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The Indian Fiddler Queen

A
 SHORT SKETCH
 OF
 PHILOMENA
 THUMBOOCHETTI



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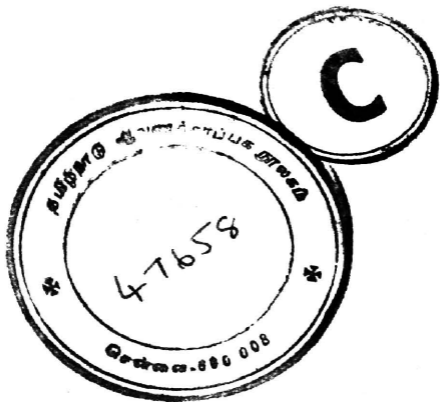
1919

“THE INDIAN FIDDLER QUEEN”

A SHORT SKETCH
OF
PHILOMENA THUMBOOCHETTY.



PUBLISHED BY
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Raja Dharma Pravina T. R. A. Thumboo Chetty, C.I.E., Philomena Thumboo Chetty's grandfather. He was for many years Chief Justice of Mysore and finally retired as Dewan.

Mrs. Rajamma Thumboo Chetty, grandmother of Philomena Thumboo Chetty.

Rajasabhabhushana T. Thumboo Chetty, O.B.E., Huzur Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, Father of Philomena Thumboo Chetty.

Mrs. C. Thumboo Chetty, mother of Philomena Thumboo Chetty (Photo taken soon after Presentation at Court at Buckingham Palace, London, on the 16th May 1934).

Philomena in her seventh year.

Philomena in her fourteenth year while studying at the School of Music, Park Street, Calcutta.

Paris Conservatoire. Senior Professor Firmin Touche and his pupils. Philomena is standing just behind the Professor (First from the left).

Philomena Thumboo Chetty (Photo taken soon after Presentation at Court at Buckingham Palace, London, on the 16th May 1934.)

St. Philomena's Church in Mysore, the foundation stone of which was laid by His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

PREFACE

THIS small brochure is not designed to be a full life-study of Miss Philomena Thumboochetty. Though she has already attained to considerable fame, she is yet quite young and her greatest achievements belong to the future. In this view the time is not yet ripe for a full account of her life and work. These pages do not even claim to be a critical evaluation of her art. They have been stimulated by a sense of pride, arising from the circumstance of an Indian Artist—acquiring such rare mastery in violin playing as to elicit high praise from critics of Western music. If these pages could communicate to the reader a little of the spirit of appreciation and enthusiasm in which they have been written, and kindle interest in her talents they would not have been written in vain.

To be noticed by the *Punch** is in itself a hallmark of fame; for, that great journal is not without its share of gentle snobbery. The very happy and appropriate title to this sketch has been taken from its Rhymes and the author acknowledges his obligations to it with gratitude.

* See Appendix I

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

We have very great pleasure in publishing this brochure on Miss Philomena Thumboo Chetty. We are very much indebted to the author who, however, desires to remain anonymous and to Sir C. V. Raman, F.R.S. for writing the foreword and thus lending his great name in approval of this work.

FOREWORD

Philomena Thumboochetty is a figure of great interest in the musical world of to-day. In her art and in her youthful personality, she embodies the true spirit of modern India which seeks to express itself in the highest fields of human endeavour, and recognises no limits to the possible heights of achievement in such endeavour. It is in the fitness of things that she has chosen the music of the west and the most expressive of European musical instruments as her medium of self-expression rather than the traditional music and the musical instruments of her own country. To see and hear her play on the violin is an unforgettable experience for any one. The circumstances that have enabled Philomena's phenomenal abilities to emerge from obscurity are of high interest. It is therefore to be hoped that the publication of this brochure will be warmly welcomed and that it will serve to strengthen public interest in her remarkable career and achievements.

Indian Institute of Science,
Bangalore,
19th February 1937.

(Sd.) C. V. Raman.





CHAPTER I

THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE.

NATIONS like individuals have moods. They alternate between hope and depression. When hope is high there is activity and achievement. With depression comes stagnation and life becomes "nasty, brutish and short."

The spirit of creation amongst the Indians had languished for a long time. This is not the place to embark upon a detailed enumeration of the causes for such degeneracy. To do so would take this modest effort perilously near a historical essay. But the fact remains that for several centuries India was merely content to withdraw into herself and to derive such pleasure, as she could, from a contemplation of her glorious past.

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No wonder, she appeared to the virile races that came into contact with her to be a decadent and decrepit old country. Her religion was regarded as a mosaic of repellent dogma, not even possessing the saving grace of consistency. Her literature was dismissed as a conglomerate mass of sentimental and sometimes, even sensual, stuff expressed in highly overwrought and ornate verbiage. Her arts and crafts were rejected as being both jejune and provincial. It was more or less in this frame of mind that Lord Macaulay essayed to benefit "a great and glorious people sunk to the depths of slavery and superstition" by introducing English education into India and thus bringing her people into line with the main currents of human progress.

But the change in perspective and values came in the last century. Goethe was supposed to have admired greatly "Sakuntala" and "the Upanishads." The word soon went round that perhaps India was not so bad as was believed. From Oxford, Max Muller drew the attention of the world

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to India's cultural heritage. To him, more than to any other European savant, India owes such recognition as she has now obtained for culture and aspiration. Sylvain Levi, Sir John Woodroffe, Havell, Romain Rolland have done much to popularise Indian thought. Their work—varied in kind but linked to the same aim—constitutes a landmark in India's recent cultural history. It is the beginning of the new renaissance.

As with individuals so with a people, sympathy and understanding work miracles. Due to the sympathy of those great savants, India came into her own. The drooping spirit revived. There was once again the desire to strive and achieve.

The appearance of Dr. Tagore in a burst of glory on the map of international letters was an event of great significance. He was the great swallow that announced the coming summer. In painting there has been a most remarkable revival. The Tagores of Calcutta have been the pioneers in this work. They painted pictures of.

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exquisite beauty and brought into vogue the Indian tradition with regard to line, colour and curve. The achievements of Sir C. V. Raman and the brilliant writings of Sir S. Radhakrishnan have put India distinctly on the world map. On a par with these honoured names is the name of Miss Philomena Thumboochetty as India's leading violinist. They are distinctly the products of the new ferment that is visible in all phases of Indian life.

