

Tamil Arasu

DECEMBER 1981 50 ps.

Thiruvalluvar Year 2012

Karthigai-Margazhi, Dhunmathi

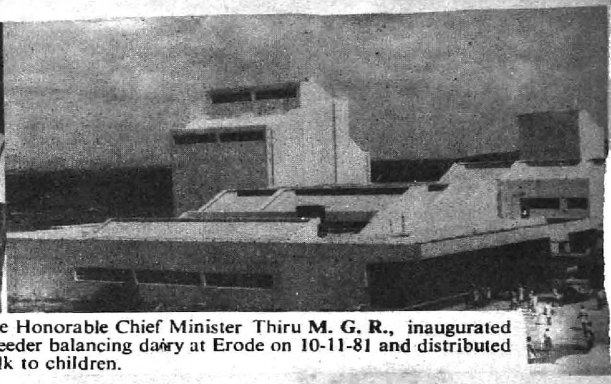


“வாழிய செந்தமிழ் வாழ்கநற் றமிழர்
வாழிய பாரத மணித் திருநாடு”

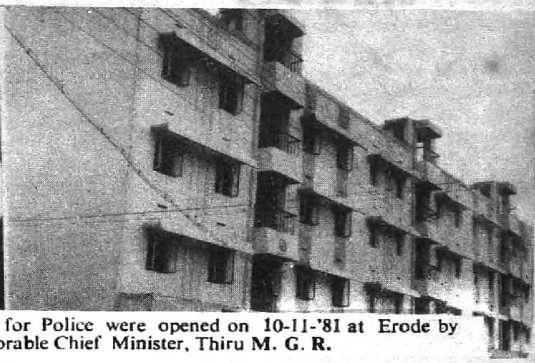
‘Long Live Tamil; Long Live the noble Tamils;
Long Live Bharat, the Glorious Land.’



The All India Co-operative week was inaugurated by Thiru Sadiq Ali, Governor of Tamil Nadu on 14-11-'81 at Valluvar Kottam. Thiru C. Ponnaiyan, Minister for Law presided.



The Honorable Chief Minister Thiru M. G. R., inaugurated a feeder balancing dairy at Erode on 10-11-'81 and distributed milk to children.



Quarters for Police were opened on 10-11-'81 at Erode by the Honorable Chief Minister, Thiru M. G. R.



Ten new bus routes operated by the Cheran Transport Corporation were inaugurated by the Honorable Chief Minister Thiru M. G. R., on 10-11-'81 at Erode.



A Children's rally was inaugurated on 14-11-'81 at the



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UNTO THE MOTHER

*The demons of Fear and Sorrow, with
their legions of beggarly cares and
pains and deaths, do ever encircle us.*

*They are plotting to rob us of the
nectar pot.*

*Day and night they are assailing this
fortressed city of a million halls,
this Body which thou hast given
to us.*

*They are damming the River of Life.
They are shelling our beautiful domes
of the Mind.*

*Mother we sing thy praises. Protect
us, dispelling our foes*

*For our laws, our arts and works
Our shrines and homes and dear ones.
Our herds and flocks, our pastures and
fields.*

*We beg thy mighty protection, O
Mother.*

*On our lives and loves and songs,
Our dreams and willings and acts,
We invoke thy blessings.*

*We offer thee our all. We kiss thy
lotus feet. We surrender. Make
us immortal, O Mother.*

—Bharathi.

BHARATI ON THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH

“VERNACULARS”

The Tamil language has a living philosophical and poetical literature that is far grander, to my mind, than that of the “Vernacular” of England.

For the matter of that, I do not think that any modern vernacular of Europe can boast of works like the Kural of Valluvar, Ramayana of Kamban and the Silappadhikaram (Anklet Epic) of Ilango. And it may not be irrelevant to add that I have read and appreciated the exquisite beauties of Shelley and of Victor Hugo in the original English and French “vernacular” and of Goethe in English translations.



SAROJINI NAIDU'S TRIBUTE

“Poet Bharati has fulfilled the true mission of a poet. He has created beauty not only through the medium of glowing and lovely words but has kindled the souls of men and women by the million to a more passionate love of freedom and a richer dedication to the service of the country.

Poets like Bharati cannot be counted as the treasure of any province. He is entitled by his genius and his work to rank among those who have transcended all limitation of race, language and continent and have become the universal possession of mankind.” So said India's Poet laureate Thirumathi Sarojini Naidu in a message when the Bharati memorial at Ettayapuram was being dedicated.

BHARATI'S PROSE STYLE CAPTIVATES RAJAJI

Rajaji wrote about Bharati's prose style as follows :—

“We may discover in the prose of Bharati how to avoid meaningless trash, filling up pages by endless repetitions, how to achieve crystalline clarity and the vigour of a diamond calibre and how to employ spoken Tamil, free from grammatical errors, to write and to draw pen pictures. The Tamils may study in Bharati's writings the boundless potentialities and grace which remain hidden in that language. One may enjoy in the works of Bharati, that gifted child of Mother Tamil, his fertile imagination, his burning patriotism, his broad sense of justice and humour which does not hurt.”

The late Thiru S. Srinivasa Iyengar remarked about Bharati's national songs as follows : “Patriotisms is real and concrete when linked to the witchery of liquid song.”

Onru pattal undu vazhvu Nam-
 mil
 Otturumai indril anaivarkkum
 thazhvu
 Nanri therinthidal vendum
 Intha
 Gnanam vandaal pin namakethu
 vendum?
 (Vande)

"I commend these lines to the particular attention of the Hon-the Law Member and the Chief Minister and the Home Minister. If we are united we can live; if we are not united we are all equally humiliated-Treasury Bench and the Opposition alike (Laughter) then I appeal to the Tamilians. Have you heard any more inspiring lines than these? I have not.

Chenthamizh naadenum
pothinile Inba
Theen vanthu paayuthen
Kaathinile Engal
Thanthaiyar naadendra
Pechinile Oru
Sakthi pirakkuthu moochinile
(Chenthamizh)

"I do not know, Sir, if there is any Tamilian in this House or outside whose heart will not melt at these songs. I ask them to remember this, that these songs are now declared forfeited to His Majesty by the action of a Government which are to a certain extent kept in those treasury benches by us. The music of it is so great that even a halting reader of those songs like myself can make an appeal to the members here.

