

FROM MY KODAK.

BY

S. Gopalan.

PRINTED AT

DON BOSCO PRESS, TANJORE.

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CONTENTS



	PAGE.
1. Preface.	
2. The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastrigal.	1
3. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer.	10
4. Late Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar.	17
5. Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastrigal.	22
6. Mr. P. V. Naganatha Sastrigal.	30



PREFACE.

The following pages were not intended to be published in this form when they were written ; and it is with considerable hesitation that I publish them now. It often happens that the views one forms of public men are peculiar to oneself ; and for this reason one is liable to be misunderstood or mistaken. Indeed, one may easily run the risk of having misjudged. But I felt that, with every personal equation, one may hit off an aspect or two in respect of which it is not unreasonable to expect agreement or approval. I believe there is nothing particularly otiose in my supposition that I may have done this.

This, no doubt, is a poor excuse for bringing out this volume ; but I have no other excuse to offer.

Tanjore.

S. Gopalan.

THE RIGHT HON'BLE V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRIGAL. P. C.

"It is easy in the world," says a great thinker, "to live after the world's opinion. It is easy in solitude to live after one's own. But the great man is he who in the midst of society preserves with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." There is but one individual in our midst today who is a living illustration of this difficult rule of conduct. All may not agree that he achieves the sweetness commended here. But that he has in him the independence of solitude few can deny. He is eminently a man of society but sits on a seat apart. He is so near us and yet so far away. He is, to use a familiar figure, the drop of water on the lotus leaf.

This singular detachment in a politician of the eminence of the Right Hon'ble Mr. Sastri may seem very incongruous. Indeed, it may easily be interpreted as mere indifference or even lack of sympathy. But to those who have studied him with any degree of care it is the expression of a remarkable trait of his character. If there is one man in our midst today who has never surrendered his judgement it is Mr. Sastri. No man has risen

in the esteem, be it even of a section of the public, by consistently contemning them, but this is what Mr. Sastri has done. No man has won their regard by smiling—some may be inclined to think, cynically,— over their political sentiments and slogans, but this is what he has achieved. He has never stooped to conquer. He has never played with the idols of the cave, the theatre or the market-place. In fact, there has been no political upheaval in our country in which he has not found himself in disagreement with the rest of his countrymen. And yet with all this no man whose opinion is worth having has ever called him a careerist.

His reputation for integrity and lack of personal ambitions in politics stands very high today. Time was when he was very much misunderstood in this Presidency and others. The stinging remark of the lion of the Punjab about “ten thousand Right Hon’bles” would sum up the attitude towards him not very long ago. His words and his conduct were regarded with suspicion. An idea might be correct but became wrong and unacceptable because Mr. Sastri expressed it. A particular course of action was perhaps the best and most conducive of good but became unworthy and impossible because he advocated it. He gave an opinion with the best of motives but the motives were always questioned. The outburst of

criticism that his temporising and, perhaps, needlessly dispassionate speeches invariably evoked was a measure of the spirit of the time in respect of him.

It is not wrong to say that Mr. Sastri himself was largely responsible for this state of affairs. His silence which was invariably his answer to the charges levelled against him and which, perhaps, is a golden rule to follow in public life, was perplexing even to his avowed friends and admirers. Today, long after the storm has blown over, he occasionally adverts to some of those popular superstitions that existed against him and tries to dispel them. But it is no longer necessary to bother about them. They are no longer in vogue in any political camp in our country. The sky has cleared today and the personality of Mr. Sastri has emerged out of the clouds—a scintillating star.

It has never been in fashion to talk of the sacrifices of Mr. Sastri. Men may talk of his oratory, his scholarship, his international reputation, his achievements as the ambassador of India in other countries. But few will be found to talk of his sacrifices. This is not unnatural when we have in view the sensational and colossal sacrifices of men like Mahatma Gandhi and C. R. Das, which have eclipsed all others. But those who

have the patience to go through the record of his life will say with confidence that his sacrifices have been no less real. It may be that his association with the Servants of India Society had provided him with opportunities for the full play of his extraordinary qualities. It may be that it has brought him his present position. But who can deny that he did a sacrifice when he threw away the head-mastership of a High School to follow, though under the lead of the great Gokhale, what seemed a mere will-o'-the-wisp; when for a paltry allowance he toiled for years; when successively he spurned glittering chances which, if taken at the ebb, would have led him on to fortune and adhered strictly to the vows of his organization; and when all these years he has walked in honoured, though as it happened to be, prosperous poverty?