Why should then, Miss Philomena Thumboochetty, who is claimed to be the child of the new renaissance, take to a typically Western method and form of expression? This question is bound to be raised at some stage or other. It is, perhaps, best to answer it at the outset. First, there is really neither East nor West in the realm of pure art. On high altitudes, the air is the same. The media may differ and the technique may vary. But the essence of art, since it partakes of the spiritual stuff of man is really universal. Secondly, to gain the ear of the world the Western

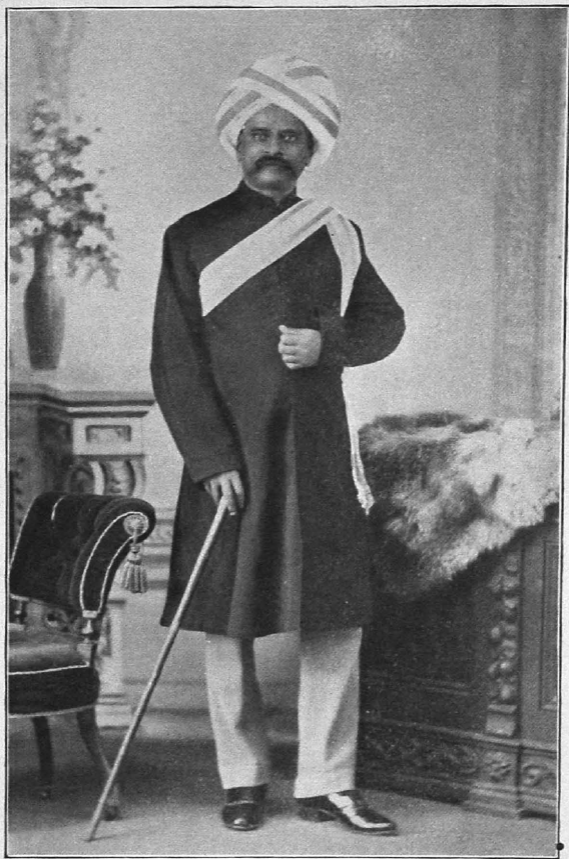
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medium is more expedient, for its appeal is to a much larger section of humanity. No one can really over-rate the importance of popularising India in as vast a portion of the world as is possible. Thirdly, a mastery of the European forms of expression helps in exploring the similarities in both the traditions—Eastern and Western—and will prove helpful in the evolution of that larger synthesis towards which all the great spirits of the age are moving.

CHAPTER II

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

THE world knows Mysore only as the best governed of the Indian States—a patch of what is called “The Indian India,” of which Indian statesmanship and administrative ability can well be proud. But to the Indian mind, especially the South Indian mind, Mysore’s appeal is larger; it is subtler too. Imagination invests Mysore with an element of romance. It may be due to recollection of its colourful history or its salubrious climate, or its several spots of gorgeous natural beauty. It may also be due to the feeling that Mysore produces gold, sandal and jasmies. The very name has a glamour of its own. It puts one in mind of things that are beautiful in nature and pleasing to the eye. A visit to Mysore and its environs confirms this predilection.



Raja Dharma Pravina T. R. A. Thumboo Chetty, C.I.E.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

Nestling under a glorious hill, imposing in its ancient dignity, clean, prosperous, with marked signs of constant improvements, Mysore lifts the visitor from the present context and puts him either in the past or in the future. He asks himself, "Were the ancient cities of India—those renowned cities of the Epics—were they like this?". The mind wakes up from the reverie soon enough. The hoot of the motor horn and the garish cinema placard remind him that he is in the twentieth century. But the dream lingers and he tells himself, "If it is not a replica of those ancient cities, it is at least the forerunner of what our cities of the future are likely to be."

With this fair city for its capital, there is now ruling over Mysore a Prince far-famed for his unique qualities of mind and exalted character. In his wisdom, in his capacity for detachment from the world of pomp and circumstance and in his serenity of temper, he reminds one of the great kingly ideal that the ancient King Janaka

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typified in his own life. For over thirty years he has laboured incessantly for the welfare of his subjects. The constant watch he keeps over the well-being of his people, the large policies he has initiated, the several great schemes of irrigation, electric power and industrial production, which he has initiated and which under his benevolent care have come to fruition, constitute each a theme by itself. This is not the place nor is this the occasion to refer to his great work, which is part of the recent history of Mysore. As passionately as he believed in the need for the material improvement of his subjects, he has believed in the need for their spiritual and moral betterment. Like Plato's Philosopher-King, he has considered himself to be a trustee of his people. He has been responsible for the large number of educational institutions, which are now found dotted over the whole of Mysore. He has been the greatest patron of the fine arts in this part of India. His court has ever attracted the most famous musicians and painters and other



•Mrs. Rajamma Thumboo Chetty.

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artists known to the country. Himself possessing great powers of appreciation and intimate knowledge of the technique of music, His Highness the Maharaja has been and is a great inspiration to the musical artistes of his State and of India in general.

There is a singular appropriateness in Philomena Thumboochetty having been born in Mysore in the reign of a Sovereign, so much devoted to art and music. It is said that a genius is not governed by ordinary rules of cause and effect; that it is a phenomenon that occurs whenever and wherever it chooses to appear. Be that as it may, it cannot be denied that her latent talent had ample opportunities for development under the conditions obtaining in the city of her birth and early life. She was blessed with a home that had a vision of her destiny. She was born in a State that had always thought highly of music and the arts.

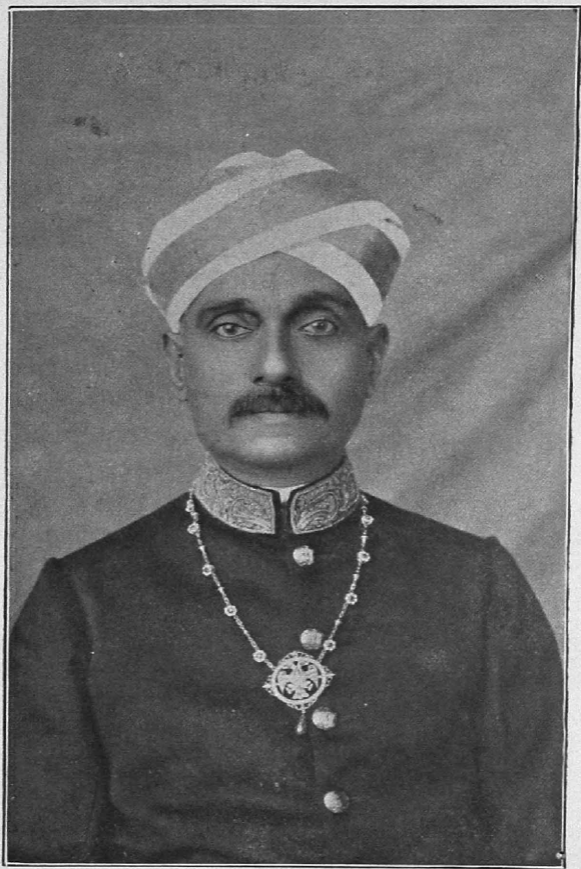
Philomena was born in Bangalore in her father's place named Rugby Lodge, as the younger daughter of Rajasabhabhushana Thumboochetty, O.B.E., who is now holding

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the high office of the Huzur Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja and it was a fortunate coincidence that she was named Philomena at her baptism after St. Philomena. Mr. Thumboochetty had not then become the devotee of the great martyr. But it shows how singularly appropriate was the coincidence.

The Thumboochettys, who had embraced Christianity and had become members of the Catholic Church, migrated into the Mysore state many years ago. They soon established themselves in their new home and grew in prosperity and public esteem.

Mr. Thumboochetty's father was one of the most distinguished public servants of his time, who filled with distinction the high offices of the Chief Justice of the Mysore High Court and also that of the Dewan of the State. In both these high positions, he acquitted himself with great credit. He possessed a strong will and a forceful personality. With all his power of drive and executive efficiency, he was modest and tender at heart. An old and



Rajasabhabhushana T. Thumboo Chetty, O.B.E.

