



SPARKS AND FUMES



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PEN-PICTURES OF ANDHRA LEADERS

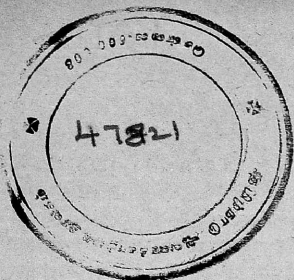
By
K. ISWARA DUTT



No matter whether you are praised
or abused, get discussed.

—*Lady Oxford*

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To
My Parents

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Pen-portraiture is a novel form of literature and perhaps for the first time in its annals it has attained the level of a fine art in the deft hands of Mr. A. G. Gardiner. In India it is probably an undiscovered instrument yet. Rarely in a newspaper here or in a magazine there, attempts have been made to utilise it for public criticism. But they have not received the impress of permanence in the shape of a book to live as part of literature.

The thirteen portraits that appear in this book have already seen the light of day in more or less the same form either in "Swarajya" or in "Triveni" (mostly in the former) to whose editors I am thankful for permitting me to reprint them here. That Andhras have played an outstanding and determining part in the evolution of Indian Nationalism cannot be denied and to estimate and evaluate their achievement is a historical necessity.

To the usefulness of the book I need not refer.

The volume, by no means, claims to exhaust the list of Andhra Worthies. In fact some of the foremost Andhras have not found a place in this portrait gallery. Yet, if this book brings forth in its wake more such by creating a genuine demand for criticism which does not amount either to blind adoration or vile calumny of the character and culture, ability and eminence, of persons that take a prominent part in the public life of the country, if it develops a sense of humour and a spirit of sportsmanship and above all, if it succeeds, even a little, in chastening Andhra public life and cleansing its turbid currents, my task, as publisher, is done.

I am very much indebted to Sriman S. Srinivasa Iyengar, for his kind foreword.

B. R. R.

BY WAY OF PREFACE

By indulging in the author's privilege of wielding the "tricky instrument" of a preface, let me, my kind reader, think aloud for a while—just for a while. When I began to write the pen-portraits—now issued in a book form, in "Triveni" at my own instance and in "Swarajya" at the sympathetic suggestion of Mr. G. V. Krupanidhi, and in both cases with the indulgence shown me by the respective editors, I knew I was skating on thin ice. The first difficult and delicate factor that I had to contend with, was the supreme necessity of avoiding the conventional and adopting the critical attitude of looking at the subject of the sketch from a detached view-point and of saying things which he might not like to hear. We have been too much fed in this country either on unqualified adulation or unmitigated vilification that very few persons are in a mood to take the risk of expressing views which, while they may not please anybody, may even offend some. In England—a land where even caricatures and cartoons fail to disturb the mental equilibrium of the victims but on the other hand succeed in raising their smiles, nobody could have heard of a threat of action by the late Lord Oxford against "the Gentleman with a Duster" or can hear of one by Mr. Baldwin against Mr. Gardiner. But here in India there seems to be a different standard for everything and before productions of this kind come to be viewed in the proper perspective, many improper things may be done and

suffered. But nothing succeeds like success. And if our public life—no aspect of life in the fields of human activity is too sacred for public gaze—is to be cleaner and healthier than it is now, our ‘leaders’—to use a ticklish and comprehensive term—must learn to ‘get discussed, whether praised or abused.’

It is with a feeling of genuine pleasure that I now recall Lord Acton’s dictum, so kindly reminded to me by Mr. C. R. Reddy when he heard of my project to issue, with the co-operation of my colleague and friend Mr. M. V. Ramana Rao, biographical sketches of Andhra leaders (who are alas ! so sorely neglected) that,

“even funeral eulogies should be couched in the temperate and discriminating language of history, and that indeed there is no justification for telling lies even in the absolving presence of a corpse. Biography should be written in the spirit of History and not of pamphlet.”

And the obvious difference between a biographical sketch and a pen-portrait tends to make the writer’s task more difficult.

I have willingly and cheerfully undertaken that task and in that spirit. I console myself by the reflection that if these pen-portraits have done no other good, they have at least enabled me to ‘get discussed,’ no matter ‘whether praised or abused.’ It will at any rate help some honest doubters to be disillusioned in public interest of the falsity of the rumour that the sketches were written by somebody who concealed his identity under the pseudonym “Iswara Dutt” and that somebody could be no other than Mr. C. R. Reddy !

What an injustice to that intellectual giant! Apparently, those wise men missed the fact that Mr. Reddy also came "under my knife."

To return to my theme from the digression of an episode for which I am so much indebted to an outstanding personality in South Indian public life, my book may—I only say, may—also serve the purpose of making the feature of pen-portraits more familiar in Indian journalism. If that happens, I have not employed my pen in vain.

The number of my sketches is thirteen—a figure which might shock a Christian soul, and the choice of the subjects of the sketches arbitrary—a fact which might not meet with the approval of some. But an author must be left free in such matters, since there can be no writing to dictation. I do, however, admit that outside this charmed circle are men who cannot be ignored. Prof. S. Radhakrishnan in the regions of philosophy and Mr. T. Raghavachari in the realms of dramatic art, to take but two examples, have won for our motherland a great name in the world. They must all figure in such portrait-galleries.

A word about the title of this book. To some it may be strange; to others startling. Well, it is meant to be both strange and startling in the best traditions of modern English literature.

And now I wish you, Sir or Madam, a temporary good-bye—only temporary!—with the fond hope that I will greet you again at no distant time with another book of this kind or a book of another kind!

FOREWORD

It is a difficult and risky thing to attempt the piquant portrait of contemporary men of note about whom there must always be some controversy. It is more difficult in India than elsewhere where the skin is still sensitive to criticism but gluttonous to flattery. In his pen-pictures of Andhra Worthies, Mr. Iswara Dutt of *Swarajya* has set himself a task which is by no means easy and requires considerable judgment and skill. His phrasing is crisp and convincing, his style has both vigour and freshness, and his delineation is characterised by shrewdness and subtlety. I have spent an enjoyable hour and I should like others to have the same pleasure.

Amzad Bagh,
Mylapore
April 12, '29.

S. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

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Sir B. N. SARMA

SIR B. N. SARMA

IF you are still inclined to think that a place on the Treasury Benches is not incompatible with national service, that office cannot tame rebellious spirits or corrupt strong minds, and that a string of titles or a succession of sinecure jobs cannot lull the ambitious to somnolence, you should only contemplate on the career of some of our foremost politicians, to be disillusioned. There have been, and are, several instances of men who, by the subtle alchemy of bureaucratic influence, have found themselves transformed from valiant fighters of the country's freedom into stern apostles of "law and order." But none in Andhra public life got up the political ladder so high and then kicked it down so unconcernedly and unceremoniously as Sir Bayya Narasimheswara Sarma. If the definition—I don't exactly remember whose it is,—that a statesman is one who sacrifices his career for the sake of the country while a politician is one who sacrifices the country for the sake of his own career, is accepted,

I have no doubt that Sir B. N. Sarma is, in every sense of the term, the tallest of Andhra politicians.

A native of Vizag District and a graduate of the Rajahmundry College, Mr. Sarma qualified himself for the bar which is, and was, in a greater measure in his day, the recruiting ground of future leaders. His earnest work, untiring industry, and dignified demeanour were of great service to him both in amassing wealth as a lawyer and building up reputation as a public man. A member of the pre-Morleyan Legislative Councils, he was among the first seven stalwarts who heroically fought for the introduction of responsible Government in this country.

Under the Morleyan dispensation, the Madras Legislative Council was to send two representatives to the Supreme Council and it was ordained that Mr. Sarma should find his way into the Delhi legislature in the distinguished company of Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. There he fought many hard battles to his own credit and to the bureaucrat's consternation. The Government are always keenly aware of the weak spot in the opposition armoury and nothing mattered much for them, however tense the political excite-

ment was, so long as Indian members did not meddle with their figures and finances. It was in such a House that Mr. B. N. Sarma, by handling financial questions and currency problems with easy mastery, crossed swords with Civilian experts like Sir George Lowndes, Sir George Barnes, Sir William Meyer, and Sir William Vincent, and established a great name among Indian legislators. To the temerity of trenching upon the monopolist ground, he added tenacity of purpose and plainness of statement. It was chiefly due to his forte that the public could adequately realise the hugeness of the financial deficit to which the Madras Government was put by an indiscriminate Central Government.

Mr. Sarma could no longer be trifled with. His opposition to the bureaucracy was a source of unconcealed embarrassment. The inconvenient critic, to whom they hitherto bore no love, began to be patted and pampered. Mr. Sarma was in evidence as a member of several select Committees. The Fiji and British Immigration Committees, the Provincial Insolvency Committee, the Imperial Preference Committee, the Reforms Committee, the Postal Bill Committee, and

Patel's Bill Committee, all claimed him for their own.

Outside the Council, Mr. Sarma played no inconsiderable part in public life. An ardent and active Congressman, he was one of those who proceeded to England in 1914 to advance the cause of Indian Reforms. Here in India, he led the deputation of the Mahajana Sabha of Madras and the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee before the Southborough as well as the Feetham Committees.

A sing-song speaker, Mr. Sarma's contributions to the Council are as dull as ditch water. We find in him little of intellectual animation and less of emotional thrill. But he can create an impression by clinching his argument in telling words as when he described the Madras Government as "a glorified District Board." The President of the very first Andhra Provincial Conference which demanded the creation of a separate province for the Andhras, Mr. Sarma had the honour of moving a resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council for the re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis. Some of the members including Mr. Jinnah jeered at him but there was one in the distinguished gallery

at any rate—I am referring to the late Mr. Edwin Samuel-Montagu, who had his imagination touched. It was openly claimed that paragraph 264 of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and page 15 of the Report of the Joint Committee, was the outcome of Mr. Sarma's splendid advocacy.

His appointment in July 1920 as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council was a well-deserved recognition of his varied services and a well-merited tribute to his outstanding abilities. But the harmony of the announcement was marred and the spirit of the Government's offer vitiated by two incidents. In April 1919, he resigned his membership of the Council as a protest against the Rowlatt Act. That night he was booked for lunch at Government House and ere he recovered from the gastronomic shock, he withdrew his resignation straightaway! And then in December 1919, at the Amritsar Congress he made himself conspicuous by opposing the resolution urging Lord Chelmsford's recall. His elevation to office in such close succession to these two political feats came in very handy for journalistic banter. A Bombay daily hit it off in the following humorous vein:—

"Mr. B. N. Sarma bravely eulogised Lord Chelmsford. He won official appreciation worth nearly his own weight in gold; a thing of no mean measure considering his girth."

Let alone this jest. In office, he was not known to have done anything extraordinary, except that he—the whilom opponent of Rowlattism—stuck to his place when the fiercest gale of repression swept the land. Apart from conventional compliments to hard work, sound judgment and tact from retiring Viceroys, there was one thing for which he was ferretted out. They praised him to the skies for his remarkable reticence and his unequalled capacity for keeping official secrets. So austere a man as Mr. Asquith could not survive the imputation of having disclosed Cabinet confidences to the private ears of his vivacious partner. Sir B. N. Sarma had not, it is clear, run even that risk! No wonder that Lord Reading, in paying a fulsome tribute to him, went to the length of praising Sir B. N. Sarma's silence as though it were more imposing than his eloquence!