It is difficult for people to appreciate these touching aspects of his life which have been, as it were, clouded from them by his political differences with them. The condition of our politics today is such that no man who is not thorough-going in his political views and who is not prepared to translate them in his own personal life at all costs could find a niche in the hearts of the people. It is inevitable that people in any country similarly placed see things as through a "glass darkly." They have their ruling obsessions and it is no time for them to sit and weigh and consider such matters. Their

test is simple and exacting and they have no other test. At the same time I am prepared to maintain the thesis that Mr. Sastri is not what Mr. C. R. Reddi called him, a demon of moderatism. I can show by chapter and verse that he is as courageous and forward in the expression of an opinion adverse to the powers that be as one may desire, provided, of course, he feels sufficiently strongly in the matter. In this sense his differences with his avowed political allies are as deep and great as his differences with those in the Congress. If there is one man among the Liberals who may be relied on to speak nothing but his most earnest and sincere convictions, it is Mr. Sastri. The cynical, though not altogether untrue characterisation of a moderate as a person who often feels what the extremist utters, as a chicken-hearted person who dare not speak out boldly, does not apply to him.

But the difficulty with him is that his judgments and conduct in our politics are very much like those of a well-meaning foreigner sojourning in our midst. This undoubtedly is a very rare quality. It was prized and applauded in men like Morley and Haldane. It is bound to be respected and appreciated by all sensible men in any country whose politics are settled and where people are not living perpetually under a crisis. But in our country it is bound to be an obstacle to popularity. His counsels of perfection hardly com-

mend themselves to the people and not unoften irritate them. Even when he is speaking the barest truth, his words like those of Cassandra are disregarded.

But this is not to say that any one in this country has today anything but the greatest respect for the man. He has won and merited the high regard, almost bordering on love, of Mahatma Gandhi who is his very antipodes in politics. Every Indian is proud of his keen intellect, his spotless character, his high distinction. We are all proud of his international reputation which is hardly excelled by any living publicist in our country save, of course, that of Gandhiji. His work in South Africa has been greeted with universal acclamation by all shades of public opinion in this country and indeed it may be said that here Mr. Sastri, for once, achieved something like real popularity. And all will joyously award him the Victoria Cross for oratory.

No one who has heard Mr. Sastri speak can talk of him ever afterwards without the greatest enthusiasm. His delivery and the brilliant effects he achieves on the platform are the envy and despair of all aspirants in this field in our country. Indeed, this aspect of his speech is noteworthy. It is said of Gladstone that his voice and his delivery imparted to his words a significance and great-

ness which they lack in print. One seeks in vain today for the majesty and grandeur of the sublime orator in the published speeches of Gladstone, even in such a performance as the renowned Glasgow speech. I often think that the case of Mr. Sastri is not dissimilar. I can easily imagine a reader of Mr. Sastri's speeches laying them down without a perception of the greatness of the orator. But let him hear Mr. Sastri, come under the magnetism of his personality, experience the serenity and quietness of his expression, hear the melodies of his voice and follow his faultless periods and perfect pauses; and then he will have no hesitation in acclaiming him the greatest speaker he has heard. Those that lightly talk of the magic of the spoken word and pout their lips when the importance of personality in education is stressed have this lesson from Mr. Sastri. Words have a way of changing their colour between his lips and the note-book of the stenographer. Words which when read sound trivial flow from his lips invested with the charm and glow of a great message. There is no mean rhetorical device, no claptrap to rouse the gallery, nothing at all sensational to heighten his effect. His words come swimming on the electrons of his remarkable voice and take you captive.

A speaker so great as Mr. Sastri will always have his importance in the public life of any country. A speaker like him tends to become an insti-

tution in himself. It is impossible not to reverence his gifts. It is impossible not to worship at this luminous shrine. Here the drums of strife cease to sound. Here the war-cries do not seal the ears against the charmed words of the deity. Here only the pure incense of devotion and rapture burns.