"I have listened to Hon-the Law Member shouting here yesterday; he has not even read these songs; but still he has forfeited the book. I can understand if the Government has chosen one of those songs or two and said that those songs should be forfeited. They have not done anything of the kind. These two volumes consist of some of the most moving songs on our religion and letters, apart from pure patriotism.

What they sang: "I shall finish by referring to similar songs in English literature which Englishmen sing in their country which they sing even in our own country in private dinner parties and other places. They sing of the glories of England" "Britain shall rule the waves, Britain shall never be slave, but Indians shall always be slaves. That is the burden of their songs, if they are to be judged by the results of the actions Lord Tennyson Sang:

At her girdle clash
The golden keys of the East and West!
Her mailed hand keeps the keys of such
Teeming destinies

William Blake wrote..



Their mighty wings stretch from
east to west
Their nest is in the sea, but they
shall roam
Like eagles for the prey.

Then England's message in Parker's words:

Then Courage, all brave mariners
And never be dismayed
Then be bold work for gold
When the stormy winds do blow.

Lord Tennyson says:

The fleet of England is her all in all
Her fleet is in your hands
And in her fleet her fate.

"I want to point out three capital differences between the English nationalistic literature and ours. English nationalistic literature boast of its own strength and speaks of the confusion and destruction of their enemies. "God save the King, send him victorious happy and glorious and confound his enemies." That is the Englishman's song. The Englishman's psychology is that God has to deal with only two categories, England and her Subject on the one hand and her enemies on the other. That is, God must give up all. His other work and constantly save England and confound her enemies on the other. Whereas the message of Subramania Bharati is the message of all races, of poets, philosophers and seers of all nations.

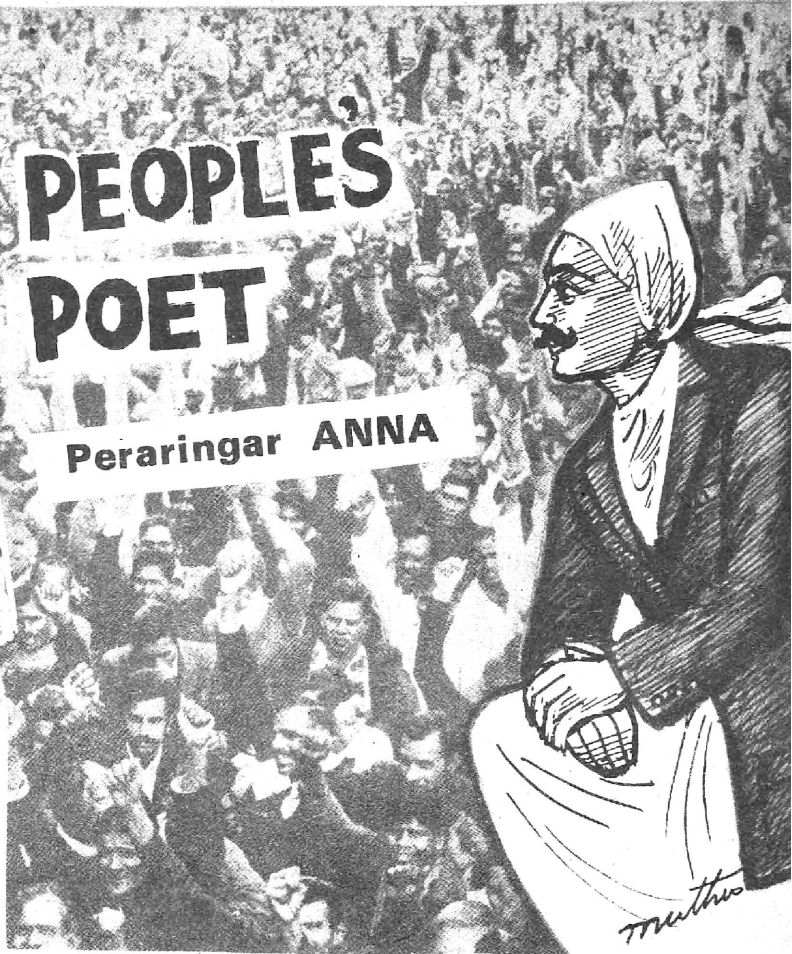
"Let India be free and happy and the other nations of the world be free and happy. Is it for preaching this message of peace on earth and goodwill to all men that the Madras Government which does not understand the ABC of patriotism or nationalism have ventured to lay its profane hand on this sacred literature? We are constantly told that we are a nation of many races and creeds. Bharati was a Brahmin by birth, and I appeal to non-Brahmins in the South - several of them were his friends and I do not want to name them - to say whether throughout his literature, there is a single trace of caste or communal bias or superiority or inferiority. He talks only of Indians as a whole, he knows no distinction of class or creed, race or religion. He is the most cosmopolitan that I know of among modern authors. Is it for preaching this harmony among men that his books are sought to be forfeited by this Government? It seems to me that this action of the Government cannot be justified on any basis what ever, either of duty or of reason.

Courtesy: YUVA BHARATI



PEOPLES' POET

Perarinar ANNA



Charming and significant as the term is, it is a warm tribute not only to the poet but also to the people for the people had had their monarchs and ministers, their warriors and saviours, their seers, and saints, miracle-monsters and priests, but had no poets and from ages past there were poets in abundance, poets who supplemented the scriptures or who polished the palaces by their poetry, but poets who sang for and about the people in the people's tongue were very very rare. The poet's voice did the function of the temple bell or the palace drum but rarely did that voice represent the innermost thoughts of the people and when at times poets spoke about the people, it was to point out to them, how greedy and wordly they have become, how impermanent and illusory this world is, how sinful is silver and how ungodly is gold, and such like sermons that supplemented the royal rod and the whip of the aristocrat. Poets became in due course one more important item in the Royal paraphernalia, one more policeman, who filed the case here and asked the high heavens to deliver the judgment later on. These poets spoke in a different tongue altogether and were far from the people. They despised the crowd from where they rose and used their poetic genius to gain admission to the royal palace, and when once there, they went on weaving wordly wreaths for monarchs of all sorts, provided his gold was pure. The poets of the Sangam period are

noble exceptions to this sorry rule, and they are the poets least known to the people of our days.

Poets either became vendors of virtue in verses or became pleasure merchants, and they found it hard and unprofitable to become the People's Poets. That is the reason why we find no outstanding people's poet after the Sangam Age in Tamilnadu.