Sir B. N. Sarma was the first Andhra to ascend the heights of Simla and great were the expectations raised of him by his im-

mediate fellow-countrymen but they were sorely disappointed. He did nothing by which the Andhra cause advanced a whit. You may turn round and say that he did well in not being clannish! But he did naught which captured the imagination of the Indian public either. Whatever might or might not be his role as an official—it is said that he was not even much of a drawing room success in the social life of Simla—it was open to him to return to public life, after his term of office, and once again join the vanguard of the national movement. To be fair to him, it must be said that he was a Congressman until he was swallowed by appointment. But alas, when he was about sixty, when he had no cares and no embarassments, when he had no need of thirst for power and pelf, and when the path lay before him for active national service at a most crucial period in the country's history, a wordly-wise and opportunist politician, Sir B. N. Sarma preferred to be comfortably ensconced as Chairman of The Railway Rates Advisory Committee and be ranked among the ragged veterans of Indian politics. He represents the class of men for whom the seductive trammels of office have proved too strong even after a long

gallant fight in the legislative forum. What a sad turn of events to a career well commenced and well continued ! Mr. Sarma's personal eminence does not indicate, much less does it reflect, national progress. He is more a warning than an example to a subject country immersed in freedom's strife. Evidently, •

“ There are more things in ” (Office and power) Horatio,
“ Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.”



Sir R. VENKATA RATNAM

SIR R. VENKATA RATNAM

IT was Pierrefeu who once related how at a very critical juncture in the battle of Verdun, when General Joffre, the Commander-in-chief was sound asleep and the orderly officer declared it impossible to disturb him, Castelnan finding the news becoming more and more terrible, defied every obstacle and burst through the double-locked barrier. The Supreme General, it is said, having heard of the disaster, calmly declared that there should be no retreat, and quietly composed himself once again in slumber. It is in this calm and confident, formidable and stubborn spirit that Sir R. Venkataratnam stood out for above three decades as the pioneer, preacher and reformer in Andhra Desa. But what strikes one more than his imperturbable equanimity is his benevolent detachment from the hum of the ordinary world and his inspiring mind that stirred men to heroic action. Absent-mindedly he never smiles down upon life as if it were a mere contest in which his only concern is to award the prize with a suitable oration but deliberately he makes you plunge headlong into the rush,

the swing, and the sweep of full life. This manner of greatness,—what else is it if it is not greatness to draw you from the lecture hall or drawing room into the field of action?—is pre-eminently inherent in him. The achievements of his life in his twin-role as teacher and reformer, are not merely matters of personal recollection but substantial episodes in the history of Andhra awakening.

As an educationist Venkata Ratnam stands as the foremost figure of his day, reminding us of the matchless record of Dr. Arnold of Rugby. According to him, education does not lie in the receipt of degrees and diplomas, certificates and hall-marks, prize-books and gold medals, but in the possession of virtues that are needed to make one a gentleman. He taught his students besides Shakespeare and Milton, Bacon and Burke, manners and morals, aims and ideals. The college was his Church while the class-room provided him with a better arena than the pulpit for the deliverance of his message to his pupils. He exhorted them to be pure in word, thought and deed, to discern true ends in life, and grow brave enough to strive for them and

strong enough to reach them though the roads be rough. "Spiritualise politics," said Gokhale. "Spiritualise education" was Venkataratnam's motto.

In the wider sphere of social reform Sir Raghupati is one of the most dominating personalities of the age. Inspired by the lives of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chunder Sen, by the teachings of Pandit Sivanath Sastri, and by the example of austere souls like Ananda Mohan Bose, Venkata Ratnam became a zealous recruit to the cult of Brahmoism and later the leading spirit of the Brahmo Samaj in this part of the country. Both by tongue and pen, and what is more abiding, by the steps of Faith, which even, when they fall on the seeming void, find the rock beneath, he served the cause and affected the mind of his generation. Viresalingam and Venkata Ratnam joined their forces,—and there was a revolution in Andhra Desa. The wrongs of man and rights of woman, was their slogan. Viresalingam concentrated his energies on the Widow Re-marriage movement and Venkata Ratnam on the Anti-Nautch Party campaign. If for nothing else, Andhradesa is indebted to them for the example they

have given it in behaviour towards the sex of the devoted wife, the affectionate sister, the loving daughter, and the sweet mother.

Man cannot be really human without some sort of limitations. Venkata Ratnam's excursions into politics were a sad affair. As a member of the Madras Legislative Council he hurled a surprise at the world by once remarking that it was an anathema to pronounce the term "Non-co-operation" on the floor of the House! There was also an occasion when the sacerdotal heirarch of the Brahmo Samaj became an itinerant orator of the Justice Party. It pains one to think that even the best of our men are sometimes overcome by the temptation of speaking in terms of parties and communities. As a Principal also, he was said to be guilty of certain shortcomings. The spy system which existed in the P. R. College was attributed, rightly or wrongly, to his mistaken zeal to spot out the doubtful and dangerous elements in the student population while his regular irregularity in attending the college was treated as a standing and stale joke. But his strict discipline and parental solicitude have made ample amends for these small flaws.

There are two interesting, and in one sense, arresting features in the life of Sir R. Venkata Ratnam. The one deals with his utterance and the other with his dress. Time was when his eloquence was considered to be alike a model and a marvel. An old-fashioned rhetorician of the Gibbon School, with a decided proclivity to speak either on a Raphael or a ribbon with the same emphasis, he unfurls his periods of rounded phrases and balanced sentences with singular fecundity and force. Full of allusions, anecdotes and quotations, his speeches are always lit by one passion—the passion of lofty devotion and austere idealism. The diction may be a trifle monotonous, but none can deny its splendour.

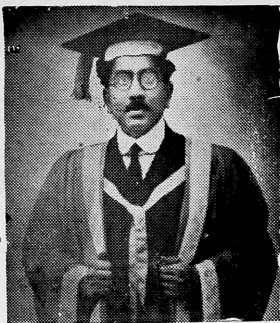
Venkata Ratnam is one of those few men whose apparel proclaims their minds. The whiteness of the garments is an eternal symbol of the purity of his character. Never was he known to cast aside in public gatherings his accustomed dress and favourite turban. Therein lies his striking individuality. The white-robed saint of the Brahmo Samaj reminds me of the white-robed Pandit of the National Congress.

Venkata Ratnam, as the world knows,

became the Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University and received a Knighthood, but I am sure the world will not care to remember these things. Vice-Chancellors come and go. Knighthoods—thanks to the indiscriminate policy of the Government—make small men great and great men small. These are all empty bauble. But there were incidents in Venkata Ratnam's career which posterity will recall with pride. Once at Masulipatam he sacrificed his place in the Noble College and saved his soul when his inner faith collided with the proselytising mission of the establishment. In 1894 he created a flutter in the Madras Congress when he objected to the appearance of Mr. Norton on the platform in view of what he considered to be his questionable character. Such manifestations of singular independence are pleasant memories, as revealing a background of deep conviction, great probity, transparent sincerity, and unsullied purity. Years ago I heard a high-placed gentleman remark that the world knows but half of Sir Raghupati. How many know at all of his secret gifts and private benefactions? In him the down-trodden finds a champion, the distressed a benefactor, the forlorn a friend,

and the orphan a parent. Teacher and reformer, scholar and speaker, sage and saint, he shows that Andhradesa has "not lost the breed of noble bloods".





Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDY

MR. C. R. REDDY

WRITING of Lord Byron, Macaulay applied to him with little change, the pretty fable by which the Duchess of Orleans illustrated the character of her son, the Regent. "All the fairies save one," we are told, "have been bidden to the cradle. All the gossips have been profuse of their gifts. One had bestowed nobility, another genius, a third beauty. The malignant elf who had been uninvited came last, and unable to revert what her sisters had done for their favourite, had mixed up a curse with every blessing." One such malignant fairy, it was taken for granted, also turned up at Lord Rosebery's christening and turned the gifts of others to bitterness. The same grim and cruel jest has been, I am afraid, repeated in the case of the brilliant C. R. Reddy. Otherwise, it is hard to find a life so rich in promise and so poor in performance, so full of aspiration and so little of achievement. His record is indeed a woeful tale of false steps, mistaken preferences, fatal miscalculations, and lost opportunities.

When at the dawn of this century the

finished spark from the Madras Christian College began to dazzle at Cambridge, there was perhaps no career to which India turned with greater fascination and love than to that of Mr. Ramalinga Reddy. And whose heart in India did not beat with pride at that blazing procession of academic triumphs and University honours? The Government of India scholar was the Exhibitioner of St. John's College in 1904 and took first class in Historical Tripos in 1906. But that was not much to make a song about, in the case of an young man of Mr. Reddy's wonderful gifts. He took part in the Union Debates and passed into the ranks of the spell-binders. The fine delivery, the perfect accent, the classic diction, the keen wit, and the "English-like English" of this Indian student were a revelation to the best intellects of that country. Was it not the young Reddy that once stepped into the breach caused by the absence of Gokhale and Lajpat Rai at a general election meeting in England in 1906 and caught the imagination of the West? Proud Cambridge paid, indeed, an obeissance to India by electing Mr. Reddy as the Union Secretary and Vice-President. The monopoly of colour was for once broken ;

Mr. Reddy had an epoch-making start; the future lay at his feet.

I am led to believe that the happiest and proudest period of his life was spent at Cambridge. It was then that he came under the chastening and inspiring influence of that prince of patriots, Gokhale. The spell was soon cast on Mr. Reddy and the nobler impulses in him were stirred to action. He bid an eternal adieu to a career at the Bar where he would have figured among the giants of the profession. In his own phrase, he burnt his boats. Was there no career outside the law courts? Was professorship a stumbling block for a career in politics? Figures of the type of Gokhale and Wilson perhaps flitted across his heated brain. He took the leap and as later events showed, it proved fatal.

After finishing his course, Mr. Reddy proceeded to America in 1907 for study at the instance of no less a person than H. H. the Gaekwar of Baroda. The New World also opened its gates to him. With that rich experience Mr. Reddy joined the Baroda College as Vice-Principal which he subsequently left to enter the educational service of Mysore as Assistant to the Inspector General

of Education. He was soon marked out as the coming man of Mysore. Events marched in quick succession. He accompanied the Yuvarajah of Mysore on his tour to Europe. He went on special deputation to study educational questions in Canada, Japan, Philippines, Hongkong etc. On his return to Mysore from the second world-tour, he was on special duty for preparation of a scheme for the Mysore University. Later he was for some time a Professor on whose honeyed lips the students literally hung, then, a Principal whose popularity was a striking feature, and finally he blossomed forth into the biggest man in the field. As Inspector General of Education from 1916 to 1920, Mr. Reddy brought a new orientation to the problems of Indian education. He was even expected to give a lead to British India in several directions and his lectures on University reform were part of a Midlothian campaign in the realm of education. History was being made. But then suddenly something happened and Mr. Reddy left Mysore for ever under "troubled feelings." Another fatal turn in his career! How jealous the gods were!

From Mysore to Madras and from education to politics, it was a short cut to publicity.

The lime-light was upon this intruder in Madras politics. The student of Morley and the friend of Gokhale sought umbrage under the communal wings of Sir P. T. Chetty. He made the mistake of his life by becoming a ministerialist. On entering the Madras Legislative Council as the representative of the University constituency, he expected the Panagals and Patros, the Reddys and Ramaswami Mudaliars to make way for him. He was out to play the role of the Imperial Caesar and carve out a kingdom for himself. The world spoke of him as "The next Education Minister" but the calculation had gone awry. The second reform Ministry was formed, and Mr. C. R. Reddy—well, he was left in chilly isolation.