This is the place which Mr. Sastri himself would like to occupy. He has stated times without number that he has no love for politics. He often loves to picture himself as one out of the rapids of politics. He always warns men off the snares and pitfalls of politics. He takes a delight in assuring the teacher-world that his place is still among them. The teachers may feel that this is a fond belief on his part. They may feel that he has passed away from their midst and could not well fit in among them. But they cannot deny that though outside their pale, his politics are and have always been those of a teacher rather than of a partisan. And when today his appointment as Vice Chancellor of the Annamalai University is announced who can resist the thought that at last the teacher has come back to his own? Who can help feeling that the mariner has laid his anchor well? It may be that he leaves the harbour and

puts out to sea once more. But who can dispute
the statement that his place is here,

Here, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems,
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
Watching the green fields growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A splendid world of streams?



SIR C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, K. C. I. E.

A few years ago I attended a meeting of an Association in Mylapore which was addressed by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer. The Secretary of the Association, either in welcoming the distinguished guest or reading the Report of the Association, prefaced his remarks with the usual "Ladies and Gentlemen". But unfortunately for him there was only one lady present at the meeting. And Sir Ramaswami Iyer, who spoke next, made use of this slip of the Secretary in somewhat the following language:—

"When your Secretary was referring to the presence of ladies in this room I was wondering who they were and where they were in this room. At the same time I was sure that your Secretary would not have used the plural without the strongest reason for it. But soon I recalled to my mind the remark of Jawaharlal Nehru at the recent All-Parties Conference that the Liberals in India, of whom I am one, are all widows. And I therefore think that your Secretary was quite justified in seeing in this room more ladies than one."

The fun over, the tone of the speaker became serious, the eye-brows lifted and the whole expression assumed a gravity from which, as Charles

Lamb would put it, Newton could have derived his theory.

I have seen Sir Ramaswami Iyer at other and more important gatherings than this. I have heard him utter with remarkable effect many a polysyllabic word on momentous occasions. But I always think of this pretty sally of his at this little meeting as the best illustration of the spirit of the man. The readiness with which it came and its absolute freedom from that sense of wounded dignity which, I know, the petulant remark of Jawaharlal provoked in those whom it ridiculed were so charming that I was glad that the Secretary of the Association made the mistake which he did. His happy and inspired mistake evoked a happy and inspired reward.

To those people in this country who, in any camp of thought, take things in a tragic spirit, Sir Ramaswami Iyer has this lesson to teach. It is, within limits, the best rule that you can keep in your secular and social decalogue. Too much feeling may, no doubt, be a measure of your earnestness. But it gives you a tragic perspective. Do you think that because you have serious things to do, life should not preserve its cake and ale? An emphatic No!

I do not for one moment suggest that Sir Ramaswami Iyer is not a serious phenomenon in our

politics. People who know his work as a member of the Madras Cabinet and his devotion to the tasks which he undertook will scout the suggestion. His dynamic energy—an expression which, by the way, he is, characteristically enough, very fond of—and his driving will are well-known. People in high offices in this province have referred to the Cauvery—Mettur Project as a flowing tribute to his constructive genius and practical vision. Many in the Project-affected area have come to regard him as if he were the solitary figure engaged in the scheme; and while this is a diverting instance of popular superstition it is very characteristic of the man who has produced the impression. I do not believe that anybody who has won these distinctions could have done so without the utmost earnestness and purpose. But at the same time it is true that even the most depressing hour in our politics finds him wholesomely free from that melancholy which inevitably afflicts those whose sense of humour is less keen than his.

There is a story that Goddess Kali, overjoyed with a *bon mot* of Tenali Raman, appeared before him and told him, "Look here, my boy, I keep in one hand of mine a silver vessel containing curd and in the other a gold vessel brim-ful of milk. If you drink of the one, you will prosper in wit. If you drink of the other you will grow in wealth. I ask you to make your choice." The great humourist

sprang upon the Goddess almost before she had finished and to her great alarm, quaffed off the contents of both vessels. There are those that are witty without wealth and wealthy without wit. But Sir Ramaswami Iyer has obtained his boon from the Goddess very much in the spirit of Tenali Raman.

His extraordinary luck both in his worldly and intellectual pursuits, his reputation for high living as well as sober thinking, his sartorial as well as mental refinements, his physical resources notably, the dignity of his mien and the charm of his manners, all flow from that enforced boon from the Goddess. It is not difficult to enumerate the persons in this province who have been lucky one way or the other. We have men in high quarters who, apart from their offices, are unmentionable boobies or unworthy adventurers. We have sound thinkers, earnest workers and able speakers whose noble rage is being repressed every day by chill penury. Obviously, these people had failed to quaff off the contents of both vessels when the Goddess appeared to them. Some of them had, perhaps, mustered just a little courage to sip from one vessel or other, while others had been completely frightened by the hand that held the boon.