Virtue itself came to be considered an investment for a happy life in another world. Hence, poets who came after the advent of this false and pernicious theory began to extol the particular bank of dispensation for which they were the self-appointed agents. Like the clever banker, or the active insurance agent, these poets began to pour forth rhymes in abundance, about the soundness of their Bank, about the delightful dividends and the bright prospects. If one poet gave the people a sweet song about the powers of Garuda of Maha Vishnu, up rose another to supply us with a sacred sonnet about the stately bull

of Siva, or the beautiful peacock of Muruga or even the ugly buffalo of the all powerful God of Death, Yama. All these poems were of the highest order, looked at from the artist's point of view. There was rhythm, diction, similes, metaphors, parables, all in abundance except reason. These poets thought that the temple bell did not work well and thought it their duty to lend their poetic strength to supplement the sound duty or no duty, it was such a paying job that there was a rush in that direction. Poets assumed an attitude of superiority they enjoyed the commonman's confusion, they tried to compromise contradictions and beautify absurdities, they were loud in their denunciation of things wordly; the worthlessness of human life, the littleness of mankind and they presented a poetic picture of the unknown world heaven up above the clouds, and the hell underneath the earth. The telescope was in the womb of science. Hence, heaven existed, and the poets entertained the people with imaginary descriptions about the theological worlds! The ignorant stood

amazed and the intelligent adored the art and not the thought.

It is not easy to take up the role of a people's poet. Bharathi rose equal to this stupendous task. It is easy to become the poet of the classes. Some sweet sonnets about the silvery moon swimming in a sea of blue, some poems about the twinkle of the stars, fine poems about the fragrance of the flower, the rhythm in rivers, lyrics about the love and verses about valour these are enough to secure a place of honour in the poets' gallery. But to discharge the duties of a people's poet, one has to cross hurdles of hatred, take many a dive into dangers and should not think about patronage and popularity. Though a select circle of friends knew and spoke about the poetic genius of Subramania Bharathi, the people as a whole were almost unaware of their poet till at a later stage, and then too, it was the poems of a political colour that was presented to the people, and not the poems, which a people's poet alone can conceive and deliver. We had had poets in abundance. The shepherd sleeping inside a temple forgetful of his home and vocation, the goddess returning after her midnight supervision, the smile on her lips on seeing the simpleton, her curious idea to make him a poet, the gentle pat and the touch of the divine rod, the wonderful result these were known to the people. One becomes a poet, because of the divine touch, and it is his duty to sing devotional songs to a particular deity or to all. This theory held the ground so strongly that the people were not prepared to meet the people's poet, even when one came forward. The people will cast a look of contempt and suspicion on one who says boldly, "I am the people's poet. I sing for them and about them because I am one of them." There would be no recognition and the more radical his poems are, the more vehement will be the opposition. And in this dangerous ground, we find Subramania Bharathi, taking steady steps victoriously.

Bharathi was born on the frontier of two eras. The feudal order was in full force in his homeland. Ettayapuram had a palace surrounded by huts. Age old castes were still in power. He himself was a Brahmin by birth but side by side with feudalism and Sanathanic order of Society, modernism was peeping in. Industrial revolution was dawning, the old

order met the new with sorrowful eyes, and there was a challenge in the look of the new era. Bharathi was born during that period and none could have imagined that he will become the warrior in the duel between the old order and the new for in the old order of things his was a comfortable place.

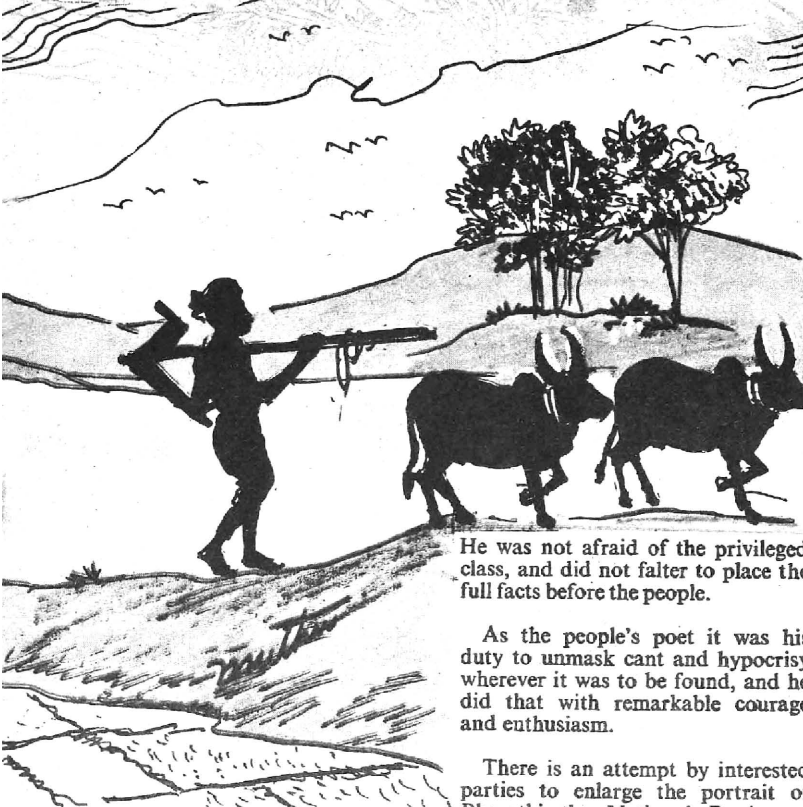
He was born, moreover, in this land of paradoxes, a land where arrogance and humility, cruelty and kindness march together, where there is energy in abundance and absurd contemplation strong enough to dissipate the energy, a land of some dazzling ideas and millions of mute people, a land where there is apoplexy at the centre and anaemia at the extremes, the land of courage as well as fear, the land of faith as well as despair. Byron and Burke landed here just then, only to meet Bharatam and Bagavatham. The booming of the gun became familiar to the ears of the people and the age-long temple drum was not silent in such a land of paradoxes and perplexities.

Bharathi was born, and in such a land history moves but slowly and it needs a strong push if it should move at all. Bharathi's claim to greatness rests chiefly on this: he gave the push as the people's poet.

Bharathi was not merely the bard of Nationalism. He was certainly the morning star of reformation only because he was the people's poet. He was angry with the foreigner, and wanted his country to become free but that was not his goal, that was not to be his end. It was but the beginning. He wanted to free his country men from all shackles, wanted them to rise up in the estimation of the world, wanted to see

a new land peopled by men and women of a new type altogether. He found the people enveloped in fear. Fear was written on their very faces. They were afraid of anything and everything. Not only did they fear the foreigner and his gun but their own brethren chanting some slogans. They were afraid of ghosts and phantoms.