He was naturally stunned into sobriety. He realised his mistake. And the realisation did both Mr. Reddy and Madras public life some good. He raised his revolt, mobilised his forces, blew his bugle, and declared war against "Panagal and his creatures". There was a flutter in ministerial dovecotes, a sensation in political circles, a stir in public ranks. Never was there such a day in the Madras Legislative Council as the one on which he delivered his philippic against the Justice

Party. The impeachment of Panagal was the first of a series of militant pronouncements which were made by Mr. C. R. Reddy to impart an altogether new note to Madras politics. His no-confidence motion was lost as the nominated members—"the dittoists and dummies", in Mr. Reddy's phrase, rallied round the Ministry, but the Ministry was visibly crumbling. Mr. Reddy had a mighty moral victory.

Mr. Reddy's change of front was a distinct gain to the opposition benches and surely, it spelt disaster to the Justice Party, though its official organ regarded it then "not so much as a loss to our ranks as a good riddance of bad rubbish." The Reddy-Satyamurti combination was invincible. One used to sting and the other to stab. If one shed light, the other diffused heat. Opposition to that inimitable pair was but a feeble counterblast.

A politician of dynamic energy, Mr. Reddy launched a huge campaign against the "ornamental puppets" and the "blinking images of mystified perplexity" and began to find his way to his right place in politics. Congressmen who were in sympathy with him pointed out that it was true that "he (Mr. Reddy) was doing considerable service", as

"Swarajya" put it "to the Nationalist cause by courageously exposing the real character of the Justice Party" but that he should be "out to destroy Dyarchy and not merely to effect a change in the Ministry." Mr. Reddy was frankly for working the Reforms with a Nationalist programme and to popularise his view-point, he fought very ably with the reactionary Panagalites on the one hand and "the latter-day saints of Madras Swarajism" on the other. But on all broad principles of Nationalism he was with the Congress and he was doing the most solid work for the rally of all Nationalist forces in the following elections when diplomatic Panagal silenced him with a job and sent him out of the lists.

But Mr. Reddy did not leave politics without a pang, without a struggle. He was half-inclined to reject the offer of the Vice-Chancellorship of the new Andhra University. On March 3, 1926 he told me at Munagala House, "I am struggling to arrive at a conclusion. You see, it is like asking a general on the eve of a battle to relinquish his function." But various persons advised him to accept the offer for various reasons. Some wanted to see him out of politics. Several applauded his return to his "first love." The

Andhras were overwhelmed with joy at the very prospect of having a separate University of their own and that with the most distinguished educationist of South India at the helm. Amidst dithyrambic applause, Mr. Reddy donned the Vice-Chancellor's robes. But, as subsequent developments made it plain, it was another fatal turn in his career!

The affairs of the Andhra University are yet in a melting pot. The greater is the regret as Mr. Reddy himself is partly responsible for the whole mess. In all matters of University education his word is almost final. His convocation addresses are chapters of what may be called the University Bible and may also be reckoned pieces of literature. Dr. Raman, himself an educationist of great repute, was said to have remarked that the mantle of Sir Ashutosh Mukherji had fallen on him. But oh, the pity of it, Mr. Reddy's career is splintered on the rocks of Bezwada. Hats off to Mr. Reddy for the splendid fight he put up with the Government for the transfer of its institutions to the University's control. But in fixing his eyes on the stars, he has not fixed his feet on the sod. And the truth must be told that his amazing right-about-turns and legerdemains in regard to the

question of University Head-quarters have lowered him in public estimation.

Mr. Reddy at first favoured Rajahmundry in the council debate, then, after he became the Vice-Chancellor, he was for Bezwada, later for Vizagapatam, a little later for Anantapur, and then again for Vizagapatam. Another whiff of wind, and we really don't know where he is! If he had not changed his mind so often and contradicted himself so glaringly, Mr. Reddy would have worked miracles. But he is of the superior Curzon type. Consistency, as Emerson says, is the hobgoblin of little minds. And "a pedantic consistency is a sterile frame of mind." Mr. Reddy perhaps sings with Whitman,

"Do I contradict Myself

Very well then, I contradict Myself

(I am large. I contain Multitudes)

The discords and discrepancies, in Well's language, between mood and mood, and the conviction of this hour and the feeling of that, have under-mined Mr. Reddy's reputation. He is, every inch, an intellectual aristocrat. He has naturally a high opinion of himself. But unfortunately he has a low opinion of others in the scheme of things. He distrusts the populace and the idols of democracy.

We know how he avoided the Madras beach and monster meetings. The defects of his temperament, of which the "mercurial fluctuations" of his mind are the most serious, can only be traced to his single-blessedness. Mr. Reddy is, we should not forget, a bachelor. Was it not Bacon that said that a wife and children are a kind of discipline to humanity? And lacking that stern discipline, Mr. Reddy lacks the right temperament and lacks all.

In the domain of intellect, Mr. Reddy is one of the most outstanding figures in India. As a scholar and speaker, critic and conversationalist, he has few rivals and no superiors. His "Kavitvatatvavicharanam" was received by Pandits and Sastris, scholars and men of letters as the most remarkable contribution to Telugu criticism. In Telugu, he is a very persuasive writer and speaker. As for his command of English, it is the delight of Englishmen and the despair of Indians. There are several public men in our country who can sway the feelings of thousands of people. Mr. Reddy does not belong to that group. He lacks the sonorous periods of Mr. Chintamani, the powerful invective of Mr. Satyamurti, the intellectual agi-

lity of Dr. Pattabhi, the moral exhilaration of Mr. Sastri. But in making a speech characterised by cogency of argument, perspicuity of thought, limpidness of flow, lucidity of exposition, and finish of diction, few public speakers in India (or in England) can excel him. I am reminded of the late Lord Rosebery's description of Sir Robert Peel's speeches. There are, said His Lordship, no alarming flights and no shivering falls; no torrents or cascades, but an ample flow, clear and strong and abiding. But of all the elements that contribute to the excellence of Mr. Reddy's speeches, his gift of banter and power of epigram are easily the most striking. He lacks the temperament and lungs to address big open-air or mass gatherings but in small assemblies of educated men he can rise to the highest level of Parliamentary eloquence.

Mr. Reddy is also one of our best letter-writers and conversationalists. His epistles are short, sweet, and spicy while his conversation is an intellectual treat. One should only catch him in the right mood while smoking lanka cigars or committing "lanka dahanam" as he calls it. Good-humoured jokes and jewelled phrases create an atmosphere in which all is right with the world though

God is *not* in Heaven. In spoken or written word, there is that inimitable Reddy touch. At a public meeting where a subscription list to a certain fund was opened he burst out amidst loud cheers that "In England when they subscribe, they also pay". At an after-dinner speech in April 1926 when Mr. A. Siva Rama Menon drew Mr. Reddy's attention to a series of articles then appearing in the Madras press on longevity and married life, he gently hit back that he had "no faith in Malayalee prescription." Hundreds of men went to Bezwada but it remained to Mr. Reddy alone to call it "*Blazewada*" and write to a friend that there was a tremendous economy there in fuel consumption. Once in Madras he threw the audience into a delirium of applause by remarking that "here (at Tanjore) were Non-Brahmins accusing each other that detachments were due to disappointments and that attachments were due to appointments". In the same speech he made fun of the Justice-Party by saying that "it had been trying to introduce the Stone Age into Madras politics". With a humorous remark he can tide over a crisis. When the late Rajah of Panagal put his hand in his pocket to produce a

certain letter which Mr. Reddi denied to have written, he observed with a mischievous twinkle in his eye that "in England when lovers quarrel, they return one another's letters". The Council was dissolved in laughter. A serious situation was averted. Advising Prof. Radhakrishnan who was on the eve of his departure to the continent, to put on his turban when travelling abroad, he said, "At any rate, avoid the hat. You will understand the spirit of my remark when I tell you what I once put to an American audience—All the courtesies I have received here, I owe not to the Christian nature of your country but to the Turkish nature of my head-dress". That is, I repeat, the inimitable Reddy touch.

Yes, his brilliance is undimmed and word-wizardry unquestioned. But who has succeeded in life by mere intellectual endowment? Ironically enough, his achievement is not at all proportionate to his equipment. He failed to rouse public confidence to the extent that is necessary for a leader of thought to refashion a country in the heroic mould. When he accepted the Vice-Chancellorship of the Andhra University, a friend of mine observed that it was a loss to politics

and a gain to education. A shrewd wit whose epigram sounds like an epitaph turned round and said that it was a gain to politics and a loss to education! It is true that Mr. Reddy's life has been so far one of unrealised hopes and unfulfilled ambitions. Prof. Radhakrishnan is reported to have once remarked that Mr. C. R. Reddy is always one step down luck. But in God's good time Mr. Reddy may recover lost ground. He may yet have the re-awakening touch of some divine impulse. Can he spring a surprise on the world by taking up the Promethean torch (of the Cambridge days) that can its light re-illumine, follow the Gokhale tradition in politics, rise to the Asutosh level in education and write his name in indelible letters on the scroll of fame? Will the malignant fairy withdraw her curse?



Mr. N. SUBBARAU PANTULU

MR. N. SUBBA RAU PANTULU

IN a country like ours where the psalmist's allotted span of three score and ten is more a phrase than a reality, a long record of public service is a rarity and an event. It is not, however, the length of the period of service but the volume and spirit embedded in it that really matters. Satisfying both these tests and animating the life of this generation with counsel born out of experience, there are still, happily amidst us, men of the eminence of Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya of the United Provinces, Babu Bepin Chandra Pal of Bengal, Sir Dinshaw Edulji Wacha of Bombay, Sir C. Sankaran Nair of Kerala and Mr. C. Vijiaraghavachari of Madras. It is to this distinguished galaxy of veteran patriots that Mr. N. Subba Rau Pantulu belongs.

The conditions under which he started his career were entirely different from those under which his esteemed compatriots shot themselves into prominence. Andhradesa was then, perhaps in a way still is, but a geographical expression, not an administrative unit or historical entity. The very term 'Andhra' which has now gained an almost

universal currency was absorbed by or lost in the term 'Madras'. Relegated to the background, the Andhra could emerge with an individuality of his own, only as a result of the solid work done by pioneers of the type of Mr. Subba Rau Pantulu. Credit lies not only in using opportunities when they occur but in creating them where there are none. With a faculty allied to a genius for adaptability to existing conditions, he filled a large place in Indian public life. More. Babu Aravinda Ghose once said that a great worker and creator is not to be judged only by the work he himself did but also by the greater work he made possible. Judged by this dictum, Mr. Subba Rau Pantulu's activities are as beneficent as they are commendable.

A graduate at twenty, a founder of an organ of public opinion like the "Hindu" at twenty-two, and leader of the bar at an important place like Rajahmundry at twenty-five, Mr. Subba Rau Pantulu had a start in life which bordered on the phenomenal. At first a member and then the chairman of the Municipal Council, an Honorary Magistrate and also member of the Taluk and District Board, several were the experiences he picked

up in the spheres of local Self-Government. Next to knowing when to seize an opportunity, runs a Disraelian maxim, the most important thing in life is to know when to forego an advantage. Mr. Subbarau Pantulu gave proof of this when the India Councils Act of 1892 came into execution. Resigning the office of the public prosecutor and Government pleader he entered the Madras council where, as the spokesman of the Northern group of Telugu districts for three consecutive terms from 1893 to 1899, he toured through his constituency, receiving ovation everywhere and took, according to the high testimony of Lord Wenlock, the very greatest interest in all matters of public importance and approached them with a spirit of fairness and careful enquiry. From the Provincial to the Imperial council, it was an easy step for a man of his standing and reputation. The Minto-Morley Reforms found him in the spacious atmosphere of the Imperial Legislative Council as the representative of the non-official members of the Madras council. His long experience and great tact, sound commonsense and sober judgment were of no small service in facing the national problems. During the three years

he sat in the House at calcutta, he always stood for the people's cause. That might appear as mere passive goodness. But the active lead taken by him in urging the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the public services of India repudiates that suggestion. It is not too much to claim, even at this distance of time, that his speech in that connection was among the classics of Indian political literature. He ceased to be a provincial figure; he was an All-India man.