His reputation for intellectual and literary pursuits was established early in life. Every school-

boy in Madras knows that he is and has always been a tireless student of literature. His speeches are always richly reminiscent of his wide and incessant studies; and as a writer, he is well-known for his colourful and picturesque expression. Chesterton once said that an orator should never be afraid of pollysyllabic words. Those who have heard Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and appreciated his gift for employing the big word with charming effect will understand the force of this aphorism.

But he is not among those whose mastery is only over figures of speech. His mastery over facts and figures is equally undeniable. He is an illustration of the principle of Morley that a really cultured man, a man with high literary equipment can be safely trusted to handle practical affairs more intelligently and more efficiently than the so-called practical men.

There are those that are tempted to characterise his attitude in our politics as laodicean. They are certainly not to blame. I cannot see how that adjective will not apply to the greatest panjandrum in the Liberal Party. Our present political condition is such that it is impossible for the Liberal to make himself felt in the public life of this country. There are times in the life of a nation which must be termed abnormal and they call for

abnormal men. Our country is passing through such times today; and the members of a Party who have been drawing in the hems of their robes at the sight of the multitude are bound to be under a great handicap when they come forward to court public opinion. Frankly speaking, their time is not yet.

Nevertheless, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer is and always has been a fascinating figure to the people of this province. There is a magic in him that in the popular imagination keeps him out of the official ranks of the Liberals. They are prepared to indulge him many a fault. They have not forgotten the memorable episodes in his evolution as a public man. There are some who still fondly recall his association with the Congress, his part in the Home Rule agitation, and his many early indications of popular leadership. There are some others that still pathetically hope that "the Hebrew will turn Christian," that the plain "C. P." may still be there, and that as of old he will be with them and of them. It is no doubt true that he now and then strikes his old notes as when he recently spoke to a Secunderabad audience; and this may, perhaps, encourage his admirers in their fond expectation.

But no ! The Pied Piper has taken his irrevocable steps. He will not turn back and go to them,

although, unlike the proud and insolent Mayor of Hamelin Town, they have given him no provocation. He is drifting away from them daily.

“ A wondrous portal opened wide ”
and

“ The door in the mountain side shut fast. ”

And who can blame them if they exclaim in the words of Browning on “The lost Leader”,

“ How all our copper had gone for his service !
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his bright and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
He alone breaks from the van... ” ?



LATE MR. A. RANGASWAMI IYENGAR

It is unquestionably true that the world is often generous to the dead rather than just to the living. But it has been fairly consistent in its attitude to Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar both before and after his death. The universal tributes of praise which his untimely death evoked were, we may say, not more generous than they were just. There was no time when he was not regarded as a very brainy politician and a solid thinker; and he had achieved his highest praises long before his death.

Indeed, it could not have been otherwise in his case. The department of work which he had selected for himself was of a character that left him to bear the palm alone. Others might care for the more attractive, the more sensational, the more illuminated part of the field. But he was for doing all the spade-work and all the inevitable cerebration. And no one grudged the laurels to the toiler.

His eminence was due to his endless capacity for taking pains. His mind was a well-stored granary of facts and figures, the reward of careful and honest husbandry. The peculiar qualities of his mind are to-day recognised by all. Correctness and

comprehensiveness were the most prominent of them. Very few men have excelled him in mastery of baffling details. None at all has equalled him in point of opportunities to exercise that mastery. His writings were always an impressive array of irrefutable facts. Complicated questions of finance, of constitution and of politics were analysed with clearness by his lucid pen and illuminated by his comprehensive intellect. It was this remarkable equipment that enabled him very early in life to work his way into the very first rank of our political thinkers.

And yet he was far from being a cold statistician or a dispassionate thinker in our politics. It was as a fighter that he entered the arena of our public life and a fighter he remained to the last. Behind all his statistics and his massive thought, there was the rich glow of feelings for his nation. His was a life dedicated to the uplift of the country and he stands in the very first rank of our publicists who scorned delights and lived laborious days for the sake of the nation.