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respected citizen of Mysore, writing his interesting reminiscences of those times, writes of him thus: "Mr. T.R.A. Thumboo chetty was remarkable for his strong will, clear foresight, sagacious energy and uncommon firmness to persevere in a policy of justice and fair play. He was the prototype of a pious Christian. He was accessible to everybody and like Mr. Rangacharlu tapped from everybody some lesson which used to be of great assistance to him in the performance of his public duties. He used to say "There is no man on earth from whom you cannot learn something. Even the humblest of men are the embodiments of some virtue or other, which if learnt and translated into practice will make our lives sublime." He shares with Rangacharlu and Seshadri Aiyar and other great men of Mysore, the credit of having laid the foundations for its present day prosperity and administrative efficiency. His wife who was an exemplary helpmate and simple and generous to the very core of her heart passed away in 1934, universally

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regretted, at the advanced age of 86. Her death recalled to many that had known her the memory of a deeply pious and saintly personality.

Born to such parents, the present Mr. Thumboochetty (Philomena's father) was brought up in a home that set high traditions for a keen sense of duty and religious devotion. After a brilliant scholastic and college career, Mr. Thumboochetty entered service under the Mysore Government in the year 1906 as an Assistant Commissioner. His unswerving integrity of character and sympathetic imagination helped him to become a very successful executive officer. He rose in the service and in 1914 joined the Palace administration and is today occupying the high office of Huzur Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja. It is no easy office; and the incumbent must possess a considerable degree of tact, understanding and imagination to make a success of it. That Mr. Thumboochetty has achieved great success in his office is shown by the fact that he



Mrs. C. Thumboo Chetty.

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has been the recipient of warm praise all round. His Highness the Maharaja bestowed on him a much coveted honour and the public felicitations that were offered to Mr. Thumboochetty on that occasion indicate the high regard and esteem in which he is held by the people of the State.

Through all these busy years of unceasing official life Mr. Thumboochetty has remained a deeply religious and pious member of the Catholic Church. It is true that most men do not choose their religions. They are born into one faith or another and are content to pass their lives in conformity and peace. But the few—the very salt of the earth—have speculation in their souls. They think out the fundamentals. The basic postulates are examined. It happens sometimes that such introspective scrutiny leads one to a totally different standpoint. More often it happens that one is reconciled to his inherited faith. When one comes back to his old position after an adventurous thought and speculation, he clings to it with passion. What was a

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blind adherence before is now transformed into an intelligent loyalty. Mr. Thumboochetty is a thinker and he has thought out the several problems of his religious life and experience.

Is it any wonder, then, that Mr. Thumboochetty should be carrying his religion—as religion should indeed be carried—into actual life? He is kind, affable and modest at heart. He is deeply attached to the catholic saint St. Philomena and through his exertions, it was possible to spread devotion to her in India. His Highness with characteristic catholicity of mind laid the foundation stone of the magnificent church under construction in honour of this ever sympathetic saint and made a most notable speech¹ on the occasion.

Two things stand out prominently in Mr. Thumboochetty's life—(1) his devotion to the memory of St. Philomena and (2) his love for his daughter who bears the saint's name. From his contribution to

(1) See Appendix 3



Philomena in her seventh year.

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St. Philomena's Messenger, published in Appendix, 2 it will be seen how the father has linked up his love for his child with the devotion to the Saint and how anxious he is that the great influence of St. Philomena should guide and protect his daughter.

Mrs. Thumboochetty, a lady of great accomplishments and elevation of character, has by her enlightened tenderness and unceasing vigilance, exercised a most wholesome influence on her young daughter and her sister. Her home has been one of the greatest blessings of Philomena's life.

(2) See Appendix 2

CHAPTER III

EARLY EDUCATION.

“MY training under my father’s eye,” writes Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, “was of a strictly scientific character. He was determined that I should be a great mathematician or a scientist. But the poetic instinct I inherited from him and also from my mother (who wrote some lovely Bengali lyrics in her youth) proved stronger. One day, when I was eleven, I was sighing over a sum in Algebra, it would’nt come right; but instead a whole poem came to me suddenly. I wrote it down. From that day my poetic career began.”¹

Philomena Thumboochetty’s lot was different. Her father had no preconceived plan to impose upon her. She was lucky in her parents who spotted out her natural

(1) Quoted from Aruthur Symons introduction to Golden Threshold.



Philomena in her fourteenth year.

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talent and were only glad to steer her towards her destiny. They knew that music was her line and that in music she would go far. That was why after giving her a rudimentary training in the three R's, they put her into the Good Shepherd Convent, Mysore, where Sister Maurice, herself a competent musician and an excellent teacher, gave Philomena the first lessons in violin. She not merely showed remarkable aptitude but what, in a child of six is a much rarer quality—the desire to master the dull detail. She made considerable progress under Sister Maurice.

Her quickly acquired proficiency encouraged her parents and teachers to make her appear for the junior Trinity College examination. She sat for the test at the age of seven and Dr. Mistowsky was so pleased with her performance that he called her "a born violinist."

Caryle's oft discussed saying that genius consists in the capacity for taking infinite pains looks very much of a half truth in the face of prodigies like Philomena. No

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one can minimize the value of pains; for it is labour that brings to perfection the medium of expression. But there is a line that divides genius and proficiency and that is not a difference that labour alone makes. It is a difference in natural gifts.

After leaving the Good Shepherd Convent, Philomena was sent to Calcutta where she was placed under the care and direction of Professor Sandre of the Calcutta School of Music. For such a tiny girl, the change of place and environment must have been trying at the outset, but she fell in with the ways of the new school and soon became very popular both with her professor and her school mates. Her increasing proficiency enabled her at an incredibly young age to think of stiff tests like the F.C.T.L. examination of the London Trinity College of Music. Again, Dr. Mistowsky happened to be her examiner. No young examinee would like to have an examiner twice over—*one like* Dr. Mistowsky is trying enough even once. But these common fears never touched Philomena's brave



Paris Conservatoire.

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spirit and with an assurance that was considerably in advance of her young years, she proceeded to show off her best to Dr. Mistowsky. He was so pleased with her progress and performance that he gave her 98% of the marks. The two marks that were not given her were, perhaps, to remind Philomena that she was, after all, an examinee. Dr. Mistowsky, who seems to possess great powers of understanding, saw the humour of the situation and admitted in confidence that he had the utmost difficulty in resisting the impulse to give her all the marks.

So far, her training was only confined to Mysore and Calcutta. Side by side with her musical lessons Philomena was acquiring general education. In 1929, her father took a great and decisive step. He determined to send her to Paris. Both to him and to his wife, the separation meant a good deal. They had never been parted from her for any long periods of time. Even when she was in Calcutta they felt the wrench, but after all, Calcutta was in

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India and within easy reach. But Paris was in a far off continent. But they thought of the girl and her future. The sense of duty overpowered the natural love and she was sent to Paris. This was a great event in her life. From now onwards her mind widened rapidly. A new range of possibilities occurred to her. She was set on the path to international distinction.

In Paris, as an young girl of 16, she was admitted into the famous Paris Conservatoire and she was the first Indian to be so admitted. As a preliminary to the admission she had to appear for a competitive test. Some 150 candidates from all parts of the globe and all of them artistes of no negligible merit competed. Of this large number, only 10 were chosen for admission and Philomena was one. She was not merely the only one of her race to sit in her class but she was the youngest of them all.