It was a lucky thing that the councils did not monopolise the activities and exhaust the energies of this tried public worker. The services he rendered to the Congress added to his stature as a politician and status as a leader. Since the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 his attachment to the great national institution was so ardent and intimate that he was elected as the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Madras Congress in 1898. But more eventful and enduring than this honour done to him at an annual session was his association with the Congress as its General Secretary for a continuous period of four years from 1913. Meritorious were the services done by Mr. Subbarau Pantulu to the premier

political organisation in that capacity. His extensive tours all over India for making up her contribution to the fund of the British Congress Committee brought him to the forefront of Congress politics. His election to the presidency of the Congress would have been the "fitting close and final fulfilment" of his political career but he missed it, partly because of the smallness of Andhra voice in the counsels of the nation and partly because of his own lack of a masterful spirit.

Mr. Subbarau Pantulu still speaks with conviction and argues with passion. An attack on him, be it vitriolic in utterance or vehement in method, leaves him for the nonce unruffled. The slow and sometimes vacillating process in which his mind works must be left to the study of the psychologist. To the layman, however, he is the very picture of geniality which springs out of a robust spirit.

I have a strong suspicion that Mr. Subbarau Pantulu is at war with himself, being drawn in different directions by his temperament and impulse. "Budge", says the one ; "budge not," says the other. Hence he is not a whole-hogger who either does or

dies. A "but" always plays havoc with his moods and methods. He was associated with Viresalingam in the widow remarriage movement started in 1881 but stood apart from it when he felt that it partook more of the nature of gretna green marriages and convinced himself that reform should begin with the family and not with the individual to ensure its success under the peculiar conditions of this country where family is the unit of social life. He has been for the formation of a separate province for the Andhras but he found many difficulties in the way of the Telugu districts pulling together in making a united demand and wanted leagues to be started for unifying them. He is convinced of the futility of the policy of the Liberals but is afraid of breaking away from their fold. But this is all a mental attitude with no bearing whatever on moral principles which, in the ultimate analysis of character, make a man great or small.

Past seventy, Mr. Subbarau Pantulu still retains in him the tenacity of purpose which is so supreme a quality in a politician. The greatest triumph in his life was that he escaped the humiliation of passing into the ranks of political reactionaries and titled dig-

nitaries. He was loathe to get the "honours" which would have led to a knight-hood, the glimmer of badges and the glamour of ribands. Free from their insidious influence as also from the gyves and trammels of office, he has a strong predilection to toe the line with the Nationalists. He is not the man, like Mr. Chintamani, to say—"The Liberals right or wrong." He has in him much of the wisdom of the Moderates and something of the idealism of the Extremists. There is much truth in the observation recently made by a distinguished Liberal that as in the case of Gladstone in England and of Dr. Subrahmanya Iyer in our country, age has made Mr. Subbarau Pantulu, not more conservative but more radical.

What entitles Mr. Subbarau Pantulu to distinction is, above everything else, the indispensable fact that he has touched life at many points. He has always in heart the larger interests of the nation. As a champion of political rights, an advocate of social progress, a lover of spiritual revival, and a patron of art and letters he has contributed not a little to the growth of the Renaissance movement in Andhradesa. Above all he has a pulse which quickens with a tale of woe and

an impulse which readily responds to it. Whether it is the Jallianwalabagh tragedy or the Shradhananda murder, a starving institution or a suffering individual, the loss caused by a decimating famine or the havoc done by a disastrous flood, his heart is touched to the core. But his sympathies are governed by a disciplined will. From days of hard struggle to those of bursting prosperity, he marched through life with fencing caution and unaffected modesty. Simple in his tastes, dignified in demeanour, courteous in word, generous in disposition, he is dear to us not merely for what he has done but also for what he is. And if for no other thing, the nation owes the Grand Old Man of Andhradesa a debt of gratitude for the example he set in the happy combination of public service and personal worth. Who can differ from Mr. C. R. Reddy when he says that "twenty men like Mr. Subbarau Pantulu will make a nation?"



Dewan Bahadur
M. RAMA CHANDRA RAO

DEWAN BAHADUR
M. RAMACHANDRA RAO

THE story is told of an eighteenth century statesman in England that he used to find it so difficult to make a choice that he would simply keep himself indoors, though inclined to stir out, because he could not decide whether to go east or west, north or south. In politics, more than in any other sphere of life, this frame of mind which automatically shrinks from quick decision and firm action spells disaster. The Indian Liberal, speaking generally, is a pathetic victim to this temperamental weakness. He refuses to be stampeded into immediate and definite action even by a political upheaval or national cataclysm. By nature, he is averse to the policy of quick adaptation to changing circumstances but inclined to wait and see and to pause and think. He sees so many sides to a question as a certain Goschen at the admiralty is said to have done, that we could never get anything done, at any rate in time. If this is a general weakness with the Liberals as a lot, it is a particular weakness in the case of

Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao. But for this Hamlet-like vacillation, the Dewan Bahadur would have been somewhere on the peaks of Olympus.

Inspite of this obvious and serious handicap to political leadership, Mr. Ramachandra Rao has turned out work which the future will appraise as the most enduring, done in our time. If his senior, Mr. Subbarau Pantulu began his career at a time when there was little more than a glimmer of political consciousness, Mr. Ramachandra Rao had to rise amidst the flutters of political awakening. Lucrative practice as a lawyer and long civic experience led to his thumping electoral triumph in 1910 for a seat in the Madras Legislative Council. The spirit of public service was so much ingrained in him that, though he did not make a bonfire of his briefs as several did at a later day in response to the Nation's call, he has been always surrendering his professional to public work.

In the realm of Indian legislatures, Mr. Ramachandra Rao occupied a position of unchallenged supremacy. In a Council in which giants like Krishnaswami Iyer, Subrahmanya Iyer and K. Srinivasa Iyengar among the dead,

and Sivaswami Iyer, Vijiaraghavachariar, and Srinivasa Sastri among the living established their reputation, Mr. Ramachandra Rao had to his lasting credit a record of work which reached the highest watermark of legislative eminence. Later in the Assembly, amidst veterans in public life, he maintained the same high level of distinction. He lacks the subtlety of the Mylapore mind. He has none of the histrionic talents of a Jinnah or the silvery eloquence of a Malavya. Yet, he had always the ear of the whole House as he could contribute something useful to the discussion. No matter what the subject is, whether it relates to education or excise, finance or army, civics or constitution, British India or Native States, he can speak on it with a wealth of information and an urbanity of manner that make his speech something of an event. It has no light and colour but carries conviction and weight. He indulges in no rhetorical devices or passionate outbursts but gives a plain unvarnished tale. He states his case and resumes his seat, least worried about the lobby situation. There is not in him that virus of party bitterness that converts politicians into fanatics or diehards. I recall with amusement, how a prominent member

of his party referred to him as a Liberal who is not over-fond of the Liberal party.

Mr. Ramachandra Rao is not really over-fond of anything, not even of his work. Though a lawyer, he has never sung his own praise but only allowed his work to speak for itself. His refreshing reticence on issues in which the first person singular often figures prominently, his high sense of public duty, and his ardent desire to understand the intricacies of all national problems have marked him out as one of our best committee men. It is not in the heat and hurry of party conflicts but in the committee stages that solid and substantial legislative work could be done and it is in such committees that Mr. Ramachandra Rao is found to be one of India's indispensables. His work in connection with the Skeen and Lytton Committees and the Moderate Party and States Subjects' Deputation is an epitome of his statesmanship. One distinguishing feature of his work is that he goes on adding to his information and experience, and when Mr. Satyamurti had once a jibe at him in a public meeting wondering whether Mr. Ramachandra Rao had any time to leave his blue books, he only paid a compliment to the

indefatigable student of Indian politics. Mr. Ramachandra Rao does not force down his opinions on you with gusto: he calmly influences your decisions. He does not dictate his views: he merely wins you over to his side by stating the case in "unattractive but sensible", halting but convincing way and at times expressing extreme views (in Mr. J. A. Spender's vein) in moderate language.

Mr. Ramachandra Rao has all the elements of statesmanship and none of the qualities of generalship. If he had dash, gift of speech, and initiative, he would have really gone far—rather much farther. Owing to the disastrous combination of ill-luck and indecision, just when he was expected, and when he expected himself to reach the Happy isles, the gulfs washed him down. He is totally incapable of cowering for the sake of official preferments and popular favours. At an eventful period in his career when his best friends advised him to see the Governor of Madras, he said he would have none of it. He declined to stand for the presidentship of the Assembly with Government support which Mr. Jinnah volunteered to obtain for him. He refused to sign the

Congress creed to secure an uncontested return for the Assembly election.

There are in him a certain detachment of outlook and a spaciousness of atmosphere that mark him out as a beneficent influence or wholesome force in politics. A man of vast information and wide experience, high dignity and unimpeachable decorum, Spartan simplicity and serene disposition, and of statesmanlike stature and cabinet timber, he is an acquisition to his party and an asset to the nation. Who can forget even in these days of political excitement and national crisis, Mr. Ramachandra Rao's work

"That in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes....."

It is indeed, golden, though it glitters not. He will go down to history as a statesman and gentleman, reminding us of an Asquith in England and of a Gokhale in our own country.



Mr. C. Y. CHINTAMANI

MR. C. Y. CHINTAMANI

SUCCESS in life does not always carry with it an element of interest. There are lives which have no surprises to hurl at us and which are supremely dull. But to ruminate on the mysteries of a life which is as interesting as it is successful we had better turn to the celebrated Andhra Journalist at Allahabad whose record in life has all the glorious uncertainty and marvellous luck of a Derby sweep. His life is, indeed, one of the romances of Modern India and would be a fit theme for an Indian Smiles.

From an obscure reporter on Rs 35, he rose, by dint of sheer merit, to the editorship of a daily, the ministership of a province, and the leadership of a party. He was not a product of University education. He stepped into the College class only to step out of it, but by that time he acquired a command of English, which, allied to a strong memory, created a sensation in circles in which he was known. With a spirit of glorious adventure and reckless heroism, he embarked upon the high seas of Journalism. It was quite recently that he had occasion to write how he went to

the Lahore Congress of 1900 in his twentieth year. "I was an unknown and a penniless young man," he recorded, "to whom it was almost a reckless adventure to journey to cold and distant Lahore (from Vizianagaram) with the help of borrowed money". But it was his good fortune to be "taken in hand with great sympathy by persons of eminence like Bhupendranth Basu and Surendranath Bannerjea, and affectionately looked after by G. Subramania Iyer". An young man who could reel out finished sentences with an amazing fecundity and write on Indian problems with a sort of Jovian authority naturally passed for a prodigy and all great leaders who happened to come across Mr. Chintamani welcomed him with open arms.

His was, however, an up-hill task and arduous struggle. It was not in his Presidency that he could find a career but in distant U. P. At Madras, whither he went in 1901 with nothing to rest on but his innate worth and stout heart, he learnt the rudiments of journalism first on the weekly "United India" for a few weeks, and then on "The Madras Standard" for ten and a half months, under that distinguished publicist, the late

lamented G. Subrahmania Iyer. "It was against his advice" Mr. Chintamani says, "that I left Madras for Allahabad at the end of 1901. But on several occasions when we subsequently met, he nearly always made a point of congratulating me on my 'wisdom' in rejecting his advice and coming away from the southern capital to the city of Allahabad which I have since learnt to love with a love that can with difficulty be exceeded by one's love for one's birth-place."