Those that have studied him carefully will acknowledge that he was not a docile follower of any one in politics. It is true that he had his allegiances, but they were informed by sound thought and discernment. It is true that he never disagreed violently from his political comrades; but he dis-

agreed definitely enough when he thought it necessary to do so. In the language of Burke, "his disagreement was enough to indulge freedom without violating concord or disturbing arrangement". He persuaded without diffusing heat. He believed in affecting the course of events by affecting the course of thought: and his position as a great nationalist gave him exceptional chances for achieving this difficult end. And we all know how more than once he has prevailed in the inner counsels of the nation.

It was his peculiar nature not to worship his own idea. He would fight for it heroically but would never get into a tantrum because it was rejected by his party. This may appear a very small thing to say of a man so astute and reasonable as Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar; but there are many among our publicists who will readily accept that this is a very difficult virtue to practise, particularly those who often search for the supermen in their own looking-glasses. Few men there are who are capable of such extraordinary loyalty and discipline of the intellect as Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar. This is one of the reasons why he must be regarded as one of our greatest parliamentarians. The dictum of Burke about the creed that must govern the conduct of a partyman was never lost sight of by him. He believed in the "partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship" and although in

particular instances disagreement was inevitable, still he agreed that "a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political company if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten."

The politics of Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar are well-known to-day; better known than those of most other leaders because of his editorship of the greatest organ of public opinion in this country. There are few questions of public interest on which he has not expressed himself clearly and boldly enough. But I think that it is not as a politician wedded to the principles of a party he should be remembered. He has, I believe, a more permanent place in our national history than the fugitive character of politics would permit. His proper place is as a sound economist and able financier, as one who was in many respects a pioneer in this field. It is no exaggeration to say that in matters economic he saw farther and judged better than most of his colleagues.

But this lasting quality of the man is naturally overshadowed now by his towering reputation as a great journalist. Indeed his place in journalism is the *motif* of the obituary tributes to him. This is as it should be. For years to come he will be remembered for his labours in this sphere. For years to come his work as a journalist will remain

a chastening influence to those who take up this profession. His journalism was not of the pyrotechnic type. It was inspired by high ideals. It was sustained by an admirable reserve. He eschewed glittering phrases. He avoided verbal embroidery. But he was always effective without being vehement, earnest without being strident and sober without being puritanic.

It is well that India with "thousand voices praises him." It is well that the journalists all over the world are paying their respectful homage to him. It is all but the barest justice to one whose light shone far and wide. Our country can ill afford to lose a man like Mr. Iyengar in the prime of his life. She might have worshipped at other shrines than his. She might have, at times, followed counsels other than his. But she must always prize him as the torch-bearer who in many matters revealed the face of the deity.



Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastrigal.

Some time ago a vernacular journal congratulated us on the retirement of Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastrigal from judicial service. The reason suggested in this journal for our jubilation over his retirement was as amusing as it was, perhaps unconsciously, complimentary to him. His retirement, it was declared, would bring us lectures and discourses *en galore*. This facetious remark admirably hits off an aspect of the man's nature which is irrepressibly prominent in him. Most of us in this Presidency are impressed with the volume, the frequency and the range of his utterances, both spoken and written. And here we have a measure of his generous desire to communicate and share with others the delights he derives from art, literature or religion.

It may be safely said that few officials and particularly few in the judicial service have impressed themselves on the public life of our country like Mr. Sastrigal. In making this statement I am not pitting him against men like Mahadev Govinda Ranade or Sir S. Subrahmanya Iyer whose spheres of activity and thought were altogether different from his and whose paths to fame were perilous ones. I am only talking of him as an officer who

stuck to the normal routines of his office and yet made himself prominent extra-officially. There are some ornaments on the bench that limit their lustre to the court-hall. Outside their appointed work they feel like fish out of water. They always look at life with blinkers on. They sedulously avoid the free air of social intercourse. But Mr. Ramaswami Sastrigal, without for a moment quitting his place on the Bench, had acquired a wide dominion for the play of his mind and the recreation of his soul.