Such a people cannot become the standard bearers of freedom and a land peopled by such nature cannot lift its head high, and look straight at the world, even if the foreign power is driven out. Hence Bharathi wanted his countrymen, to drive out fear from their mind to shed off inferiority complex. He instilled into their minds hope and courage, he placed before them their own hidden powers and pointed out to them, how that innate power is being wasted, the slumber of the masses, their gross ignorance, and superstition, their inferiority complex and their caste prejudices. Bharathi saw clearly, and he determined to root out these evils, and none but a people's poet could have been so deeply interested in these problems. But Bharathi knew fully well, that it was the age of the common man the era of democracy and he wanted the people to fight for freedom. He did



He was not afraid of the privileged class, and did not falter to place the full facts before the people.

As the people's poet it was his duty to unmask cant and hypocrisy wherever it was to be found, and he did that with remarkable courage and enthusiasm.

There is an attempt by interested parties to enlarge the portrait of Bharathi the National Bard, not entirely because they love that portrait but because, they think that that portrait's immensity will conceal from the public eye, the other portrait, the portrait of Bharathi, the people's poet.

Bharathi's poems are no mere hornets. The people's poet was not afraid to lay bare the absurdities of ancient systems and thoughts, and in almost infuriated tone, he asks those who champion the cause of conservatism in very strong words, "Fools! Do you argue, that things ancient ought, on that account, to be true and noble! Fallacies and Falsehoods there were from time immemorial, and dare you argue that because these are ancient these should prevail.?"

"In ancient times, do you think that there was not the ignorant, and the shallow minded! And why after all should you embrace so fondly a carcass-dead thoughts. Live in the present and shape the future, do not be casting lingering looks to the distant past for the past has passed away, never again to return," so says Bharathi and therein we meet. He gave a moral code for the masses, not unrelated to life, as some of the ancient codes were. He boldly differed from the ancient codes and placed before the people,

a new vision altogether. He refused to allow the thought of Maya philosophy to have a hold on the people. He ridiculed that theory strongly and infuriated the Ashramites, but he was not afraid of the consequences. "A people immersed in such a thought," Bharathi said, "will become inactive, unprogressive and such a people will become worthless".

Hunger and poverty and ignorance, he will not tolerate, and he rises his powerful voice against the tyranny of the rich, and threatens the whole world with due consequence even if a single individual is made to starve. He wants the people to lead a full life, develop their faculties, improve their commerce, industrialise their land and enjoy all the benefits of the new era. His religion is not to be priest craft and slogan shouting; his religion is service, to humanity and brotherhood in the broadest sense.

The task that lies before the people's poet, is a mighty one. It is his task to make the people realise new truth, take a new path, and get a new process of valuation altogether. It is his task to release the people from the clutches of the Astrologer, and place before them the Astronomer. His is the task to drive out the Alchemist from the people's mind so that the chemist can come in. His is the task to push aside the priest so that the teacher can get a place. The people's poet has the mighty task of driving out the influence of the miracle monger so that the Medical man can find a place in the order of things. Superstition is to be fought out so that science can flourish. In short, the people's poet has the task of a revolutionary and more difficult than that of the revolutionary for the people are apt to mistake the tyrant for the saviour and the saviour for the tyrant. He fought with courage and though the battle is not over yet, and though he is no more alive he has given an armoury of thought enough for the successful termination of the fight, and the best and lasting tribute that one can pay to this people's poet, is to continue the fight, the fight for freedom of the people, in its fullest and noblest sense. And there are men for the job and it will be finished.

(Radio talk of Perarignar Anna in 1948.

Courtesy: Anna Publishing House.)

TRUTH

*Ever will I trust in thee, O Truth,
In the temple of my heart shalt thou ever shine.
Keep thou my vision, true star of our stormiest nights,
Mother of Liberty, maker of strength,
Bride of the four-faced Lord who made these worlds.
O thou, white River of Bliss,
Soul of Being and its only light,
Hold thou my tongue,
Ever will I trust in thee, O Truth ;
Not all the fiends of the triple worlds shall prevent me.
In the temple of my heart shalt thou shine for ever.*

BHARATI'S CONCEPTION OF INDIA.

In Bharati's dream India's two projects were nearest to his heart : eradication of untouchability and emancipation of women. The caste system was decried by him time and again. He himself refused to observe many of the obscurantist practices enjoined upon the Brahmin caste, and took to inter-dining with all castes, something of a revolutionary move in the early decades of this century. While he wore no sacred thread, he performed the sacred-thread investiture for an untouchable boy in Pondicherry. A telling simile in the poem 'Drum' drives home this point :

A white cat has been living in our house,
When it kitted a litter each a different shade !
One was an ashy kitten, another was wholly black ;
A third was snaky-sheened, the fourth was milky-white

A pack of different colours, equal otherwise ;
Was one hue superior, and lowly another ?
Beat the drum announcing people's equality ;
Beat the drum denouncing caste-creed divisions !

From an article on Bharati by K. R. Srinivasa
Iyengar published in Hindu on 12-9-1976.

VINOBA'S BHARATHIAR

Acharya Vinoba in an interview said that he first read a book containing the essays of Bharathiar, (Vinoba always referred to the Poet only in this form) while he was in the Vellore Jail. He has recollected Bharati in the following words :—

" In an essay on Education, Bharathiar speaks about man. Science is discovering many new kinds of living organisms, he says, germs that cause cholera, germs that cause plague, etc. But let us realise, says Bharathiar, the greatest of all living organisms is man himself. He flourishes over and above all other organisms. He is the greatest of all. This thought that man is the supreme organism, I got from Bharathiar. "

" Second ' Bharathiar felt a sense of kinship with the whole universe, not only human beings and animals.