Her stay in Paris was in many respects the most crucial period in the development of her art and personality. She practised

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at her lessons assiduously. She was eager to learn; and what she learnt she was as eager to perfect. The Paris Conservatoire and its great history exercised a subtle influence over her mind. She was besides in the musical centre of the world and such a place always appeals to the imagination. The famous city is, as it were, an epitome of the colourful history of France. To Philomena Paris had several things to teach. For centuries, France had remained loyal to her own faith, the great Catholic Church. The French are known to be a keenly intellectual race, not devoid of an engaging touch of cynicism. But along with that there is a deeper strain in their nature, their adherence to the Mother Church which, not even the volcanic eruption of the French Revolution, could weaken. In Paris, Philomena saw a number of institutions round which still clung the dream of the Middle Ages. The chapels with their "dreaming spires", the sonorous peeling of the bells, the soft music and the low afternoon light flooding through coloured

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glass and vivid ritual left on Philomena's mind a permanent impression. She saw in them all what Matthew Arnold has described as "the last enchantments of the Middle Ages." Philomena had opportunities while in Paris to visit the great picture galleries and works of art. She saw the art of Michael Angelo, of Leonardo da Vinci and of Botticelli—those great masters whose work constitutes in Walter Pater's words "a great outbreak of the human spirit." She saw the works of the celebrated Santi Raphael. She could feel the throb of life that made those master-pieces possible. She could see the spirit of Christ hovering round their work.

She read also widely of the lives of the great composers and felt inspired by their experiences. She read about that greatest of musical composers, Beethoven, who tramped the streets of Vienna and gave to the world the Ninth Symphony. She read about Mozart, Bach, and Schubert. She read about Wagner, who revolutionized the operatic music and about Chopin, the

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master of sad melody. That she practised at the works of these great composers goes without saying. But she attempted also to go behind their actual work and seek to discover in it the secret of their inspiration and the key to their personality.

After finishing her course at the Conservatoire, Philomena became the pupil of the great Roumanian violinist Enesco, who is as great an artiste as a critic of music. Several artistes seek his help and advice on matters touching their work. Yehudi Menuhin comes over from America to Paris every year for taking some lessons under this great master. Enesco had repeatedly said that Miss Philomena Thumboochetty would go up high in the world of music. That Enesco—unlike several prophets—turned out to be a true one will be seen from what Miss Philomena has been able to achieve since leaving the Paris Conservatoire.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST DEBUT.

SINCE leaving the Paris Conservatoire Philomena continued her musical studies and her first recital abroad was in London. On the 20th of April she gave a recital before a very cultured and critical audience in the Trinity College concert hall. The Trinity College of Music, London, is one of the foremost institutions of its kind in Europe. Her concert began at 8-15 p.m., with Miss Catherine O'Brien at the piano. She began with a concerto of Vivaldi Kreisler in C. Major. She rendered with great effect a sonata of Cesar Franck. She gave them in turn pieces from Ernest Bloch, Brahms, Marie Theresa, Paradis, Beethoven, and Wieniawski.

The selection of pieces shows the variety and range of her proficiency. The pro-



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gramme was a happy blend of the old and new compositions and left her hearers not merely greatly satisfied with the performance but most hopeful about her future.

We extract here the notice from the London Trinity College of Music Magazine:—

“A concert of special interest was the violin recital given on March 20th by a Hindu artiste, Miss P. T. C. F. C. T. L. whose programme was as follows:—

Concerto in C Major.	...	Vivaldi-Kreisler
Sonata in A Major.	...	Cesar Franck
Nigun (Baal Shem)	...	Ernest Bloch
Waltz in A	...	Brahms
Dance. (17th Century)	...	Paradis.
Minuet in G.	...	Beethoven.
Mazurka	...	Wieniawski.

Miss Chetty who showed herself to be a player of uncommon gifts is a native of Mysore (S. India), her father being the Private Secretary of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, a lover and patron of music who is one of the Vice Presidents of this College. His Highness has an excellent

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band and Orchestra and also holds string quartet concerts in his Palace. He has encouraged the study of music in his own family. His nephew and heir, Prince Jaya, is an excellent Pianist, who holds a college diploma and other members of the family have passed our College examinations."

With this recital she started her career on the international stage.

In the court season of the summer of 1934 Miss Philomena Thumboochetty had the great honour of being presented with her mother to Their Majesties at the Buckingham Palace in London. Philomena as a debutante was presented at court by Lady Maud Hoare, the wife of Sir Samuel Hoare, the late Secretary of State for India. A writer in the Press, writing at the time says:—

"A number of Indian women have been presented to Their Majesties, on previous occasions; amid the colourful array, which is acknowledged to be one of the most picturesque in the world, one can imagine their dresses and deportment to be

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dignified and equal to the occasion.

“English debutantes, for their apparel, have to conform to the pattern approved by Her Majesty the Queen, and no departure from it, we are told, is tolerated. Indian women, however, appear in their own national costume. Were there a considerable number of them, one can fancy how the stately draperies and variegated colours of the Indian *saree* would have enriched the scene and provided a harmonious contrast to the fashionable English gowns.”

“A report describes that when they were presented Miss Chetty wore a red Benares gold embroidered *saree* and a green emerald set of jewels, while Mrs. Chetty appeared in a purple-and-gold *saree* with diamond-set jewellery.”

Another writer writing of the graceful manner in which Miss Philomena conducted herself on this great occasion, says—

“Ordinary court conventions of dress and courtesy are set aside for Indian ladies who come to be presented to the King and Queen. Instead of the courtesy, they made

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a deep bow which was accompanied by a graceful gesture of obeisance with both hands spread wide apart.”

By her dress and demeanour, Philomena showed that she was proud of her nationality and that in high social functions she was equally proud to own it.

CHAPTER V.

THE GREAT CONCERT

11TH April 1935 was a great day in Miss Philomena's life. In was the announcement of her full fledged vocation. Violin was no longer a hobby, a thing to practise by the fireside to a group of devoted relations. It becomes from this date the vehicle of her expression. Secondly, it marked the transformation of the amateur into the professional. Superstitions die hard. But prejudices are even harder to die. In spite of increasing enlightenment, people are not wanting who raise their brows at art being made into a profession. The money part of professionalism is the least part of it. It means entire devotion. Hence the superiority in quality. Dilettantism is the price of amateurism. A high born lady who need not work for her bread has

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chosen music for her career! Even in the West, it is no common thing. In India, it is almost a unique thing. In braving that experience, Philomena has placed numberless members of her sex under gratitude. She has set the example with courage.

The Aeolian Hall concert started under the best auspices. It was the jubilee year. London was in a holiday mood. Representatives of the far flung empire trooped into the imperial capital. There was an added sense of common citizenship under the crown. The air was filled with friendliness. Mark how an English writer puts it: "One charming sidelight of the jubilee which nevertheless was not mentioned to me as such is that the talented Indian girl, Miss Philomena Thumboochetty, is to give her first recital in London very soon. It may be mere coincidence that she may be doing so in the jubilee year, but it is pleasanter to think that it is a reminder that we are fellow subjects, also that music is one of the international things of life."

The "Star" of London had a more formal

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but not a less cordial announcement.

“Although it is over eight years since Lord Reading ceased to be Viceroy, he still keeps up many of his associations with Indian friends.”