Those that, to any degree, are familiar with him have been touched by his great simplicity. It is not the affected simplicity of individuals who, conscious of their greatness or importance, believe that nothing is lost by a familiar manner with or a kindly word to others. It is with him a quality of mind and a habit of life. There are those who in office or retirement are relentlessly self-important. And if they mix in company at all, it is merely to impress on you that they are the chosen of God. But Mr. Sastrigal is the most unsophisticated of them all. He walks through life with a kinship of spirit with all and sundry. The consciousness of power and position, of being well-to-do, of learning and of reputation for learning have done little to impair the child-like naturalness and the remarkable goodness of the

man. It may appear a piece of affectation that he should sing of himself as being

“Forced by Hunger’s unrelenting calls
To cast aside my soul’s immortal crown
And mental sceptre and full-robed in gown
To bustle midst the Court-room’s nasty brawls.”

One who does not know him well will take this for a mere truckling to conventional fib, excusable, of course, in one who is courting the Muse. But I am inclined to take a different view and I believe that the words are vibrant with a self-flagellant zeal.

There is a tradition in this Province of encyclopaedic learning for which our public men, half a century ago, were noted. There was a thoroughness that characterised their studies. There was a fearless copiousness in their utterances. They were not ashamed or afraid of quoting poetry or prose and quoting at length. And may I say that it was a sign of the earnestness of their time that people listened to them without considering them mere bores? I always think that Mr. Sastrial belongs to this generation. In spirit, training and upbringing, he is among the last of them. Poetry, that Cynderalla of this age, has the staun-

chest adherent in him; and he never checks himself when the cherished study of a life-time in the realms of gold rushes spontaneously to the gates of his mind and gushes forth in translucent cascades of quotations.

But like some lovers of poetry, he is a panegyrist. I have heard people complain that in his avowedly critical works there is little that is critical. It is usual in this connection to instance his work on Tagore. But if the gravamen of the charge against him is that he never indulges in adverse criticism, then he can be easily defended. He is such a goodnatured man that dispraise he has none for any one. If there is one man who uses strong language against none but uses it in favour of nearly all he comes across, it is Mr. Sas-trigal. Since his goodness is not a pose but an organic part of his being, it is difficult for him to lay it aside in his literary criticism. The picture given to us by George Elliot in one of her illuminating sentences of a Greek scholar who with one hand tenderly rocked the cradle of his child and with the other dashed down the most virulent and the most scathing attack on a poor author is simply unthinkable in connection with a man like Mr. Sas-trigal.

But that he is a most indefatigable student of literature is a statement with which even his most

unsparing critic must agree. He is one of those few men who on the wrong side of fifty study their books like ambitious students studying for an examination or preparing a thesis. I cannot imagine him skipping through a book, although such a practice has the high support and recommendation of Dr. Johnson. He follows Morley and studies his books with an uncovered pen in hand and his note-book before him. It is no wonder that his mind is redolent of the great classics.

The writings of Mr. Sastrigal will fill many volumes. His unpublished and unknown works in prose and poetry are as voluminous as his published and known works. The leading characteristic of his writings, as all who have read him know, is his passion for words. People who, deficient in expression, make a fetish of economy in words, are apt to pout their lips at the verbal embellishments and decorative frills in his writings. They may wisely point out that the adjective often tends to be the enemy of the substantive in his case. But it must be conceded that he is an artist in words. He is like a diamond merchant who wishes to put his best diamonds to the best advantage. If he keeps all his coruscating words crowded together in the forefront of his writings, it is open to you to call it a weakness. But he has his effect.

There is no doubt that in his uttered views he is an ancient in his attitude to life. He has always

a tendency to talk tenderly of the times that were. But I do not believe that he is a *laudator temporis acti* to the extent of disliking the present or discrediting its achievements. He is almost the only individual in his camp of thought that does not throw up his hands and say that the progress of the world had stopped several years ago and that the world now stands like a painted ship on a painted ocean. His concessions in this respect are not a mere matter of tact or policy on his part. It is no doubt true that with all his endearing simplicity and his radiant idealism, he is a good deal tactful and cautious. In fact, we are told that when he stood on the threshold of manhood, his father exhorted him to keep before him the motto, "Tact, Push and Principle"; and although it might seem that principle is often irreconcilable with tact or push, still the fact remains that the son has achieved in his life the almost difficult advice of the father without descending into any vulgar compromise. But at the same time his modernism is a matter of faith with him and not mere policy necessitated by prominence in public life.