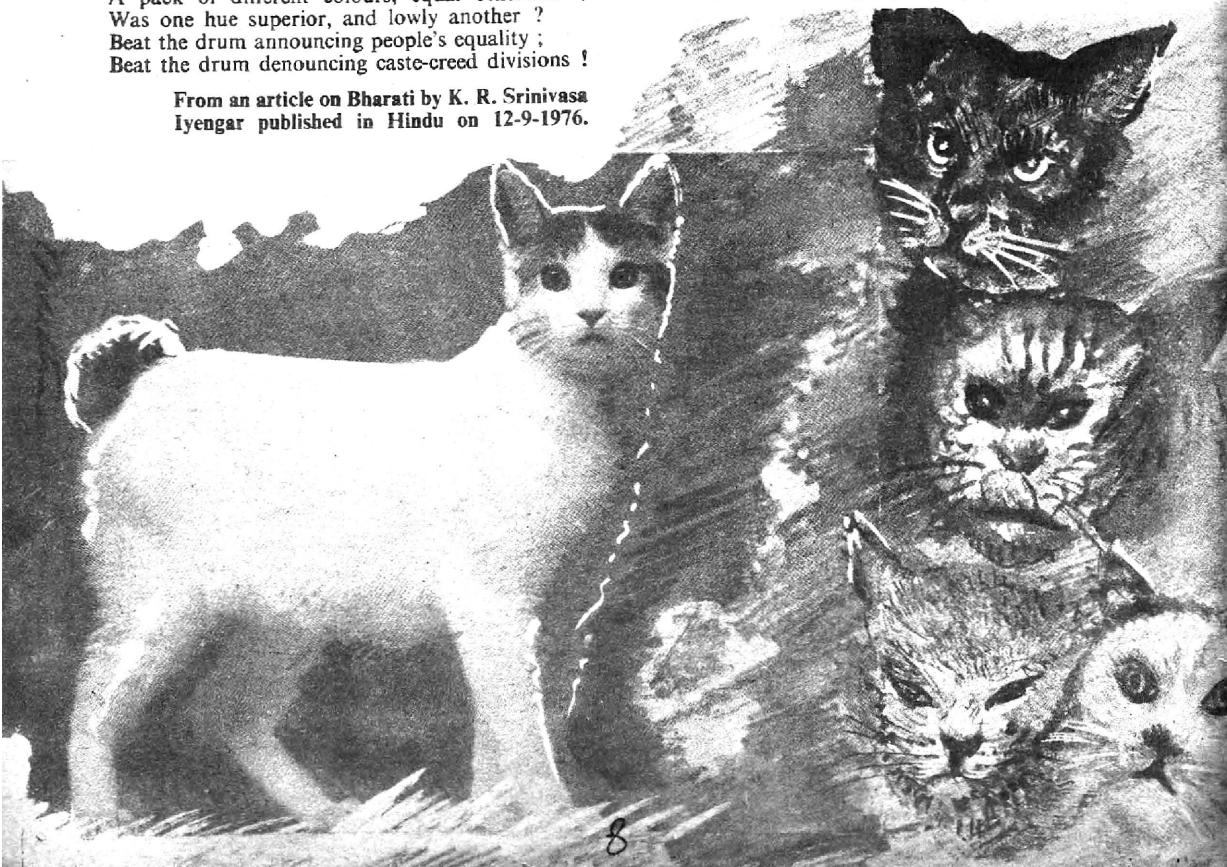
" The crow and the sparrow are our tribe "

Continued Vinobaji, not only living beings, inanimate objects also.

" The sea and the hills are our crowd.

The universal feeling I got from Bharathiar. "

" Third ' Bharathiar was a nationalist no doubt. But his nationalism was rooted in our tradition of Ahimsa. He emphasised Bharathiar's poem " Love Thine Enemy " as in the best traditions of the country's philosophy.



"Let me write the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws," said a wise man. For, the songs of today lay down the laws of tomorrow and poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the land. The poet blazes the trail, which the politicians follow, plodding along. In India's struggle for independence, the banner of freedom has been held aloft by a gallant galaxy of poet-patriots, two of whom stand foremost, Tagore and Bharati.

It was Shelly who said that poets learn in suffering what they teach in song. The patriot in Bharati writhed in agony, under the oppressive yoke of foreign rule and the poet in him, burst out in song, that was at once a call and a challenge: His words were power and his songs were fire his music moved the people to mutiny and roused them to revolt.

His song "as a heart cannot bear" (தெஞ்சு பொறுக்குதில்லையே) is a scathing indictment of the slavish life the people had reconciled themselves to. "Obsessed with fear, and laden with sorrows, they had fallen prey to a thousand superstitions. They shuddered at the very sight of a sepoy and skulked away when someone carrying a pistol passed by. In docile servility and cowardly sycophancy, they meekly got up to pay dutiful homage to anyone who dressed with flamboyance and walked with a swagger. "The heart cannot bear," the poet lamented, "to see these great people torn by strife and disunity, petty differences and squemish disputes setting even the son against the father and sowing the seeds of a feud, that was to cast its shadow for generations to come.

TOOK CUDGELS AGAINST FALSE VALUES

His poem on the pretentious patriots and presumptuous heroes, rings with denunciation of deceit and revels in the exposure of hypocrisy. The dumb driven masses who had sold themselves to slavery, the false crowd that indulged in facile talk and heroic fibs to cover and camouflage its cowardice, the crowd that talked when it should have toiled, that feared where it should have fought and sighed where it should have struggled, the crowd that grovelled in the dust and revelled in its own impotence, that was the crowd that

Bharati singed with his sarcasm and scorched with his scorn. He called upon the people to shed fear and fight falsehood. "Even were the skies to fall on your head, have no fear" was the message of courage, this crusader against injustice put in his song. Even as he struggled to destroy the false values that had corroded society and corrupted man's mind he sought to build up new values, to forge and fashion new bonds of sympathy, understanding and love. As Longfellow said, he was a poet with hate of hate, scorn of scorn and love of love.

It is when we drink deep at this fountain of love, that we feel that out of clay, we have been made into men, and from men we have risen as Gods. It is this gospel of love that binds the highest with the humblest, the lowest with the loftiest and creates a comradeship that is strengthened by common endeavour and unity of purpose. It is in the raptures of this love that Bharati sings of the oneness of all, that all are one kin and all one kind, all the people of this august land, and all of the same worth, all of the same value, all the monarchs of the mighty land. A society that will rise above its calls, that will refuse to demean itself into divisions of caste, that will respect the tiller and the toiler and will no longer burn incense to the idle rich, a society where virtue shall be strength and earnest endeavour seek to promote the abiding good—this is the new order of which Bharati dreamt, for which he worked and prayed.

Respect the Past, But Don't Discard Progress

The India of his dreams would have its roots in the past, in the rich culture and noble traditions that had sustained the country for thousands of years. "This was the land where our forefathers lived happy, purposeful life and thought a thousand thoughts, fertile in their imagination, rich in their idealism and faithful in their realism. Shy and bashful maidens have revelled in the cheering coolness of the rivers of this land, and the

benign moon beamed with joy at their virgin delights. These damsels had ripened into woman hood to fulfill themselves as mothers and with the sweet words, they spoke, fed their babies with the wisdom of our land. This was the land studded with temples that rose high, offering unto the Gods the humble gratitude of men for the life of fulness and fulfilment that they lived there".

