spirit of sincerity.

If in particular the depressed classes have a demand on his munificence, the destitutes and the poor are no less the recipients of his general attention. As a member of the Madras Legislature in 1930, the Maharajah of Pithapuram moved a resolution demanding the taking of a census of the beggars and the homeless in the province, which should be the starting point of an attempt to solve the problem of poverty by the State. Yet the dread of finance damped the Ministry's enthusiasm and prevented them implementing this resolution. Though

unfruitful, this is yet another evidence of his endless concern for the poor.

The Maharajah has a genius for friendship. He is the most loyal friend one can boast of among the unreliable aristocrats. At the sight of his close friends he waives all formalities and casts ceremonies to the winds and dives deep into an intimate chat. But the sight of a stranger as yet undiscovered acts on the Maharajah as the touch of a strange object acts on the snail. He breaks not the ice for a pretty long time and sparingly engages in the conversation. Slowly and searchingly he surveys your figure, fathoms your mind and feels your pulse. If you survived this subtle operation and came out unscathed, you are the lucky Cassim with the secret of "Open Sesame". Once admitted, you are overpowered by his geniality and gentle love. You are feasted with the proud consciousness of the possession of his confidence. He makes you forget by his mild bearing that he is a Maharajah. When you have done an appreciable thing which has gladdened his heart, he accosts you with emotion and addresses you in the most tender tones and even hugs and blesses you most affectionately.

Many may fancy that the Maharajah is an austere and morose figure cut in alabaster, who would persist in his gravest look. They were never more mistaken. The apparently calm surface of his austere countenance is often enough splashed by the gentle ripples of sweet smiles and swaying laughter. While in agreeable company none can be more genial than the Maharajah. He is as much alive to the serious aspect of a situation as to the

lighter side of life. He could be grave as a sage and gay as a child whenever he chooses. Even in his morose moods "nothing is so dainty sweet as his lovely melancholy". His philosophy of life is a balanced one, the gaiety of the "La' Allegro" and the gloom of the "Ill Pensoroso" mixed up in due proportions. He uses to lapse into amazingly playful moods and assume amusingly child-like poses. And on such occasions it is Heaven itself to be his companion. Even the presence of strangers does not inhibit his knowing wink and a significant shrug that make you share his secret joy.

It was the melancholy evening that had loaded and paralysed the mind of Pithapuram with the tragic tidings of his defeat at the polls. I had gone to the "Gulaby", his residence, to convey my sympathy and if possible to console him. I expected to see inconsolable sorrow and irrecoverable shock in the person of the Maharajah. But a gentle humour was seen playing on his countenance. I was agreeably surprised. "I hope Maharajah Sahib will not brood over the calamity," I feebly attempted to discharge my duty and salve my conscience, and waited for his reply. But I was surprised to see him warm up and exclaim, "Brood? I say, K. M.! On the other hand I have been laughing too much. I have an idea. It will be nice if Bobbili, Venkata-giri, myself and others were to go in a procession in the streets; won't it, Eh?" he eagerly queried and patted me in self-appreciation of his own sense of humour. Thus I remained to be delighted where I had gone to delight. Like a lightning he changed the topic and with a mock serious look asked me how I had got rid of a small boil on my face, wondering if he could be helped to be rid of one such on

his leg. It was all a wonder, a revealing instance of his human touch and humour.

The Maharajah is a non-vegetarian in diet and a militant one at that. It is well nigh a creed with him. Flesh-eating without fail is as big a plank in the programme of the Maharajah as it is with Dr. Moonjee. A vegetarian is, in his conception, a poor grass-eater, who denies himself the quintessence of human pleasure. The Maharajah is tolerant of many shortcomings in life. But what he cannot tolerate is a meal without meat. The sight of a purely vegetarian meal is the signal for a mental war. He curses the star and the dishes. But a full-dressed meal with fish, fowl and eggs is the *summum bonum* of his life.

The People's Party is the best reminder of the name of Pithapuram. It is his latest achievement. It is his immaculate conception. It is the greatest monument of generous intentions grievously wrecked. The Maharajah fancied that a third Party *sans* the defects of either of the then existing two was imperatively needed for the country. And people were not wanting to eloquently delude him into this belief. With unlimited capital and all the good-will in the world he organised the Party and ushered it into existence. It became a political curio, the constant talk of the Province. Sycophants welcomed it and scoffers were bent on killing it. A raging and tearing propaganda was carried on for the Party from Ganjam to Cape Comorin. Right-royal receptions were accorded to the Maharajah and roaring assemblages were harangued about the Party. He set sail to the ship of his Party on the high seas of the electorate with high hopes in heart.

But alas, it could not reach the haven of electoral success. It dashed against the hidden rocks of coloured ballot-boxes and floundered in the eddies of the popular prejudices. It proved a South Sea Bubble in politics. One who knows our country and the people will hardly be surprised at the results. The Party's armoury was the richest save for the lack of a sentimental appeal. What the public wanted was not what you have done but what you have suffered. A slight bruise, a shocking blow and a sentence in jail are more eloquent canvassers of votes than the charities of a Nuffield or the science of a Bose. The Electoral Cow refused to be fed on the concrete fodder of the People's Party. It would fain chew the empty cud of an imaginary grass of the Congress. Caught between the Scylla of the Congress and the Charybdis of the Justice, this infant prodigy was suffocated into swooning. With the weight of its political principles, it went down to the bottom of the waves of popular ignorance.

The Maharajah finds himself the most mistaken man. He has missed the wood for the tree. He is a Rasselas in Politics whose venturesome pilgrimage in quest of better life has landed him in distress, and who has discovered at last that the Happy Valley of *Gulaby* is after all a place where happiness is cheap and human life tolerable. He has overestimated his mission in life and strayed into regions of staggering filth, all unawares. But now he seems to be cured of his fanciful notions of a Prophet's role. The People's Party's experience has shaken his faith of a lifetime in God and humanity. This volcanic eruption has violently shaken and variously displaced the old contents of his mind. He

has learnt to evaluate things from a different perspective. Ten months' tenure of the People's Party has taught him more of human nature than two-score and ten lengthy years of his life.

"Politics are a game of dishonesty" said the late Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, an authority on the subject. And Pithapuram is the embodiment of honesty; so he failed miserably in this dirty game. Yet the sincerity of his stupendous attempt to serve his fellow countrymen we should never forget. Methinks there is the ring of the Prophet's role about this aspect of Pithapuram's career. A greater tragedy than the Party's rout is the personal defeat of the Maharajah. This electoral earth-quake at Pithapuram is no more explicable than the earthquake at Bihar or Quetta. It is either an act of God or the treachery of man. The voters of his constituency have woefully repeated the folly of the Jews of Jerusalem and the men of Mecca. Their Prophet was ignored in his own area. "It was the most unkindest cut of all." Yet there is time enough to make amends for the past and rediscover their real friend. Let us in the meanwhile take leave of Pithapuram, leaving him to his Rolls Royce and the lovely sea breeze on the Beach!