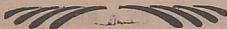
And those that know him know his broad sympathies. Though he may be found to ally himself with fanatics in most matters of public interest, he is never affected by their fanaticism. Hear what he says in his review of J. T. Sunder-

land's "Eminent Americans" when dealing with the "Age of Reason" by Thomas Paine: "This work led to his being dubbed an atheist but what he attacked was institutional and superstitious religion and not the religious feeling itself. He said: In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search his scriptures called Creation.....I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy....The world is my country and to do good is my religion. Mr. Sunderland says with appositeness and fine feeling He seems to have been the first, if not the very first, to advocate the abolition of Negro slavery. So far as is known, he was the first to suggest legal protection for dumb animals. The claims are made which seem to be well-founded, that he was the first to advocate legal justice to women, including legal equality with men; the first to suggest more rational ideas of marriage and divorce.....

How I wish that Mr. Sastrigal pursues with equally warm approval the catalogue of suggestions for our own social amelioration! It is strange that one who is a product of the modern age and who could thus express himself in sympathy with the movement should lay himself open to the charge of occultism. It seems to me strange that he should have patience with those who defend institutions and practices based on antihuman hypotheses.

I was present at a conference over the deliberations of which he presided. It was clear to me from his utterances and the utterances of the others on that occasion that there was a deep gulf fixed between him and the others in point of their attitude to life and in point of their respective sentiments. It was clear to me that Mr Sastrigal's place was not among them.

But even here his position is the expression of a beautiful trait of his character. His devotion to his father has been a dominant influence in his discussion and study of our public problems. His father, the great Professor Sundararamier, has become an institution in our province and it is unimaginable that the son should remain unaffected by the well-known "stormy views and tempestuous antipathies" of the father. The only parallel I can think of for this epic devotion, outside, of course, the pages of the Ramayana, is the case of Gladstone. It is now part of English History that at the outset of his career as a public man Gladstone was against the anti-slavery movement because his father was against it. But he took courage in his hands and made his sensational *volte face*. When will Mr. Sastrigal make his *volte face*? When he does, I will not be among those that express themselves surprised.



Mr. P. V. Naganatha Sastrigal.

One of my visits to Mr. Naganatha Sastrigal stands out prominently in my mind. I have visited him often before and since but the doors and windows of my mind were never so open to impressions as on that occasion. The scene was laid in a quiet and retired part of Tanjore. A zinc gateway grimly shut me out of a spacious compound. With faltering hands I pushed one of the doors inside, taking care all the while that the movement did not disturb the dulcet harmony of that silence. Inside, a long avenue led from north to south to a tiny and austere-looking house and stretched quite beyond it to the brink of the new Cauvery-Mettur Channel. A spare, short figure moved at the southern end on the spacious walks in the morning sun giving brisk directions to his men. He was not undisturbed by my intrusion and shading his eyes he tried to make me out. Observing that it must be one of his inescapable visitors, he stepped towards his house.

“I am sorry I am disturbing you when you are engaged in the work of your heart,” I said with awkward formality.

“Never mind,” he uttered before I finished and then, pointing to a new path-way, he said,

“This is the new walk I have laid up. I wanted to finish this and see other things done besides. But I am worried out of my wits. I feel like going away to Coonoor for good. I am tired of this, that and the other thing with which I am being constantly bothered. You know it is impossible for me to do anything so long as there is the slightest distraction.”

I had gone to him to invite him for a public function. But I took the cue from his then frame of mind and dropped the idea.

The worried air of the man on that occasion, his exasperated tone, his brisk and downright utterances were very characteristic of Mr. Naganatha Sastrigal. He is one of those who could never suffer trifles gladly. He could argue a complicated case with great lucidity and charm but would feel annoyed and vexed by a mere pointless interruption. He could untie knots of obscurity in Sanskrit grammar with great skill but would confess himself defeated by a small scratch on the cover of his book. He could recall with admirable accuracy the details and incidents in a difficult passage in Valmiki but would condemn his memory if he could not recall the name of the person that last visited him. He would make a captivating speech at a public meeting but on coming home would say, with obvious sincerity, that his speech was a lesson to

him that he should never more open his mouth in public.

There is in him an impatience with things which adds to his peculiarly attractive individuality. It is not the absurd and peevish impatience of the ordinary mind but the grand impatience of an elevated character with the commonplace world. It is always as if he expected too much of people and they failed him. The famous gibe of Dr. Johnson at mankind that the more he saw of them, the less he expected of them has obviously no truth for him. The more he sees of them, the more he expects of them. And hence his impatience.