He had set our Five-Year Plans to Music

But Bharati was no poet of the past, he was indeed a poet of the future and heralded an era where, enriched with our experiences, we should march forward towards fresh advances in every sphere of life. Love of ancient culture and the yearning for modern progress met and mingled in Bharati's melody. "There was no use", he counselled, "in secretly regaling ourselves with colourful tales of the prosperous past.

மறைவாக நமக்குள்ளே பழங்கதைகள் சொல்லத்திலோர் மகிழ்மையிலை.

We should catch up with the most progressive advances in arts and sciences, in thought and literature. Our past shall equip us, not envelop us; it shall inspire us, but not imprison us.

If Bharati was an idealist dreamer, he was also a practical planner. He was not like the nightingale that sat in the darkness and sang to cheer its own solitude with sweet songs. His songs were not mere invitations to romance and rhapsody. They were also the blue prints for progress. Let us walk amidst the silver snows clad mountains, while our ships sail all the western seas. Let us bridge the gaping gulfs and harness the turbulent waters of Bengal to nourish our crops. We shall delve deep into the land and coax the hidden treasures of the earth to bring us prosperity. We shall dive deep in the Southern seas and fish for pearls as bright as wisdom. Let us exchange the tasty wheat grown on the banks of the Ganges for the tender betel leaves of the banks of the Cauveri.



The POET PATRIOT

We will reward the melodies of the Marathas with the soft, shining ivories of Kerala. We will pay tribute to the glory of the Rajput heroes, with Mysore Gold, we will have wealth from cotton and silk, and make earth heave with the fulsome weight of the fruits of our labour. We will span the seas and scan the skies; we will watch the stars and probe the Mars. We will cherish the truth and nourish the arts and sing in ecstasy of Bharath, the land of our birth". In Bharati's poetry, we can find Independent India's Five Year Plans, set to music.

NOT THE NARROW LOVE OF TAMIL

This patriot who spanned our wide country with the poet's mettle and measure, who had his feet play with the waters of the seas that met at Kanyakumari, and held his head high amidst the snow-clad Himalayas, swelled with abounding pride



and abiding love for the language that lured him to poetry—Tamil. Bharati is an illustrious example of a nationalist who did not love his country less, but loved Tamil more. "The mention of Tamil Nadu fills our ears with sweet honey."

செந்தமிழ் நாடென்னும்
போதினிலே இன்பத்
தேன் வந்து பாயுது காதினிலே.

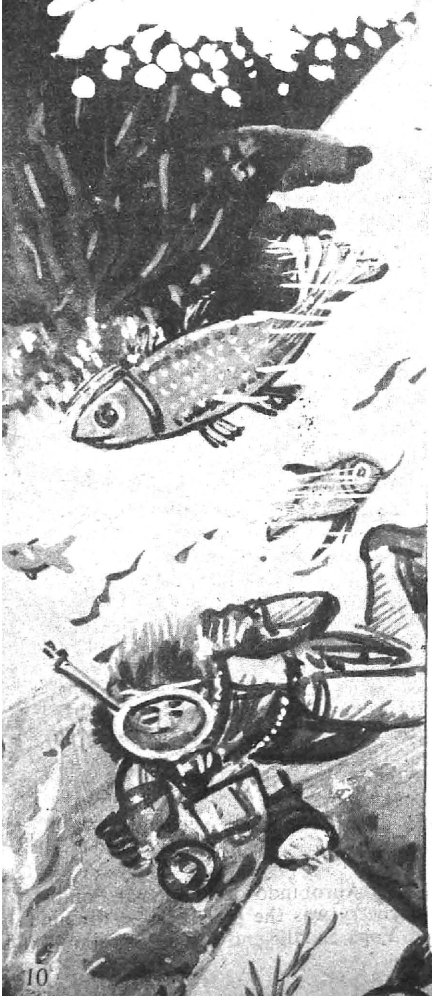
The very name of our forefathers breathes into us, a new power. Tamil Nadu, rich in valour and full with the Vedas, where labour and learning unite at the altar of love—this was the land that produced Valluvar and presented him to the world; this language that sang of living truths in lilting music: this the people who matched the mountains with their mighty valour, who roamed the seas and planted little Tamil Nadus in lands far-away, at the back of the beyond". Bharati was a true Tamil and therefore, a great Indian.

Bharati is a poet of love—a love that does not confine or choke itself within narrow limits, a love that flows more and becomes fuller. His was a passion pure and powerful, strong

and serene, soothing and soulful, that uplifted the lover and the loved and carried them forward to greater heights of devoted, dedicated affection, that embraced humanity and reached out to divinity. "The crow and the pigeon are my kin," claims the poet, His love of freedom and spirit of equality, were born out of this oneness, of this deep identity, his infinite capacity to see one in all, and all in one. The lowliest being was to him as important as the most favoured or fortunate. It was not mere poetic flourish, revolutionary bravado or anarchist frenzy when he declared, "should even one man go without food, we will pull down the whole world."

தனி யொருவனுக்குண விலை
யெனில்
ஐகத்தினை அழித்திடு வோம்.

In Bharati, then, we have the poet, the philosopher and the passionate lover, all rolled in one. He loved his language, his nation, no less than he loved God and humanity. But, to love, he must be free: to cooperate, he must be equal: to create, he must be fearless; to be divine, he must be human.



The songs of Mahakavi Bharathi sung under the inspiration of Vira Chidambaram Pillai at Tirunelveli promoted National awakening. The songs sung after 1908 at Pondicherry effected universal self-awakening. The ten years of political exile in the French territory (1908-1918), enlarged his views and visions and transformed him under the inspiration of Sri Aurobindo Yogi, into a universal poet of intuition and introspection. His tuneful songs gained in cosmic vision of the divine splendour. The rising grace of the sun, the tossing dance of the moon-lit waves, the zephyr-kiss of evening blossoms, the soothing shade of groves and orchards, transported the poet's soaring inspiration to Parnassian heights of ecstasy. Even the hurdles and hardships of the lonely poet prompted his muse to spiritual exaltations :

" No worry about life !
Brothers, accept my creed of choice-
less awareness.

The means of living, Nature grants.
Yours is to love and live in joy."