Speaking at Pertabgarh on Feb. 20, 1925 at the Gokhale Anniversary celebration, Mr. Chintamani was reported to have said that India's national aspirations to attain Swaraj could only be realised by the "political methods of India's greatest patriot, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji; of her greatest thinker, Mr. Mahadev Govinda Ranade; of her greatest leader, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta; of her greatest agitator, Sir Surendranath Bannerjea; and of her greatest statesman, Mr. Gopala Krishna Gokhale." Mr. Chintamani was exceedingly lucky in his associations. It was given to him to come into contact with and under the influence of some of India's greatest sons whose names he mentioned above, and on Mr. Chintamani who was a great believer in

political apprenticeship, his association with such master-minds had a lasting effect. An element of hero-worship is indispensable to become a hero. And the man who yesterday regaled and even to-day regales his listeners with numerous quotations from their pronouncements and also passages from the speeches and writings of British politicians, chiefly of the school of mid-Victorian Liberals, is himself reproducing much of the vanishing tradition of dignified speech that is called Gladstonian.

The United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, where the prizes of public life invariably went to outsiders, offered young Chintamani opportunities for his extraordinary equipment. The *Leader* which came into existence under the auspices of men like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mr. (now Sir) Tej Bahadur Saprú, was entrusted to Mr. Chintamani. Except for two brief interruptions, once when he became a Minister and next when he went to Bombay to edit the "Indian Daily Mail" at Mr. Jehangir Petit's invitation, he has so identified himself with the paper that Mr. Chintamani and the *Leader* are spoken of as "one inseparable entity." He made it the official organ of the

Liberal Party, a great power in the United Provinces, and a journal to whose columns men of all shades of opinion and the Government as well turned for well-informed, weighty, and vigorous articles.

Mr. Chintamani was not merely a journalist but a politician. In the U. P. Council he was a force to be reckoned with. When he spoke, they listened to an orator. When he was not a Minister, he was the Leader of the Opposition. He achieved a personal position of influence which was so powerful in the public life of the United Provinces that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, while unveiling at Madras on Oct 7, 1928, the busts of Messrs. G. Subrahmaniam Iyer and S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, referred to Mr. Chintamani as "a person who had helped us in building up public life in the U. P. during the last 20 years" and said, "If Madras"—(really speaking, it is Andhradesa) "has reason to feel proud of him as one born within its territory, we of the U. P. are prouder still in having adopted him as one of ourselves."

Mr. Chintamani was an old Congressman, and at present, the chief intellectual asset of the Liberal Party. His position cannot be better described than in his own words. On

the first day (July 3, 1925) of his editorship of the "Indian Daily Mail" he wrote over his name in the course of a leader: "I was a Congressman from 1898 to 1918 and have been a Liberal during the last seven years, which is to say that I have been, continuously and consistently, an adherent of the political creed of the fathers and founders of Indian Nationalism, which in a word is self-government to be attained by constitutional means. It is my conviction that no other policy has done, or will in the near future do, any substantial good to the country. Constitutional agitation is misunderstood by not a few and misrepresented by many, as moderation is, as being an euphemism for imbecility and mendicancy. I absolutely deny this. Moderation is not weakness; it can be 'strong' as in Cobden, it can be 'animated' as in Sir Pherozezshah Mehta."

In Mr. Chintamani, it is both strong and animated. He blew up the whole case for Dyarchy in his masterly evidence before the Muddiman Committee. In the last few months of his Ministership he used to carry a letter of resignation in his pocket. And on a point of principle he—a moderate of moderates!—resigned the job. His spirit

was restless and he soon seized the tattered flag of Moderation from a stricken field and went about trumpeting the policy of Liberals. Again on principle, he resigned the editorship of the "Indian Daily Mail" about three weeks after he took it up amidst almost lyrical appreciations. As his thickset and massive features indicate, Mr. Chintamani is combative. He has the courage of his convictions. To rout the N. C. O. movement which stunk in his nostrils he advocated repression and started in U. P. the notorious Aman Sabhas. He had the boldness to proclaim that every vote given to the Swarajist was but a vote given to the bureaucracy. I once heard from him that when everyone was in raptures over the "Satyagraha"—he told Mahatma Gandhi (in May, 1919)—"You alone will retain the *Satya*; all your disciples derive the *Āgraha*." In opposition to any man or any party he is a tough bit of cord flesh, and to-day he prefers to lose a Governorship to giving evidence before the Simon Commission. When once he arrives at a decision, he refuses to budge an inch. Like Sir William Harcourt, he is a fighting Liberal who gives and takes no quarter from the enemy. His worst enemies must concede that in a public

controversy he is a formidable factor, and that many a political opponent and bureaucrat who could afford to sneer at other public men has had his armour pierced and his shield battered by Mr. Chintamani's onslaughts.

As a speaker he reminds us of the old Congress orators to whom the sonorous sweep of rhetorical sentences was an intoxicating music. In defence, he can prove, like Mr. St. Leo Strachey, at inordinate length that everything he has done has been quite refined and gentlemanly, while on the war path, he can discharge inconvenient facts and figures like a naval gun to the destruction of the enemy.

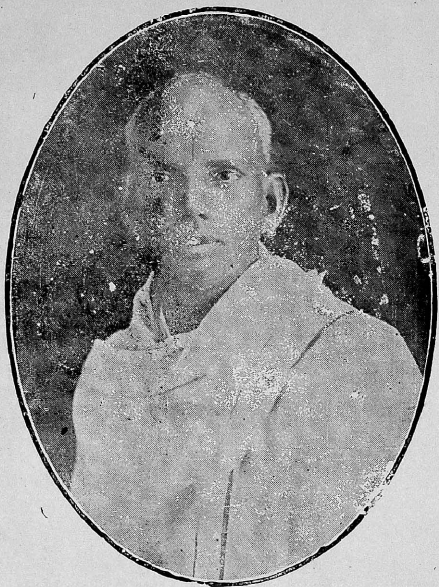
To compare him with men nearer home, Mr. Chintamani lacks Subbarau Pantulu's ripe wisdom, Ramachandra Rao's sweet reasonableness, Pattabhi's keenness, and Ramalinga Reddy's polish of expression, but all of them combined have not his phenomenal memory. Mr. B.C. Pal called him a moving encyclopædia. "The Bombay Chronicle" wrote years back that he has a strong memory, with a rectangular finish for every new idea in his head. Mr. Mahomed Ali, who has an unusual gift of phrase described his memory as the card index system of Indian politics. A friend

of mine who received his journalistic training under him referred to it as a small secretariat in itself—with all its voluminousness and none of its mustiness. Whether he writes a letter or a leader, or speaks on the platform or at tea-table, he performs those feats of memory which have almost gained a legendary reputation. If he wills, a Niagara of facts and figures, statements and statistics, quotations and passages shoots out, submerges you, and sweeps you off. It is partly because of this dominating influence of memory, that his epistle is like an essay, his conversation is like a lecture, and his lecture like a page from history. It is a positive good luck to find him in reminiscent mood when he is embedded in clouds of smoke at tea-table. You are sure to receive what I venture to call “liberal education.”

In politics a confirmed Liberal, in social matters a whole-hogging rebel, in journalism a born craftsman, in public life a formidable figure, and above all an amiable gentleman, he has played no small part in the history of Modern India. But for his incorrigible admiration for the West, and what matters more, his intense disregard for native culture, and his stubborn opposition to the

ruthless march of new forces, Mr. Chintamani would have achieved an almost epic fame. As he is, he will be a classic example of a self-made man. I am tempted to close this sketch in the words with which Lord Birkenhead closed his sketch of Mr. T. M. Healy. Said his Lordship,

“His reminiscences are a joy, and he ought, while he still retains so much of vigour and a memory so unimpaired, to collect them in the interests of those who love good stories, a vivid pen, a stirring and brilliant career.”



Mr. KONDA VENKATAPPIAH

MR. K. VENKATAPPIAH

THE appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the political stage was the greatest event in modern Indian history. Under his inspiring auspices, the old order changed, yielding place to new. Politics meant serious business and leadership meant unconditional surrender. One who was not prepared to face the music of the jail and the bayonets of the soldier had no place in the Congress. Like every other province, Andhradesa passed through strange vicissitudes owing to the flutter created by the Mahatma's politics in the ranks of even the stalwarts. Mr. N. Subbarau Pantulu, the chief of the 'old guards' of the Congress, announced his exodus to the Liberal camp. Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao's vision was blurred by the 'dazzling' light of the Montford Reforms. Mr. B. N. Sarma already found his way to the giddy heights of Simla. Dr. Pattabhi was still subjecting the Gandhian programme to his hyper-critical analysis. Mr. Prakasam had not begun his Olympian strides. Yet, fortunately for Andhradesa, there was no cause for grave anxiety. An unpretentious but

undaunted servant of India, was there, holding aloft in his hand the flag of Nationalism. That celebrated person is no other than Mr. Konda Venkatappayya.

He fulfilled several of the rigorous tests involved in the Gandhian campaign. The spirit of sacrifice was not new to him. Years before there was a call to boycott the Law Courts he renounced his practice on the ethical ground that after a certain amount of worldly success and at a certain stage, one should have no profession but only a mission. And what better work could one find or nobler service could one do than to answer the call of one's country? It was as one of the founders and fathers of the Andhra movement that Mr. Venkatappayya won the affections and esteem of the Andhras. The mightier the call, the greater was his sacrifice. The heroic resolve, the noble endeavour, the exacting discipline and the sublime idealism, that the greatest man of the age summoned to the service of a nation struggling to recover its lost soul, were the very qualities that the country could discover in Mr. Venkatappayya.

At the most critical juncture in our history, he was in charge of Andhradesa

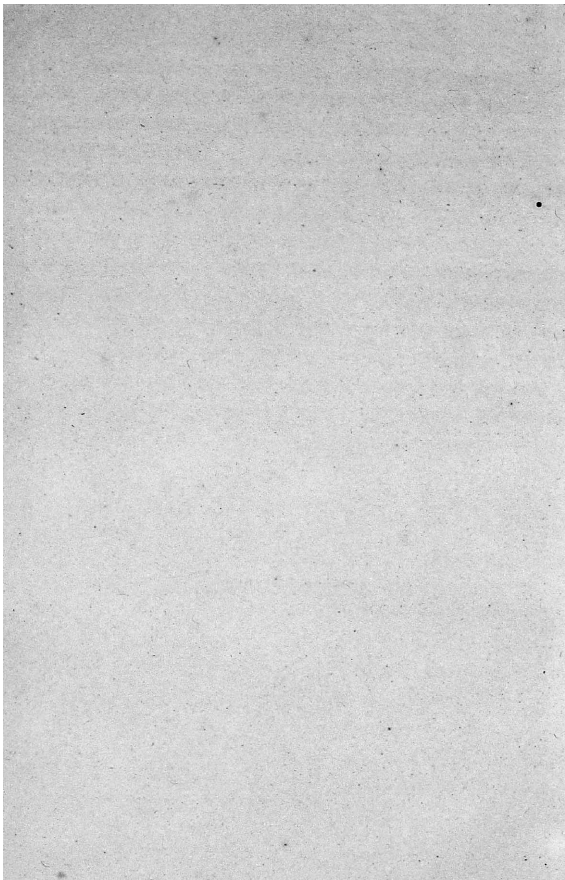
and her destinies were perfectly safe in his hands. He had no axe to grind, no private end to pursue, no power to covet. "Virtue is its own reward" seems to be the principle underlying his work. A silent and sincere worker, his sole anxiety was to advance the Andhra cause and enhance the Andhra glory. Jealous of Bardoli, and of the honours that it was bound to win in the vanguard of national forces, he made a stupendous effort to make Guntur, the Kurukshetra of the N. C. O. movement. But the odds were against him. His triumph, however, lay in his remarkable self-restraint in not precipitating matters then, and in controlling the army in that hour of excitement.