“Tomorrow the first concert ever given by an Indian Violinist in London is under his patronage. The artiste is Miss Philomena Thumboochetty, the twenty-two-year-old daughter of the Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Mysore, whom Lord Reading knew well during his term of office as Viceroy.”

That Lord Reading was giving his patronage to the concert and that Lord Goschen would be there too, added to the interest of the function, which was already unique—an Indian girl of tender years—displaying not her own national music but European music before an appreciative European audience. The air was charged with anticipation.

The great day arrived. Accompanied by her mother she came to the hall, dressed in her *saree* and with confidence tempered

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with becoming modesty she proceeded to give of her best.

Words cannot recapture the thrill that one experiences when listening to exquisite music which holds an audience spell bound.

Let us step out and allow one who was present on the occasion to tell the story of the great concert.

“Beginning with Kreisler’s Concerto (Allegro energico ma non troppo, Adante deloroso, Allegro motto), she gradually took the audience through Philippe Gaubert’s Fantasie (Allegro Tres lent and Vif), which, by the way was her first performance in London, and concluded with Bach’s sonata in E Major for Violin and Piano (Adagio, Allagro, Adagio ma non tanto, Allegro) followed immediately by Saint-Saens (Havanaise), Debussy (La fille, aux cheveux de lin), Ravel (Havanaera) and Lili Boulanger (cortage), which brought her frequent applause from her appreciative audience.

“I never had the pleasure of listening to Miss Chetty’s recital before but I have

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reason to agree with a critic who told me that her Thursday's recital gave considerable satisfaction to those who heard her at the Trinity College of music sometime ago. Since then Miss Chetty has made good use of her time, and her tone has acquired a delicacy it never had before. Simultaneously her technique has gained considerably in range and assurance.

"When Miss Chetty gave us the last interpretation of the evening on her delicately handled instrument, the audience went into rapturous cheers and in a few minutes she was the recipient of many lovely bouquets of exquisite spring time flowers. Her many admirers did not fail to spot her mother and to shake her warmly by the hand for her daughter's marvellous triumph on her first appearance in the West end of London." ¹

Praise has a meaning and value only when it comes from those that know and let us extract a few typical press notices written by competent critics:

(1) Bombay Chronicle d/23-4-1935.

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“This young Indian violinist—a product of Trinity College—gave her first London recital on April 11th in the Aeolian Hall. The programme consisted of a Vivaldi concerto (arranged by Kreisler), a Fantasia by Philippe Gaubert, the E Major sonata of Bach and a group of shorter items. The soloist gave herself and her audience some unusual exercise in the way of mental adjustments. A more chronological arrangement of the items would have been an advantage. As it was, the recitalist made a very favourable impression. She has an easy style and a pleasant tone. If her interest at the moment is centred more in her technique than in the music she plays, it is possibly because she has not yet reached the stage when the artist supersedes the musician. That she will one day pass this dividing line seems highly probable.”¹

“Various members of the audience”, says Miss Stella Mead, “.....who had heard Miss Chetty some twelve months previously at the Trinity School of Music,

(1) H. S. R. in *Musical Opinion* d/May, 1935.

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were delighted at the development of her technique. Her programme included a *Fantasia* by Philippe Gaubert, heard in London for the first time, and it provided an excellent opportunity for the display of Miss Chetty's talent. Another item of special interest was the concert by Vivaldi Kreisler, one which was handled with genuine sympathy.

I heard a distinguished member of the audience say "what gifts India is giving to England in these days!" It is to be hoped that Miss Chetty will soon be heard in her own country." ¹

Take again this typical notice. "Miss Philomena Thumboochetty.....A first London recital by a violinist of Indian birth who has studied at the Paris Conservatoire. She has a modest but clear tone and has achieved a fluent command of the musical idioms of the West, which can have been no easy matter. There were moments of eloquence, and many of pure grace, in the sonata for violin and piano

(1) Roy's Weekly, d/27-5-1935.

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in E Major by Bach, in which her accompanist, Bertram Harrison, collaborated." 1

The same note of high appreciation is struck in the following shorter notices:—

“For her first London recital at the Aeolian Hall on Thursday last week Philomena Thumboochetty, a talented young Indian Violinist, presented a Vivaldi-Kreisler concerto, a new Fantasia by Philippe Gaubert, Bach’s E Major sonata, and several short pieces by French composers. A pleasing tone was used in an efficient rendering of the fantasia. Musical appreciation of Bach and the animated playing of the final allegro were the outstanding features of the sonata. “La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin,” by Debussy, was given with great poetical expression and charm. Bertram Harrison was excellent at the piano.” 2

“Miss Chetty was certainly courageous in her choice of pieces. Gaubert’s fantasia,

(1) Sunday Times d/14-4-1935.

(2) Westminster Chronicle d/19-4-1935.

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for example, is exacting in its demands upon a young violinist's technique and Bach's sonata in E Major for Violin and Piano would not be everybody's choice for a debut recital, but Miss Chetty approached both with the utmost *sang froid* and, be it said, with considerable success. Her best effort was in a Vivaldi-Kreisler Concerto; perhaps more carefully rehearsed than the others, and certainly more suited artistically to her temperament. With greater experience she should travel far in the musical circles of the West. She is already a shade ahead of any of the violinists of the East." ¹

Even the *Morning Post* had time to step aside from its usual political obsessions and pay a charming tribute to Miss Philomena. A host of other writers wrote in terms of warm praise of her performance. She covered herself with glory on her very first appearance on the world stage.

(1) Sunday Statesman d/28-4-1935.

CHAPTER VI

MYSORE AGAIN.

AFTER the triumphal season in England Philomena accompanied by her mother hastened to India. She arrived in Bombay on the 5th September, 1935. She had now become a famous person. Her youth and her social standing added novelty and glamour to her achievement. There were a number of Indian ladies and gentlemen to meet her at the Mole Station, Bombay. The smiles, garlands and the handshakes that greeted her were not merely the expression of individual gratification. It was as if the whole community was welcoming back one who had brought honour to it. Rao Bahadur Ramaswamy, the President of the Mysore Association, was there rightly enough. No one would grudge Mysore precedence to do honour to Philomena.

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A largely attended and successful lunch was got up by Mr. S. S. Rajan in her honour at the Brandon Hotel. Many South Indians and prominent citizens of Bombay attended the function to mark their feeling of elation.

Fame brings with it certain disadvantages. Publicity is the price we pay for fame. Philomena could not escape the enterprising army of cameramen and press reporters.

She was asked about her experiences in England, her conceptions of Western and Eastern music and she was asked about her future plans.

In reply she said, "I am anxious to give my first recital in Mysore before His Highness the Maharaja as a loyal subject of his and I feel it is my foremost duty to do so and then in other parts of India."

The above remark brings out her sense of loyalty and devotion to His Highness the Maharaja. In the hour of triumph, with plaudits from all sides, she feels her first duty is to give her opening recital before

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His Highness.

One thinks naturally of her sense of duty. But one thinks also of the august Ruler who has been able to inspire such deep-seated loyalty.

The home coming of Philomena was a great event to her family. But the whole city seemed to have been caught up in the sense of jubilation.