The poet cultivated the cosmic Vision to see all in the self and the self in all. His soul identified itself with the Cosmic Soul.

" The crows and sparrows are our
clan

The seas and hills are our kin

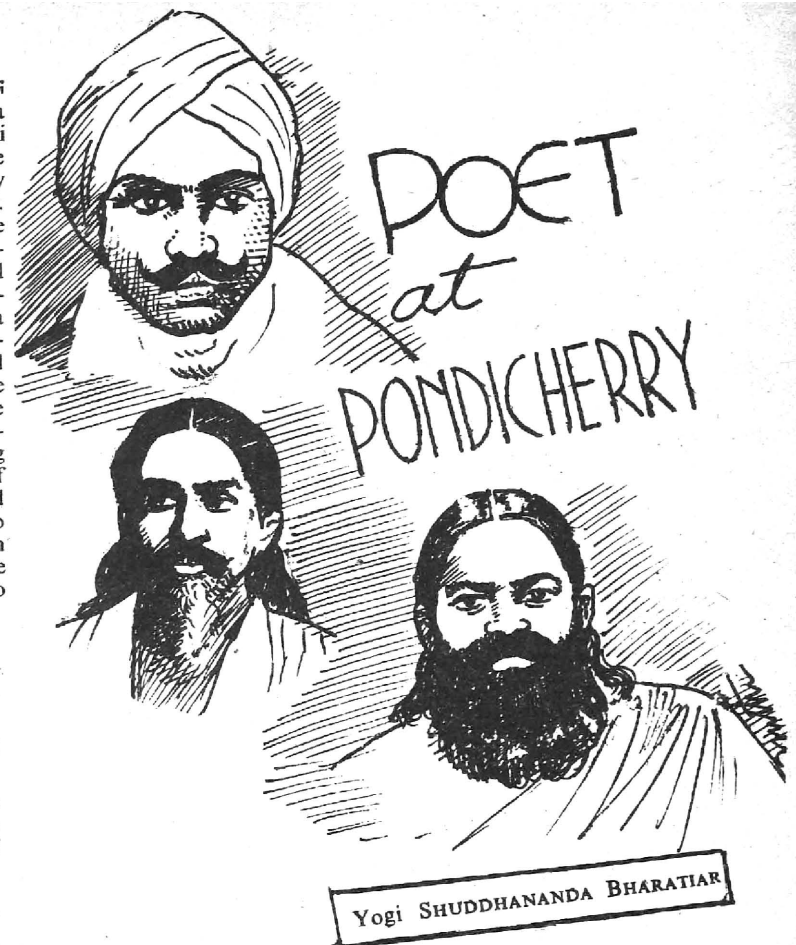
We behold none but ourselves
Wherever we turn our eyes

This cosmic vision brings us
delight
Beat Ye drums of victory
We've felled Demon FEAR.

We've split apart serpent Untruth
We drink the ambrosia of self-bliss

Death that stalks in dark
ignorance
Runs trembling before us
Blow bugles and beat drums of
victory!

Songs jingled behind him as he trod through the groves and lonely lawns, mutts and temples of Pondicherry. The crown of his poetic genius was attained in three immortal creations (1) *The Vow of Panchali* (2) *Kannan Pattu*, (3) *Kuyil Pattu*. We have heard and enjoyed these master pieces from his gifted voice. All the three implicates the end of tyrants and impostors and the dawn of India's freedom. Panchali's vow



ended the tyrant's rule, restoring Dharma Rajyam. The Kannan Pattu so much appreciated by Sri Aurobindo, is full of elegant grace and suble humour. The splendour of his soul burst out into verses of beauty and harmony, inspiring subtle patriotic verve. While subjects are itching for war, Kannan revels in dance, music and drama. But when the time is opportune, King Kannan wields his disc quickly felling cruel tyrants and restoring righteous rule. Then the Nation thrives in glory.

Kuyil Pattu invites echoes from Keats and Shelly. In dulcet tunes, it depicts the vague hypocrisy of politicians implied in the complications of love between the Kuyil, Kurangan (monkey) and maadan (bull). This love idyll keeps us spell bound.

The coming of Mahathma Gandhi to Pondicherry transformed the militant politician V. V. S. Iyer into an earnest votary of truth or Ahimsa. Bharathi adored Gandhiji as the saviour of humanity and hailed

his non-cooperation policy as the unique panacea for the freedom of India. In 1917 the tyranny of the Tzar was put down by Lenin who raised the red communist flag of labour bearing sickle and hammer as a symbol of the Republic of toilers in fields and factories.

Bharathi's Swan song Bharatha Samudhayam is a National Upanishad. It is a charter of freedom and equality to mankind.

In one word freedom—that is the soul of Bharathi's inspiring songs.

Freedom he sang—freedom from bonds
Of caste and creed ! Let us join hands
With joys of love and liberty
In this land of golden plenty.
No more fear ; No more poverty
All are one ; All men and women
Enjoy here the joys of heaven

Sri Aurobindo declared that Pondicherry was the place chosen for his Yoga Siddhi and its influence shall



be world-wide. Bharati was His votary and I too. Sri Aurobindo landed on the Pondy Port (4-4-10) with a vision and mission. Then came the Hero V.V.S. Ayyar. The Poet, Yogin and the Hero (PYH) made Pondicherry a Pilgrim Centre. Sri Aurobindo heard from us the history of sages like Swami Ramalingam and Tayumanavar and cultivated great spiritual regard for the Tamil nation. Bharati and friends opened a study class for Vedas and Indian Classics. He translated the Vedic hymns into English and Tamil. His English translations of the hymns of Andal and Nammalvar were published in the ARYA edited by Sri Aurobindo. V.V.S. AYYAR conducted Bharata Shakti pooja during which Bharati sang his Shakti Songs and devotees danced. :

We take refuge at Their feet, O Kali,
Kali

Grant us these urgent boons,
universal Mother :

Let our lives be free from worries.
Grant us dynamic energy and
courage

Give us wealth and health, light and
learning.

Give us dawn-like peace and sun-
like smiles.

Let our body be strong and sword-
proof.

Bring victory to our endeavours.
Strike at the root of fear and
cowardice

Make us Thy victorious heroes

Vira Chidambaram Pillai once visited him at Pondicherry. Bharati feasted him and delighted him with a significant song :

Our sacrifice is crowned with victory
We have attained freedom, blissful
freedom

To none are we slaves.

Blow conches of Victory beat drums
and dance
We declare to mankind all are equal
souls.