I do not know any one whom it is more difficult to draw out than Mr. Sastrigal. There are few persons in the town who could be persuaded to undertake the perilous enterprise of inviting him to preside over a meeting or deliver a lecture. It is, no doubt, true that every snake has its charmer. But this snake has assuredly none. It is easy on a superficial acquaintance with him to mistake this for cynicism. But nothing could be more unfair to him than such a conclusion. The fact is that Mr. Naganatha Sastrigal has no faith in public meetings. The fact is he has no faith that anything good could spring from a mere fussiness of spirit.

In this he is directly antipodal to Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastrigal. The two

have the greatest mutual respect and regard. Between them they have much that is common-ground. But while the Dewan Bahadur is highly gregarious, Mr. Naganatha Sastrigal is in many respects a recluse. The one seeks the public and places his wares before them. The other shuns them and is almost ostentatiously contemptuous of what they think of him. The one radiates good humour and puts you on your ease in his company. The other hits you with the weapons of his intellect and sends you home routed.

No one who meets Mr. Sastrigal even for a few minutes can go away without being impressed with his rare and delicate charms as a conversationalist. He has a vigour of expression and a telling way of putting things which, combined with ripe scholarship and keen power of observation, endow his talk with a rare, winning quality. The secret of his power as a conversationalist is his remarkable freedom from fads. There are eminent men who cannot utter half a dozen sentences without hovering round their pet ideas. Their talk, however commenced, inevitably centres round the ideas with which they are associated. They are men of limited horizon, although their horizon may be richly bedaubed with rainbow clouds. But in Mr. P. V. Naganatha Sastrigal you are struck by a remarkable versatility and inexhaust-

ible fecundity of ideas which ensnare your attention and enthrall your mind.

There is no doubt that his charm as a conversationalist and his effectiveness as a speaker flow from his ripe erudition. His is a richly cultivated and frequently exercised intellect. In his intellectual wardrobe there are absolutely no half pieces. His interests have a wide sweep. He is as deeply acquainted with literature as with the sciences. His knowledge of English is as wide and as rich as his knowledge of Sanskrit and they are both not more remarkable than his knowledge of Botany. The words of Emerson have a peculiar application to him. "We expect a great man" says Emerson "to be a good reader. Or in proportion to the spontaneous power should be the assimilating power. He that borrows the aid of an equal understanding doubles his own; he that uses that of a superior elevates his own to the stature of that he contemplates."

It is characteristic of his intellect that it delights in the subtleties of Sanskrit Grammar and Rhetoric. His achievements in this field are considered of a high order. He has a book to his credit on Sanskrit Rhetoric which has evoked the approbation of such an eminent person as Mr. A. B. Keith. He has an inexhaustible curiosity in the pursuit of this branch of learning. I have found

him working at Sanskrit grammar with tireless energy, his delight in the work increasing with the baffling difficulties of the subject. And I have no doubt that his achievements in this direction will prove to be one of his enduring titles to fame.

But even those whose ignorance of the divine language is an obstacle to their appreciation of his achievements in this direction have in his personality an irresistible appeal. This appeal is not confined to the *domus Socratica*, because to know him is to be enchanted with him. This is in a way curious because there is nothing vague or sensational about him, nothing glaringly peculiar so as to hold the ordinary man. On the other hand he is a man of definite and fixed views and while this accounts for his systematic life it can hardly explain his towering influence over those who come to him. Although he has never cared for a place in public life and although politics have always been his anathema maranatha, still his is a prominent name for scholarship, for high attainments and for uprightness in his profession. As a lawyer, he provides a not very familiar example of one whose methods have always been clean, noble, and fit for the honest daylight and the summer sun. It is of a piece with his other rare qualities that he is one of those few eminent persons in the legal profession who have a record of independence. Nor has this spirit in any way

queered the pitch for him at any stage. I have a notion that with his tireless devotion to work, his straight and manly outlook, his kangaroo-leaps to correct conclusions, he would have made an admirable judge. But the snow-clad peaks and the glittering prizes of the profession are not, except very infrequently and not perhaps unnaturally, for the celebrities in mufassal stations. Still, among those who walk on the plains of the profession with heads erect and with steady onward tread, who live simply but think highly, who never allow the call of learning to be stifled by the call of the profession, Mr. Naganatha Sastrigal must be given a very high place indeed.



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