On the 10th October of 1935, a magnificent reception was arranged for her at a garden party. It was attended by the very highest men of Mysore. His Highness the Yuvaraja was there to signify not merely his pleasure at the success of a Mysorean but also his interest in art and music. Sir Mirza Ismail, the Dewan, with characteristic courtesy was there. There were also several people of eminence in the State. Mention may be made of Captain Rajkumar C. Desaraj Urs, Sardar Lakshmikantaraj Urs, Sir Charles and Lady Todhunter, Sir C. V. and Lady Raman, Sir K. P. and Lady Puttanna Chetty, Sir M. N. Krishna Rao, Colonel and Mrs. Loch, Mr. and Mrs.

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Sinclair, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Mr. and Mrs. N. S. Subba Rao, Messrs. N. Madhava Rao, and N. N. Aiyangar and Dr. Subba Rao.

The long awaited great recital in Jagan Mohan Palace, Mysore, was given on 18th March 1936 under the patronage of and in the immediate presence of His Highness the Maharaja. It was a great gathering and this recital was an unqualified success.

The conductor was Mr. Otto Schmidt and the Maharaja's Orchestra accompanied.

The programme consisted of the following pieces:—

PROGRAMME

1. Violin Concerto to G. Minor M. Bruch.
i } Allegro Moderato.
ii } Adagio.
2. Havanaise C. Saint-Sains.

INTERVAL

3. Violin Concerto in C. Major Vivaldi-Kreisler.

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- i { Allegro energico
- ii { Andante doloroso
- iii { Allegro motto.

- 4. (a) Valso op. 39, No. 15 J. Brahms.
- (b) Moment Musical Schubert-Kreisler
- (c) Hungarian Dance No. 5 Brahms-Joachim.

We extract here the description of a writer who was present on the occasion.

“There is the simmering excitement of a first night at a London theatre, or the premiere of a big film. All the celebrities are here. His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore is here, and Prince Jaya, happily finished with the rigours of a University Examination, and, as a music enthusiast, probably looking forward with as keen enthusiasm as any one to the evening’s entertainment. Here also are the Honourable the Resident, the Dewan Saheb, the Private Secretary and the Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University; and especially interested in the proceedings, the Huzur

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Secretary, Mr. T. Thumboochetty, O. B. E., father of the musician.

The scene is the Jagan Mohan Palace, and the occasion keenly awaited violin recital of the distinguished violinist, Miss Philomena Thumboochetty. The Jagan Mohan Palace has played many parts in its time. As hostess of the University Convocation, of the Representative Assembly and of innumerable Congresses and Conferences, it has received many men of many nations. But probably never did it receive such an interested and expectant company as that assembled to-night. To-night the company is assembled not for duty but for pleasure.

And now the orchestra of His Highness, with its smart and picturesque uniforms, is tuning up. The lights are turned up, and our programmes into which we have been dimly peering, are clearly revealed. We reflect for a moment on fame. We think of this young girl, brought up in this Eastern State and setting forth to win fame in Western lands. We think of the long hours of training and practice, the keen

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competition, the triumph of winning one of the three places open to foreign candidates at the Paris Conservatoire; and then success, recognition, and well-earned praise. We think of distinguished musical professors in Paris, of crowded recitals at Oxford, Birmingham, and London, and of the tributes of leading musical critics, a race of men not at all easy to satisfy.

This is the first recital that Miss Thumboochetty has given in Mysore since her return from Europe.

She is a Mysorean, and we are Mysoreans, and we feel a reflected glow of pleasure at the fame that she has won.

To-night the artist has a hard task. To win a reputation is difficult. Still more difficult is it to live up to a reputation.

The star appears. A graceful, good-looking girl with a charming smile—a friendly smile. At once she is on good terms with her audience, and when the audience welcomes her back for the second piece her pleasure is clearly and unaffectedly shown.

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The programme gives full scope for the performer's talent. First, there is the *Violin concerto in G. Minor* of Bruch, with its two movements, the first, lively and full of verve, the second dreamy, with an air of sadness in its rhythm and refrain. This is a wonderful performance. Then the *Havanaise* of Saint-Sains, with its quick almost jazz-like movement, a piece remarkable for the quick fingering and the striking effect of the high notes. The orchestral accompaniment is especially effective in the case of this composition. Then comes a *Violin concerto in C. Major* (Vivaldi-Kreisler). First the *Allegro energico*, a tuneful composition full of 'go,' then the *Andante Doloroso* in marked contrast with the preceding, soulful, with a strange sad ending; and last the *Allegro motto*, with its lively, spirited movement, which occasionally reminded one somehow of the bag-pipes. This piece affords a good test of the performer's technique. To conclude the programme are three well-known compositions, a *Valse* by Brahms, *Moment*

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Musical (Schubert-Kreisler), and *Hungarian Dance* No. 5 (Brahms - Joachim). These appeared simpler pieces, with the refrain more clearly defined, and more easily appreciated by the uninitiated.

In every piece there is the same certainty to touch; every note rings true and clear. There is perfect poise and confidence, and absence of strain. If one had to make a choice among several good things, one might hazard the opinion that the most brilliant performance of the evening was the *Violin concerto in G. Minor* of Bruch, probably the most elaborate and difficult of the compositions. And what greater tribute to an artist could there be then that she should excel in the most difficult subject?

One could not fail to note and appreciate the absence of mannerisms, and the complete simplicity and naturalness of method.

And so, by the charming music of this charming performer, we were carried away from the everyday world to the world of art, which once again supplied refreshment

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and invigoration to the tired and harassed spirit.

A tribute must be paid to the sympathetic and clever accompaniment of the highly efficient orchestra, under the inspiring leadership of Mr. Schmidt. The music-loving public of Mysore is under many obligations to that orchestra and that leader.

This evening we have learnt that a prophet is not always without honour in his or her own country."

CHAPTER VII

TOWARDS THE NEW SYNTHESIS

THE Pundits are often fond of analysis. They divide things into groups and put labels on them. We have often heard people saying that harmony is the chief note of Western music and melody that of the Indian. The distinction is made to look plausible by buttressing it with a wealth of learning which leaves the common man helpless. The distinction between melody and harmony is really thin and shadowy as if, without harmony there could be melody and as if also there could be melody without harmony.

To the extent to which the minor differences are accentuated we miss the grand universal appeal of music.

The appeal of poetry is controlled by the knowledge of the language. The

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greatest poet of the age may be writing in Esperanto or Arabic and those that do not know the language may be excluded for ever from the joy of reading him. But not so with music, painting and sculpture.

Be the language and the technique what they may, there is no one who will not be lulled by a good song. The essence of music is a particular collocation of sounds and the sounds, if pleasing, affect all in the same fashion. That is why Carlyle says of music that it is an "inarticulate and unfathomable speech that leads you to the edge of the infinite and makes you gaze on that!" It has no speech. It is not confined to any particular system. Its roots lie in the spirit of man which "because it is human is neither Western nor Eastern."

"Music whether it is Indian or Western" says Philomena, "has a universal appeal and each has its own fascination. There is a large number of people in Europe who appreciate the music of the East just as there is a large number of people in India who are interested in Western Music.

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A combination based on the Indian and the Western systems will have a wider appeal." In this simple statement of her faith is also indicated the nature of her mission ; and who can evolve that synthesis better than she ?