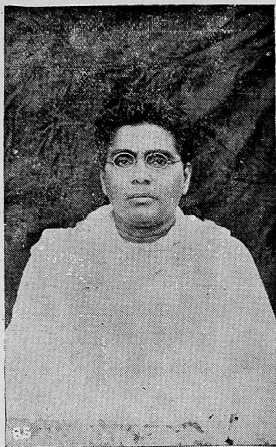
The downward plane of the movement and later its decline damped his enthusiasm and chilled his spirit. To-day, he is content to do his little bit from behind, instead of finding his way into the legislatures or obtruding himself upon the public. Mere academic issues do not appeal to him. He loathes to disturb his own peace of mind or the peace of the country by wrangling over, say, the issue of Dominion Status versus Independence. He is a man of action, not of

words. He does not understand the subtle distinctions, the sharp differences, and the spirited controversies that vitiate our politics and weaken our position. Among the Andhra Congressmen, he carries the greatest weight in all sections of his countrymen. When the No-changers and Swarajists deserted the Congress executive in their love of internecine war, the A.I.C.C. paid him the greatest tribute by electing him as the President. He held in his hand the olive branch of peace. The idea of holding that position amidst warring sects would never have entered his head. That intriguing spirit is wholly alien to his nature. His, indeed, is the triumph of character. He is incorruptible.

But it would be untrue to suggest that Mr. Venkatappayya has no limitations. His achievements in the domain of intellect are quite meagre. He has never shaped a policy or influenced a decision or made any striking contribution to an important problem. Like Sherry, he is "dull, naturally dull". He is an example, in Andhradesa, of respectable mediocrity. But for this, and his temper, which is said to betray him either into fury or tears, Mr. Venkatappayya would have achieved greater success in life. His future in Indian

politics is rather an uncertain problem. His place, to-day, is not among clamorous politicians who revel in controversies but among the few silent and staunch lieutenants of Gandhi, who when the call comes from their master, are ready to take up the cross and follow his footsteps. It must be readily conceded—and Mr. Venkatappayya himself wants no greater recognition or reward—that Andhradesa is legitimately proud of and will be deeply grateful for his work which is so glowing a record of “a great spirit devoted with rare purity of motive to the service of public ends.”





Mr. T. PRAKASAM

MR. T. PRAKASAM

IT is said that one's reputation endures most if it bears the stamp of the common verdict of both friends and foes. For, while your friend is interested in shielding you, your enemy is interested only in exposing you. Among our public workers who fulfil this double test, Mr. T. Prakasam is easily one of the foremost. Ask anybody you like, to whatsoever community or party he belongs, he makes no secret of his personal regard to the distinguished Madras barrister who renounced a roaring practice in the cause of national emancipation and deliberately put on his head a crown of thorns. And when Sir C. Sankaran Nair referred in his "Gandhi and Anarchy" to Mr. Prakasam as the most sincere follower of the author of the N. C. O. movement, he only expressed a widespread public feeling. On the Andhra political stage,

"They say he is a very man per se
And stands alone."

Mr. Prakasam was, in one sense, one of the discoveries of the Mahatma. Before the advent of Non-co-operation, he might

have spoken at a meeting here and presided over a conference there, but he was hardly a force to be reckoned with. The turning point—it was really a land mark—in his life was due to the spell cast on him by the Sage of Sabarmati. At a time when he could legitimately aspire for a High Court Judgeship, he made the biggest sacrifice in the Madras Presidency and one of the most notable ones in the country. This was a whole-hearted and unconditional surrender, totally free from all calculations of chamber practice or expert counsel. His phenomenal sacrifice, unsullied sincerity, dynamic energy, utter fearlessness, and untiring industry have made him a power in Indian politics. If manifestations of courage and heroism, devoid of all artfulness or artifice, are required to save the nation at any critical juncture in its history, Mr. Prakasam can be at once singled out for that rare honour and privilege. When the great Swami Shraddhanand laid his breast bare to the bayonets of the Gurkhas at Delhi, people attributed the Swamiji's singular courage to his spiritual power and religious fervour, but when the secular Mr. Prakasam braved alone the fire-arms of the Madras police on the occasion of Simon

Commission's first visit to this country, people knew the real man and hero. Again when history threatened to repeat itself at Madras on the occasion of its second visitation, it was to the Andhra Kesari (The Lion of Andhradesa) that all eyes instinctively turned. It has become a habit of the people to record this vote of confidence in him at all hours of crisis. Why? Since his boyhood, Mr. Prakasam has been consistently brave and heroic, with this difference, that the "rowdy" of yesterday has been transformed by the Mahatma's magic wand into the soldier of to-day. Others may desert the ranks of the army under a shower of bullets, but he will be there like a rock, solid and unassailable.

His easy victory in the last general elections over so eminent a legislator and statesman as Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao Pantulu is an eloquent tribute to his towering personality. As a speaker he is rather volatile; as a writer he is not powerful; as a politician he is not as well informed as his distinguished predecessor in the Assembly; and yet he easily makes an impression by the gushing sincerity of his statements and the tragic emotion of his

delivery. The cause of the people is perfectly safe in his hands.

This tenacity and doggedness are admirable in the extreme. To those who know too well how a candidate's enthusiasm for his constituency evaporates soon after the election, the movements of Mr. Prakasam in his unwieldy constituency consisting of three large districts are surprising. No place is too obscure, no area too remote, for his intimate study of the question with which his constituency is convulsed. In the hottest part of the tropical summer, he is to be found, not among the political leaders residing on the hill-tops, but amidst the poor ryots in the plains. And if his presence is required at distant Multan or Shoranpur where there is a communal conflagration, he goes there post-haste.

But generally his whole time is taken up by *Swarajya* which has been described as his "Magnum opus". For seven long years the Andhra leaders were satisfied with passing the resolution at the annual session of their provincial conference that attempts should be made to start an English daily to champion the Andhra cause. But no single man had the energy and courage to do the

difficult job and it was left to Mr. Prakasam alone to dare. As *Janmabhumi* so neatly acknowledges, Mr. Prakasam is carrying on his daily *Swarajya* with heroism and persistence in the midst of the most oppressing conditions.

"He has run through a lac of his own money and laid under obligation subscribers to the tune of four lacs, and yet he keeps the banner of *Swarajya* flying—and only few people know the difficulty of running a paper which keeps to an ideal and avoids the facile alternative of trimming the sails to the changing winds."

The heavy sacrifices made under Mr. Prakasam's inspiring lead by noble and brilliant young men like Mr. G.V. Krupanidhi and Mr. K. Subba Rau constitute an eloquent chapter in the history of Indian Nationalism.

During the last seven years, Mr. Prakasam has passed through the severest tests of stress and strain with a fortitude that has won the admiration of all. I wonder if he could avoid one restless day or one sleepless night in this long period. He is, indeed, one of the few men who can die for the country, and one of the fewer too, who can live for it.

Beneath his rough exterior, there is a bosom which is as soft as it is spacious. His child-like simplicity and hearty laughter

show that there is no venom in his shaft, no cunning in his design, no finesse in his word. He is "a plain, blunt man," an open foe, a hard hitter. At his approach, any indignation that one harbours against him, melts like snow, and in his presence it totally disappears.

His massive figure and arresting features remind one of the late Mr. C.R. Das while his heroic step and reckless optimism confirm the suggestion. If an infinite capacity to suffer the pains and penalties of one's own convictions were heroic, Mr. Prakasam has in him the stuff of which heroes are made.

"O, he sits high in all the people's hearts."

DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMIAH

ONE fine morning in 1920 the Chintamani Theatre in Rajahmundry was packed to the full to hear a political address by a doctor from Masulipatam whose reputation for erudition and eloquence filled the air with the rumour of his name. The conveners of the meeting were angling for a suitable President when the speaker suddenly appeared on the stage and began to unfold his theme with an apparent determination to avoid the tyranny of the chair. Not satisfied with this startling commencement, he lost no time in stepping out of the hall after he finished his finished speech, thus giving no time to the convener to indulge in the past-time of thanks-giving.

This incident is quite characteristic of the man. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya has a positive dislike to conventions and cant, formalities and fashions. Whether you agree or disagree with him, he says what he feels, writes what he means, does what he likes, and will be done with it. Compliments from the chair and cheers from the crowd have no music to his ears. He just minds his job and

washes his hands of the affair. The same spirit he projects even into big assemblies where love for prominence is more than normal by avoiding the dais and leaning against a pillar or a wall with perfect non-chalance. He catches the eye of the President only when he is provoked to sting with an epigram or release a volley of musket shots. This disposition partly explains why he is content to hide his light under a bushel in a corner of Andhradesa though able to shed light to a great distance.

Like Gokhale, he was a graduate at eighteen. And in his case, brilliance is not a sad reminiscence of his under-graduate days but a stern reminder of his every-day activities. His medical practice never disturbed his political work even as his medical studies never disturbed his literary pursuits. And yet, a few months before the United Congress at Lucknow in 1916, he gave up his profession with little ostentation and no fuss. Since the thrilling days of Swadesi he has been in the forefront of public life and if Andhradesa turned nationalist so early as in 1906, it was not a little due to the public spirit of Dr. Pattabhi and his immediate friends and co-adjutors at Masulipatam. The

part he played in the Andhra Renaissance as one of the pioneers and undoubtedly the most powerful advocate of the Andhra movement was itself enough to keep his name fresh in our memories. What was described by "candid critics" and "kind friends" as a linguistic stunt, he elevated by his splendid exposition to the level of a sub-national movement. It was in 1917 that he had to carry on a three-hour fight with Mrs. Besant on one hand and a host of Tamil leaders on the other, and got a separate Congress circle for the Andhras and in so doing laid the first stone of the mighty and magnificent edifice of federated India. His election to the presidentship of the newly formed Linguistic League at Calcutta during the last Congress (1928) was a public tribute to the great lead he gave in regard to the problem of re-distribution of provinces in India. The Andhra Jatiya Kalasala with which the name of the late lamented K. Hanumanta Rao is so indissolubly associated, owed alike its origin and progress, in no mean measure, to Dr. Pattabhi's constructive schemes and strenuous endeavours. It was but recently that he gave another distinct lead to the Congress, by projecting a scheme of Research Department

under its auspices, thus releasing trains of thought for the work of national reorganisation. His constructive work is as solid as his critical acumen is singular.

An incisive writer, a powerful speaker, a brilliant debater, a lively conversationalist, "a keen observer of human nature" he can come out in flying colours in any assembly that consists of the best brains of the nation. He can unravel the tangle of any complicated or knotty issue with remarkable ease and can explain the details of a budget with as amazing a facility as he can analyse the motives of a political opponent with unerring instinct. By his lucid exposition he can shed much light on the most difficult of problems; by his penetrating criticism he can tear the opposite view-point to tatters; by his debating skill he can beat the most fiery orator hollow; by mere heckling he can trip the subtlest of lawyers. In the A. I. C. C. he is found to be at his best when he warms up to his theme in distributing his jibes impartially at the stalwarts on the dais. Words flow from his tongue or pen in swift succession, form themselves into serried ranks, march like marshalled units, and discharge their function with unfailing precision. As a speaker

he appeals sometimes to the emotions and always to the intellect and his utterances are crammed with information and spiced with wit. Of debate, he is the very Prince Rupert. A frank and fearless critic and a born fighter who is very liberal in a public controversy with his whip of scorpions, he is in his element when he springs on his feet to pour forth a flood of eloquence which is characterised by striking epigram, keen analysis, caustic wit, ready retort and withering sarcasm. He can pounce upon the opponent with the suddenness of a panther and maul him down. He can stab in a sentence. At a time when people attributed to Mr. C. R. Das motives of love to capture the leadership of the country during Gandhiji's incarceration, he was reported to have said on the Madras beach that "the one (Mr. Gandhi) is a self-effacing saint and the other (Mr. Das) a self-advertising charlatan".