APPENDIX I

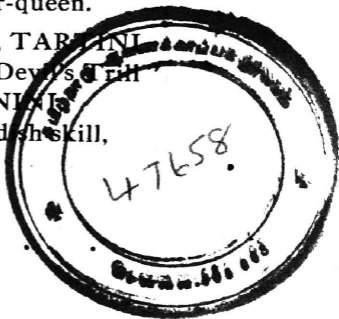
A JUBILEE SALUTE.

Amid the splendid muster,
Of Stars from o'er the sea,
Two of outstanding lustre,
Adorn our Jubilee ;

And by the grace and glamour,
That to their names belong,
Imperatively clamour,
For honorific song.

And here, while duly heeding,
The Maxim *place aux dames*,
I use no special pleading,
For proffering the palm,
With bouquets and confetti,
Of rare and radiant sheen,
To charming Thumboo Chetty,
The Indian Fiddler-queen.

For, down from Old, TARTINI
Who wrote "The Devil's Trill"
And peerless PAGANI,
Renowned for fiendish skill,



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None of these sons of wonder,
Inherited a name,
So potent by its thunder,
To fill the trump of fame.

Compared with her, Yehudi,
Young Menuhin, must yield,
And even Punch to Judy,
Can hardly hold the field.

While GILBERT'S celebrated,
Clonglocketty McClan,
Can only now be rated,
Amongst the "also ran."

Yorkshire MACAULAY'S glory,
Outshines his namesake's *Lays*,
While LIONEL'S flannelled story,
Bedims great ALFRED'S bays.

Today our jubilation,
A nobler note takes on,
From the reincarnation,
Of classic XENOPHON.

From the Humber to the Hooghly,
From Rio to Cape Race,
None spins the artful googly,
With more deceptive pace.

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As agile as a Basque, as,
Borotra at his best,
Is Xenophon Balaskas,
Our Greco-British guest.

O Priceless pair, converging
From Africa and Ind,
And in our midst emerging,
Sped by the southern wind.
Although my pen be petty,
I raise my hat to you,
O Xenophon and Chetty,
Twin bolts from o'er the blue.

From the *Punch*.

(Silver Jubilee Number.)

APPENDIX II

“ So far back as 1926, one of my brothers, who had a devotion to St. Philomena from his college days, asked me if I could get him a relic of the Saint from Rome, which as the readers of the Messenger know, is not far from Mugnano del Cardinale, where the remains of the virgin Martyr, enclosed in a figure in sitting posture are preserved in a sanctuary—one of the most popular in the world. Not having till then read the life of St. Philomena, I was naturally ignorant of the greatness of the saint and the efficacy of devotion to her. I did not know that this Princess of Paradise has been astonishing the world with astounding prodigies. It was a revelation to me when I read for the first time Father Bowden’s Book on St. Philomena and became aware of how potent her intercession read like a fascinating novel which one is reluctant to lay down till the last word on the last page is read. I at

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once wrote to my very dear and valued friend, His Grace the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Peter Pisani, D. D., who was for some years the Delegate Apostolic of India and who was then residing in Rome, requesting him to send me two relics, one for my brother and another for myself. For a couple of months I waited for a reply but none was received. Meanwhile I went on tour with His Highness the Maharaja to North India and forgot all about the Saint's relics. After visiting several places in Himalayas, we were on our homeward journey, camping in Benares. Here to my agreeable surprise, a registered packet from Rome, redirected from place to place, was brought by the postman. The eagerly expected parcel was opened and it contained two precious relics of St. Philomena, together with Certificate of Bishop Augustine Zampini of Rome, testifying to the genuineness of the relics and authorising the exposition of the same for public veneration. Relics are never sent by post for fear of the same being lost during transit. His Grace Mgr. Pisani felt most

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anxious about the safe delivery of the relics and it was not without considerable hesitation that he sent them by registered post. Thank God, the packet came safely into my possession and I expressed my feelings of gratitude to Mgr. Pisani for his courtesy in sending me the precious and valuable souvenir. On my return to Mysore I promptly despatched to Bangalore, with a special messenger, the relic intended for my brother and kept the other with me. When I wrote for it, I had no idea of presenting it to the church nor had I the remotest thought of spreading the devotion to the Saint. The ways and decrees of Providence are inscrutable. When my younger daughter was baptised, now nearly twenty years ago, she was named after St. Philomena. It was not at our request that she was given the name ; she was spontaneously named as such by Rev. Father Servanton, Parish priest of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Bangalore. In 1927, she was boarding in Loretto Convent, Middleton Row, Calcutta, and attending the School of Music in Park Street. It was the

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constant dream of her life to go to Europe for higher musical studies after passing the Fellowship Examination of the Trinity College, in violin for which she was appearing that year. The fact that she was alone in Calcutta, far away from home, and that she was longing to go to Europe caused no small anxiety and mental worry to me. She was then only 14 years of age and being so young, I was disinclined to let her go to Europe. But she kept on renewing her requests and I felt that I might have to yield to her wishes sometime or other. I was indeed feeling much depressed, not knowing what to do. She bore the name of St. Philomena, who was her patroness and I had just then on hand the relic of the dear little saint. This happy coincidence inspired me to place my daughter entirely under the Saint's powerful protection, to make a humble effort to spread the devotion to the Wonder-worker and to present the relic to St. Joseph's Church in Mysore. I lost no time in interviewing Rev. Father J. Cochet, then in charge of St. Joseph's

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Church, to whom I disclosed my intentions.

He reverently took charge of the Saint's relic and promised to co-operate with me in my efforts to spread the devotion to St. Philomena. Father Cochet had, however, misgivings of his own. He doubted the possibility of spreading the devotion to a Saint who was till then so little known in this country. By October of 1927, the beautiful statue of St. Philomena which now stands resplendently in the sanctuary erected for the saint, was received from Paris. Who would then have thought that this statue was destined to become miraculous? What a number of favours the devout clients of the saint have received since it has been installed in Mysore! What miracles have been wrought wherever the Saint's pictures and cords which have touched the relic were honoured and piously used.

On the 10th of October 1927, the birthday of my dear little daughter referred to above, His Lordship the Bishop of Mysore blessed the statue and the Relic was for the first time exposed for public veneration. On

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that eventful day I prayed to St. Philomena that she may be the special guardian and protectress of my daughter all her lifelong and that my humble endeavour to spread devotion to her should meet with success. I hope I may be forgiven for introducing into this sketch incidents which may appear personal. My only excuse is that but for the combination of circumstances in which my daughter Philomena figured prominently, the idea of the propagation of devotion to the Wonder-worker might not have presented itself to me. If I were to omit this part of the narrative, much as I would like to have done, the connecting thread and interest that attaches itself to the history of the origin of the devotion in Mysore and the manner in which the sacred Relic was procured would be lost. The Reliquary in which the precious bone of the Saint is preserved was sent from Lourdes, the world renowned place of pilgrimage. It is but fitting that the Relic of so great a martyr should be exposed for veneration in a Reliquary got from that hallowed spot.

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It would be gross ingratitude not to confess obligations, where favours have been received. My little family and myself have obtained so many favours from the virgin martyr that we have no words to express our gratitude. My daughter, who went to Paris three years ago, is still there, separated from us by whelming seas and owes all her success in the Paris Conservatoire to her Heavenly Patroness. It was at Bandol-Sur-Mer near Toulon that my wife and myself said our loving good-bye to her. As the train moved away, Philomena was standing on the platform with Professor Touche of the Paris Conservatoire and Mrs. Touche, with a heavy heart, waving her sad and affectionate farewell to us till we were out of sight. It was a painful parting, but from that very moment we committed her to the care of St. Philomena, holding the Saint solely responsible for her safety and well-being in a foreign land."

(From Mr. Thumbochetty's contribution to "St. Philomena's Messenger.")

APPENDIX III

Speech by His Highness The Maharaja of Mysore on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of Saint Philomena's Church.

28th October, 1933.

MY LORD BISHOP, REVEREND FATHERS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

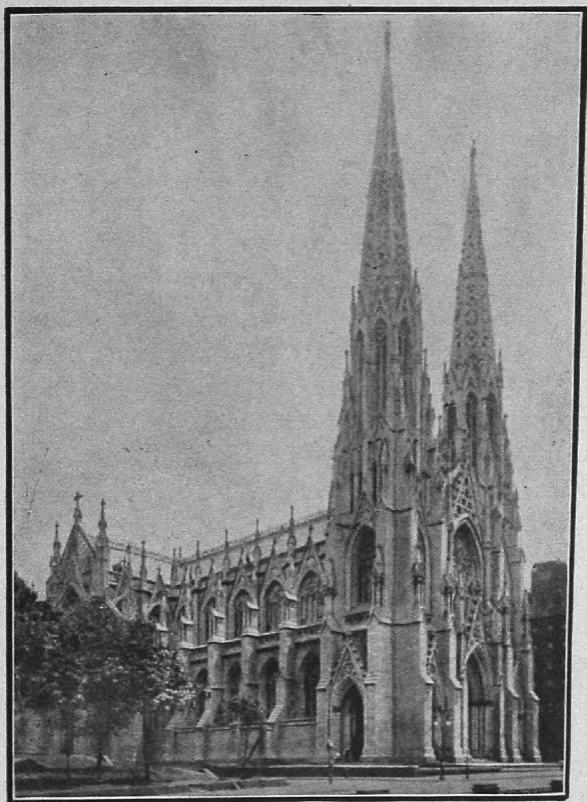
It gives me very great pleasure to come here to-day to lay the Foundation Stone of the great new church which you have planned to erect here, and to associate with the name of your patron saint, Saint Philomena.

I believe with deep conviction that religion is fundamental to the richest and strongest life of the nation. There are diverse religions in this land of ours, and frequently there exists a most irreligious hostility between them. But we have gradually been coming to understand that the unity is much deeper than the differen-

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ces, that while in creed and custom we are far enough apart, in worship and in aspiration we are one. This being so, the creed and custom of each religion among us is surely worthy of reverent study by the followers of every other.

You have reminded me that your present church was built by my grandfather of revered memory ninety years ago, and it is interesting to recall the inscription that was put upon it then. It ran:—"In the name of that only God—the Universal Lord, who creates, protects, and reigns over the Universe of Light, the mundane world and the assemblage of all created lives—this church is built 1843 years after the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Enlightenment of the world, as man." Throughout these many years the church thus dedicated has been the spiritual home of innumerable people, where in poverty and suffering they have found peace, and in trouble a wisdom that passes the mere understanding, so that every stone of it has become dear to them. There is some sadness in the thought



St. Philomena's Church in Mysore.

APPENDIX III

of its disappearance, yet it is joy to think of the rising up of a worthier temple, to be brooded over by the same eternal spirit, and to remain for centuries a shrine of holiness and healing.

The new church is nobly planned, and it will be built largely from the devout offerings of the very poor. This Church indeed will be strongly and securely built upon a double foundation—divine compassion and the eager gratitude of men. Nor can I forget, as foot by foot it rises, those devoted labours of the clergy without which it must have remained a dream. You, my Lord Bishop, have been associated with Mysore as a parish priest, and later in your present high office, for as many years as I can remember. To you and to your clergy the State and City of Mysore are indebted for countless deeds of charity and goodwill, and for endless effort for the enlightenment and uplift of the people. Yourselves you have long forgotten, but your labours cannot be hid, and this great building will be a memorial of heroic toil and sacrifice.

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May this Church of Saint Philomena, the Foundation Stone of which I now proceed to lay, be not merely the worthy centre of the spiritual life of your own Roman Catholic people, but also a fountain of peace and goodwill and the zeal for all true service.





Philomena Thumboo Chetty.

LATEST RECITALS

AT BANGALORE

On December 22, 1936, at the B. R. V. Theatre and under the patronage of Mysore's benign Ruler and the Hon'ble the British Resident in Mysore, Miss Philomena Thumboochetty gave a recital (in aid of Residency Central Charities and St. Philomena's Church, Mysore). Throughout the absorbing programme she was splendidly accompanied by the Mysore Palace Orchestra conducted by Otto Schimdt.

Miss Chetty delighted the audience by her interpretation of classical music. Her style, her brilliant technique and soulful rendering of the Concerto op. 26 of Max Bruch which figures in the repertoire of every virtuoso vindicated her reputation as a violinist of high order. "The Adagio movement was rendered with intense feeling while the Allegro Energico with its difficult passage in double stopping revealed the performer's mastery of her instrument; Her keen sense of rhythm was in full evidence in the Symphonie Espagnole of

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Edouard Lalo and the special charm of its Spanish atmosphere was felt throughout. The exacting piece, "Zigeunerweisen" of Sarasate was superb in its interpretation by Miss Chetty with slow movement and deep pathos. The acrobatics of the second part of this piece were performed with "a nimbleness of fingers and precision of bowing which carried the audience off their feet."

Miss Chetty sympathetically responded to an appreciative audience and conceded three encores; Brahms's Waltz, Rimsky Korsakof's Chanson Hindoue and Schubert's Moment Musical.

Thus concluded a great concert.

AT MADRAS

The next great event in Philomena Thumboochetty's career was the recital at the Victoria Public Hall on March 9, 1937, under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency Lord Erskine, Governor of Madras, and Lady Marjorie Erskine.

LATEST RECITALS

At long last, music lovers of Madras had an opportunity of hearing the violin recital of Philomena Thumboochetty about whose repeated successes in Europe and England they had read splendid accounts.

His Excellency the Governor's Orchestra conducted by Mr. Pomphrey which accompanied her recital opened with Raymond Thomas' Overture. Her first number and *piece de resistance* was the famous Concerto of Max Bruch in G. Miss Thumboochetty rendered it in a brilliant and finished style with a remarkable spontaneity "living it afresh." "It was the keenest fiddle playing we have heard for a long time" exclaimed a musical savant to his neighbour. In the next item, Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* she was at her best. Andante set off her very sweet tone to the best advantage. The Intermezzo was played with good feeling. Handel's Sonata in D Major was played with great simplicity and a fine sense for the classical line. It would have been a great loss indeed had one not heard Philomena's rendering of this. Three

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small pieces, Schubert's Moment Musical, Ravel's Piece en Forme de Habanera and Brahms's Hungarian Dance brought the programme to a close.

An enthusiastic audience called again and again for encores which were cheered with louder enthusiasm for the soloist and her partner, Mr. Aubrey Crichton who accompanied her on the piano.