But it is a mistake to suppose that outside the arena of debate we are not struck by his intellectual powers. He could understand the inner significance and the hidden mysteries of the N. C. O. movement and Gandhian philosophy so excellently that the Mahatma

himself was said to have made the classic observation that

"I am the Banya Sutrakara and Pattabhi is the Brahmin Commentator."

It is not merely, as speaker, writer, and debater that he gives us evidence of his genius. His conversation is so lively. If Mr. Chintamani delights us with episodes, Dr. Pattabhi delights us with observations. His talk flits through surgery and finance, history and science, art and literature, philosophy and life. Whether it is about the relics of Sarnath or the romance of Taj Mahal, art in the Hindu home or intrigue in the British cabinet, he can speak or write with the same animation. He is not merely a Jack but a master of all trades. His personality is very well mirrored in his English weekly *Janmabhumi* which has easily earned for itself an enduring reputation for its vivid style and refreshingly original comment. His notes corruscate with rare brilliance.

Dr. Pattabhi's mind is an intellectual steam engine which works with uniform rapidity and unequalled thoroughness. How else can one account for the existence of the Andhra Jatiya Kalasala, Andhra Insurance Company, the Andhra Bank and several

other institutions only at Masulipatam, and what is more amazing, some of them within half a mile radius from his house? And there at his native place, all roads lead to his residence where he sits like "the head of a great department, handling huge problems of different kinds with easy mastery, and moving men like pawns on the chess-board." He is known to be a hard task-master and a pucca businessman. He believes in Lord Fisher's three R's of war—Ruthless, Relentless, Remorseless. This hardly means that he is unjust. Only he will keep his bond, neither adding to it nor subtracting from it. But he is a misunderstood man. He would have made less enemies had he got much bonhomie.

There is hardly anything that he cannot accomplish by virtue of his genius. But he has a genius for rejecting opportunities. When friends desired that he should stand for the Assembly, he demurred. When Gandhiji suggested his name for the Working Committee, he declined the invitation. When he was offered the editorship of the "Bombay Chronicle" on Rs 1250 per month, he turned down the offer. He never plays to the gallery, or courts the plaudits of the

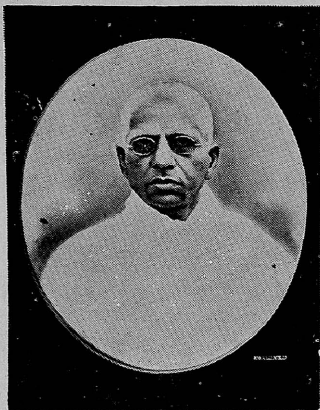
crowd, he shuns the camera, abhors adventitious aids, detests vulgar publicity. The whiff of native air is so intoxicating to his nerves that he refuses to stir out for a career. Masulipatam is his Mecca ; *Janmabhumi* is his "Times" ; his innate worth is his sheet anchor.

But wherever he is and whatever he does, one thing must be recognised. Like Cassius,

He is a great observer and he looks

Quite through the deeds of men.

He has also something of the idealism of Brutus in him. With this curious but capital mixture of a sense of practicality and a note of idealism, the instinct of a businessman and the gifts of a prophet, he is the most baffling and the most fascinating of Andhra public men. Still on the right side of fifty he is in the best of spirits. He will be of great service in Swaraj India when her forces are to be mobilised, her fortunes consolidated, and her destinies shaped to immortal ends.



Mr. K. NAGESWARA RAO

Mr. K. NAGESWARA RAO

IF one throws a stone in Montreal, one is sure, it is said, to break the window pane of a church. If one casts a glance on any humanitarian institution in Andhradesa one is sure to spot out Mr. Nageswara Rao's rupee in it. It is not every businessman that makes it a business to spend money in the interests of his country. There is no part of India in which Mr. Nageswara Rao does not levy a tax for his Amrutanjanam, and there is no day on which he does not loosen his purse-strings for a beneficent purpose. He is the type of man who earns only to give. Constitutionally incapable of hoarding money, he presses it to the service of the nation with a liberality that borders on lavishness.

Among the factors which contributed to the political consciousness and general mass-awakening in Andhradesa, the "Andhrapatrika," by universal consent, occupies the foremost place. Its evolution from a weekly at Bombay to a daily at Madras is one of the remarkable phenomena of our Vernacular journalism. Papers had been started and papers closed with such bewildering rapidity

that the Andhras were given to witness in the field of journalism only sporadic outbursts and meteoric careers. But things had changed with the advent of "Andhrapatrika." There is no village in Andhradesa into which it has not penetrated with its message. Further, it is the golden link that tends to draw together the Andhras at home and the Andhras abroad. It is an institution in itself. "Andhrapatrika" is to Andhradesa what the "Kesari" is to Maharashtra. To the lasting credit of Mr. Nageswara Rao who ran the paper at a loss for a number of years out of a purely patriotic impulse, it must be acknowledged that "Andhrapatrika" brought politics to the market place, preached nationalism to the peasant, enlightened women in the home, and revolutionised the Andhra society.

Mr. Nageswara Rao's services as journalist cannot be easily over-rated. He is the Editor not merely of a political daily but also of a cultural monthly. If "*Andhrapatrika*" disseminates popular knowledge, "*Bharati*" stimulates the Andhra talent. It has whetted the edge of the literary appetite and artistic sense of hundreds of young men and women, and it is no small service to a nation which

has lost its moorings in all spheres of life.

As the Proprietor and Editor of one of the best Telugu monthlies and the only Telugu daily, Mr. Nageswara Rao had the power in him to accelerate or retard the progress of nationalism. Fortunately for the country, the Congress found in him a staunch ally. He held aloft in his hand the glorious standard of Indian Nationalism which he never lowered even in the hectic days of relentless repression.

A man of broad views and genuine convictions, high ideals and generous impulses, Mr. Nageswara Rao was sternly opposed to reaction of any kind. Often we come across social reactionaries in the ranks of political extremists and radicals in social reform among conservatives in politics. It is a relief to find Mr. Nageswara Rao outside that group of enigmatic public workers. His social views are as advanced as his political opinions and in him practice is not divorced from preaching. The marriage of his daughter at a fairly advanced age on a pompous scale, unnerved by the frantic leaflets distributed by conservative diehards, proves to the hilt his love of silent action for the progressive ideal.

Mr. Nageswara Rao is free from the handicap of brilliance. He lacks Mr. Prakasam's combativeness and Mr. Sambamurti's fanaticism. His zeal is tempered by caution and fervour modulated by adaptability. His nationalism has the virtue of being authentic without being aggressive. There is in him somewhere an element of temperateness and a sense of fairplay that lends an air of dignity to his view and enables him to command the respect of even his political opponents. The acerbities of political warfare do not conflict with the amenities of social life under his hospitable roof and in his genial presence. One has only to enter the Rentala House at Madras, or the Ramasramam at Coonoor, or the Durga Vilas at Bezwada to find there men of all communities and schools of thought hobnobbing. He moves equally intimately with Dr. Pattabhi and Dr. Subbarayan or with Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and the Raja of Panagal* and, what is more, enjoys their confidence in an equal measure. More than anybody else in Andhradesa, he can compose differences and create a bond of friendship between warring sections.

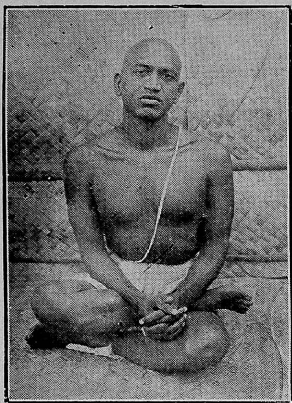
Mr. Nageswara Rao is, however, not an

* The sketch was written while the Raja of Panagal was alive.

all-India figure for two reasons. For one thing his connections with the press have not spread beyond the limits of the province. That is but the inherent defect of Vernacular journalism. For another, his charities are not concentrated. It is but the common defect of the diffusive type of philanthropy. Imagine him for example, as the controlling power of an English daily, full of the cream of robust nationalism or as the founder of an institution like the Servants of India Society with an up-to-date library for the use of promising young men—two things he can accomplish if he has the will. Would he not then find his place among the builders of the nation?

It is human weakness to bargain for something more than what is available or higher than what is accessible. But taking him as he is and judging him by what he has done, who can overlook his services? As an Andhra, he has played in the Renaissance movement, a part which is second to that of none. As an Indian, he has done his duty to the motherland by throwing his weight on the right side in freedom's battle. And as a citizen of the world he is among the "Helpers and Friends of Mankind."





B. SAMBAMURTY

MR. BULUSU SAMBAMURTI

ONE evening in 1920, on the eve of the Nagpur Congress, a thick and well-built figure attired in silk suit alighted on the Godavari platform in connection with a meeting of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, when a prominent and keen-witted Nationalist pulled him by the neck-tie and taunted him by asking if it was an index to British Civilisation! On the threshold of the year 1924, amidst the closing scenes of the Cocanada Congress, Srimati Sarojini Devi made a touching reference to "an almost unclothed man who had his heart afflicted with the biggest wound that can come to any man who is a father and yet who, forgetting his personal sorrow and anguish of his heart, was turned into dedicated service of the country." Alike the victim of the Nationalist's banter and the recipient of the poetess's tribute was Mr. Bulusu Sambamurti. In his sartorial transition—or is it transformation?—can be seen the moods through which the great nation passed during those three brief but eventful years. Mr. Sambamurti represents the temper and spirit of the new era in

Indian politics, inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi, an era which saw the end of the dominance of educated classes and the beginning of the demonstration of the mass movement. This violent swing of the political pendulum from what is popularly known as constitutional agitation to direct action, including Civil Disobedience and Satyagraha, is an unmistakable sign of the emergence into the political arena of a class of workers to whom the country is the home, the Congress the temple, and Swaraj the only religion. Mr. Sambamurti belongs, by universal acknowledgment, to that devoted band of patriots who have the additional distinction of chanting only the prayer of Independence.

In the halcyon days of the N. C. O. movement, several went out of the law courts; some have since resumed their practice; some are still waiting to go back to the profession; some others are regretting that they have taken a false if not fatal step. Mr. Sambamurti is one of those very few men who have burnt their briefs once for all. He has not merely renounced a lucrative practice but has changed his entire way of living.

It was rumoured that Mr. Sambamurti was not permitted to contest a seat in the

Legislative Council because of his sartorial trappings or want of them. The House of Commons was never the same, historians tell, as it was before, since Mr. James Keir Hardie burst into it, "clothed in cloth cap, tweed suit, and flannel shirt." The Madras Legislative Council would have been certainly different from what it is now, if this plain, blunt figure entered it in his loin-cloth and with his Khaddar satchel. Not that he is well informed or erudite or eloquent to such an extent as to dominate the proceedings of the House. On the other hand his equipment is inadequate, his voice discordant, and his delivery monotonous. Not that he argues his case with remarkable forensic skill. His argumenative faculty is even vitiated by an erratic impulse. Not that he would represent a powerful constituency. None of these things. But he represents, what most of the legislators do not, an idea—the idea of unbending revolt against alien domination in all its phases.

The slave of his own ungoverned impulses and the victim to his own obsession of mind, Mr. Sambamurti is never so happy as when he rushes to the scene of action and takes his place in the very thick of the fight.

Whether the National Flag is pulled down here at Cocanada or trampled upon there at Nagur, it is all the same to him. The proud banner of the Congress is dishonoured and he must fight for the vindication of its honour, regardless of consequences. As one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin, so does one stroke of repression the nation. He must leap to the sanctified spot of suffering and face the onslaughts of oppression. This enthusiasm for his presence in the danger zone is so unrestrained that a boycott demonstration would appeal to him more than a constructive political scheme, however valuable it is. If tomorrow by some miracle Dominion Status is conferred on India and if all politicians lay down their arms, Mr. Sambamurti will yet continue, in a minority of one, to flourish his banner of revolt against the remnant forces of Imperialist sway.

To those who do not know him intimately Mr. Sambamurti appears to be over-fond of political pyro-technics. That is due to his impatience to achieve his object, sooner than later, to-day if possible, and now and at this moment if there is the remotest chance. But his is not a vain love of fire works, for he has in himself that fire which smoulders into

flames that illumine the path of service. Intensely emotional, with a daring verging almost on recklessness, Mr. Sambamurti's patriotism carries with it an element of fanaticism. But each cult has its own pains and penalties. Often this excess of zeal exposes him to the ridicule of his political opponents, and launches him into unenviable predicaments and awkward plights as in the case of his self-imposed advocacy of the Neil Statue Satyagraha campaign which alas! ended in what a friend of mine said with withering sarcasm as 'mud-slinging.' But Mr. Sambamurty is unaffected by taunts and undaunted by threats. Let them say what they say, he cheerfully goes along his own self-constructed path of 'delirious' political wanderings!

He is not a political philosopher or thinker. There is nothing in his speeches or writings that is well-worth remembering. But all must concede that he was the fore-runner of the Independence school in this part of the country and he was the first prominent Congressman on this side of the Vindhya to advocate complete National Independence. He is always one step in advance of the national regiment. To him Dr. Pattabhi

is an extremist among moderates and Pandit Jahwarlal Nehru a moderate among extremists. Ipso facto, he is an extremist among extremists. Primarily, a man for direct action, he would laugh to scorn all puerile controversies and petty wranglings and openly sneer at all mellifluous apologies to consecrated political traditions or 'mamool' methods of political warfare. He turns Nelson's blind eye to all verbal tight-rope dance, and hears only the paeans of the battle-field. Cautious steps, conciliatory tones, half-hearted compromises, halting measures, have no meaning and no purpose for him. His vocabulary contains no middle term between subjection and Swaraj, between slavery and Independence. His vision is only that of a Swaraj in golden hues and russet tints. And,

"Not fearing death, nor shrinking for distress

But always resolute in most extremes,"

he is ready at a moment's notice, to plunge himself headlong into any kind of fight that promises liberation for his motherland.



Sir K. V. REDDY

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HANGING and wiving goes by destiny, observes one of Shakespear's characters. So also success in politics. If a few months ago a hundred men (in public life) were asked to enter a guessing competition as to the likely successor of Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, not one of them would have unravelled the mystery of the White-hall archives. Perhaps, I had almost said, probably, Sir K. V. Reddi himself would not have predicted his ambassadorial voyage to South Africa. His career is, indeed, full of surprises both in regard to appointments and disappointments. But the one remarkable trait in him was that he kept his balance when he succeeded and his temper when he failed. Through all the vicissitudes which he passed, from his early struggles to latter-day successes, he maintained his reputation as a "jolly good fellow."

From his youth up Sir K. V. Reddy displayed an irrepressible tendency to "dare and never grudge the throe," but while the impulse was noble, the object for which he requisitioned it was questionable. It was said

of Churchill that he concentrated all his love on three things—war, politics, and himself. In a similar way, Sir K. V. Reddi fixed his affections upon three things—the British Empire, the Non-Brahmin community, and himself. Success at the Bar, wide experience in Local Self-Government, active part in the Congress, and good equipment for larger opportunities of public service marked him out for the future. But he grew impatient of “the present” and had an eye—or his two eyes—on his career. He sought shelter under the banner unfurled by Dr. Nair and Sir P. T. Chetty and placed community above the nation and himself above the community. His revolt against the priest-craft is praiseworthy and unexceptionable. One can be a staunch and strong Non-Brahmin and yet be a Nationalist as Mr. C. R. Reddy or Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu. And one can even serve one's community, according to one's lights, by a complete dedication at its altar, as Dr. Nair and Sir P. T. Chetty did. By both these tests Sir K. V. Reddy has failed.

Nor is there a volume of public service of which he could be legitimately proud. As a minister, his record was barren. He was called the Minister for Development but

described as the Minister without a portfolio. No great ministerial measure is associated with his name and the State Aid to Industries Act over which he was in raptures was but a paper triumph. When the second Reform Ministry was formed, Sir K. V. Reddi found himself suddenly cashiered by the combined strategy of Panagal and Patro. This means that either he was not indispensable in the Ministry or a persona grata in the party. From that fateful day on which he could not in his helpless predicament vote either for or against Mr. C. R. Reddy's no-confidence motion in the Justice Ministry, he was ploughing an almost lonely furrow and waiting Micawber-like for something providential to turn up.

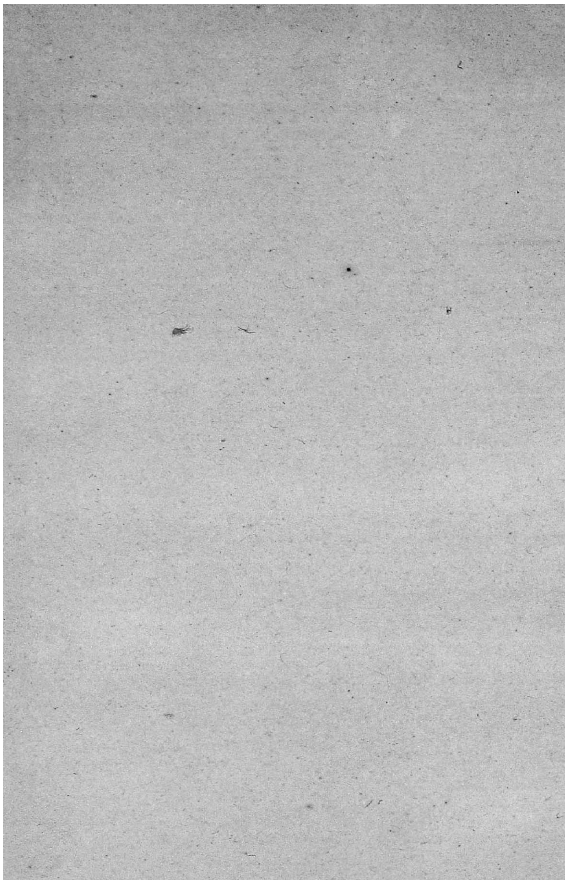
He seems to have paid heavy penalties for the rewards that have fallen to his lot. It is a suspicious world in which we live. Sir. B. N. Sarma's elevation to the Viceregal gadi was traced to his chivalrous defence of Lord Chelmsford in the Amritsar Congress. When the best men of the country refused to look at the Simon Seven, Sir K. V. Reddi organised a reception in their favour on their visit to Madras. A few months later, he was deputed to Geneva on an Imperial mission.

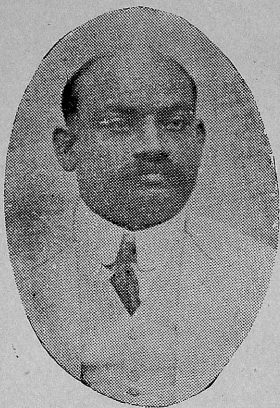
And in England, at a party given in his honour by Sir John Simon, Sir K. V. Reddi converted a conventional after-dinner speech into an inspired rhapsody of the glory of the British Empire. Ere he returned home, his appointment as Agent to the Governor-General in South Africa was announced. Indeed, this makes us suspicious.

But it serves no purpose to judge a man by high standards to which he claims no pretensions of adherence. It might be after all Sir K. V. Reddi's view to break the monopolies of the dominating spheres, kindle the imagination of his backward brethren by dangling before them cushioned berths and make his community a stronger factor in the counsels of the nation. Unto this end he achieved undeniable success. Ambitious and energetic, pugnacious and puissant, he met rebuffs and repulses in life with a gay effrontery that might as well be the envy of the doughty champions of Swaraj. His cause may be erroneous but he is sincere in upholding it; his views may be unpalatable, but he is fearless in expressing them. His eloquence is a bit rough—hewn but passionate. He speaks without mincing words. He has the courage to shout his opinion, though he knows he

would be lynched for expressing it. With a reckless disregard of consequences, he ridiculed the Gandhian movement as 'loin-cloth Swaraj' and was routed in the last elections. He rebelled once against Sir P. T. Chetti and then against the Rajah of Panagal, and was elbowed out of the inner circles. He survived these reverses, and in that very survival lies his strength.

Now he goes out to a foreign land to champion the cause of his countrymen, in regard to issues which have no bearing on political bickerings, party skirmishes, communal squabbles, and personal jealousies at home and if only he summons to his aid, his tact and experience, equipment and earnestness, courage and combativeness, he will make amends for his ministerial sterility and reactionary views. Now is the time to raze unpleasant memories. Sir K. V. Reddi is a self-made man who can rise to the occasion. Yesterday he was the leader of a communal caucus. To-day he is the ambassador of a whole nation. And tomorrow he may return to be the vigilant Foreign Minister of a Free India. Who likes to stand in the way of one's own future? Not the shrewd Sir K. V. Reddy at any rate.





Sir. A. P. PATRO

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IN all ages, climes and societies there are some men who enter politics for profit. Except as a business concern, public life has no interest for them. It must somehow pay. Otherwise there is no compelling motive force behind their actions to direct them into this channel or that and no sufficient inducement for their sustained activities. Why should they expose themselves, they think, to all the chill winds that blow in the regions of politics, if there is no chance of their going through the long train of purple, profit, and power? Men obsessed with such ideas of self-aggrandisement easily grow in number in a subject country and flourish their separatist banners under persons who can carry the game of exploitation to the farthest ends. Now let us look at that imposing figure of Justice group in the Madras Legislative Council with the bald patch on his head. It would be as unjust not to credit Sir A.P. Patro with leadership of a party which is avowedly for the advancement of a community here and a sub-sect there or for the 'elevation' of this or that individual to a high place, even as it

would be untrue to deny that he is a formidable factor in Andhra public life and Madras politics. And in him we find, truth to tell, more than in anybody else how startlingly different is eminence from prominence.

Like most public men of his day Mr. Patro was a successful lawyer and like several politicians he served his apprenticeship in the National Congress. He became the accredited representative of the people of his District and gained the inevitable honorary distinctions of civic life on the strength of their suffrage. As a matter of mere course he made his way into the Legislative Council, but unfortunately by the time he figured there, his political complexion underwent a radical change.

After a series of gyrations he found himself beside (and on the side of) Sir P. T. Chetty and fixed his gaze on the ministerial apples of the Montagu creation. The calamity that befell the Justice Party by the demise of Mr. A. Subharayulu Reddiar was Mr. Patro's opportunity. As one of the most prominent members of the group in the Council and as one who could pass for an Andhra among Andhras and an Oriya among Oriyas and hence be the connecting link