Glory to tillers and toilers ; down
idlers.
Salutations to farmers and factory
with labourers.

Mr. Pillai blessed his spiritual verve
as he sang with the Harijan Kanaka
We surrender to Thee O Muthu
Mari our National Deity
Grant us a pure mind and strong
muscles.

Hail Bharathi, Our dear mother land
Hail Bharathi, thy rhythms of hope
tend

Self-visions splendid dawns
Where angels play on earthly lawns.

* * *



The LOVER POET

Dr. Justice S. MAHARAJAN

The two primordial forces that have been shaping human history are hunger and sex. The principal force that built the mightiest empire in history was the Britisher's hunger for food. The Empire so built up down the centuries was kicked off by Edward VIII because of his love for a widow.

Hunger cannot be sublimated ; it can only be gratified by supply of food ; but sex can be sublimated by changing the direction in which sex acts ; it can be transformed into sacrifice or devotion or even Gnana.

Realising this truth Subramania Bharathi said in his autobiography :—

Love gives joy to mankind ;
the woes of mankind disappear
through love.

Human love produces poetry, music,
sculpture and the other arts.
Therefore, oh Man, make love,

It is the paramount pleasure of this earth,
By love you can remain immortal,
Rid yourselves of sorrow and thereby
make death itself a lie.

This principle is practised by the French people ; wherever you go in Paris, you can see a curious placard, which says: "France Welcomes Lovers." Love liberates man from an egocentric universe and makes him a devotee of someone or something beyond himself.

Subramania Bharathi, who lived in Pondicherry for years, had an insight into French Culture, into the French passion for liberty and into the audacities of French Poetry called *vers libre*. He also knew that

these great qualities sprang out of the French love for love. So, he sings :—

Like the two eye-lids that guard the eyes
Let us guard the pleasures of love.

Of Heroism born out of love, he sings in 'Pengal Vazhga' (Long Live Women) as follows :—

Slap your shoulders and dance,
'Glory to the Mother';
Sing hallelujas to the love-parrots;
At the bidding of slender waisted girls,
We will attack a thousand hills :
Sing 'Glory to the Mother' and sing it to Thala

And play it on the golden flute ;
We will mount the air and assail Heavens,
if beloved girls, at a wink of their eyes, bid us do so.

In one of the parables written by Bharathi, there is a fascinating discussion between a buffalo and a bird. The buffalo asks, 'How is it that men and beasts have nothing of the joy, the liveliness and the dance that mark the lives of birds?' The bird replies :—

"We, birds, have greater love—
pleasure than beasts and men,
That is why we spend our lives happily, singing, laughing and caressing.

In Kuyilpattu, Bharathi frequently emphasises the idea that there can be no pleasure without love and there can be no life without pleasure. In fact, the recurrent lines in Kuyilpattu are :—

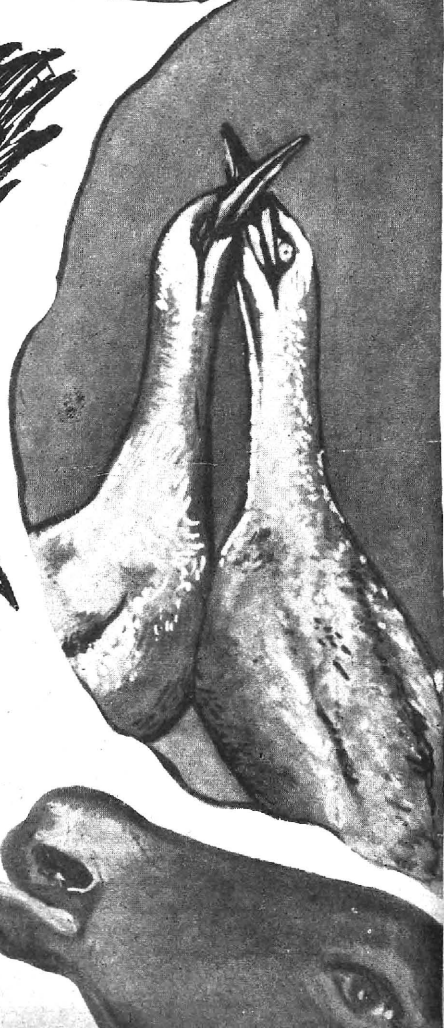
Love, Love, Love,
If there be no love,
Death, death, death.

But the love that Bharathi praises is not free love. He says :—

It is said in Europe the principle of free love is growing fast,
They declare that all women at their pleasure may live with all men,
Their words are words of cowards,
Free love means false love.

Genuine love, according to Bharathi, will put an end to all conflicts and wars.

Bharathi's grievance against the Indian Society of his times was that people instead of nourishing genuine



love were trying to destroy it. According to Bharathi, their hatred of genuine love was false and was the result of jealousy. He sings :

If they see love portrayed in drama
or poetry,
Our countrymen applaud and
praise it ;
If the same love is manifested inside
the home or at the edge of the well,
They grunt and groan against it
And try to kill it outright.

In Bharathi's philosophy, love is a precondition to the attainment of divinity. He sings :—

Look! It is the loving wife who is
Sakthi,
Through her, Godhood can be
attained.

In his autobiography, Bharathi speaks of the calf-love which struck him in his 10th year. A nine-year old girl seems to have made him mad with love. He laments :—

As I pierced the fish-like eyes of that
Gazelle like Girl
Cupid's arrows pierced my soul.

He says that the flowers his grandfather had offered in Pooja to his Deity would be picked up by him and taken by him to his beloved girl with great devotion and the beloved would see the flowers and blossom with a smile.

As this love-worship was going on, Bharathi's father got him married to another girl. In a song of great poignancy, Bharathi says :

I found myself utterly unable to
oppose my father's act,
Nor did I realize to what extent
the fire of love had burnt my heart,
My love and my duty were at
loggerheads.

All this frustration is sublimated into the theme of a short story called 'Chandrikaiyin Kathai.' There, Bharathi creates the character of Deputy Collector Gopala Iyengar and makes him fall in love with a servant maid belonging to the Shepherd caste. Gopal Iyengar is made to speak as follows :—

Cupid stands enthroned in my heart
and teaches me a new lesson :—



There is nothing great about learning
nothing great about training,
nothing great about character,

It is Love that is sweet in itself ; the
rest is husk.
The only thing of substance is
Love.

Veeresalingam Panthulu, who was listening to Gopal Iyengar, retorted by saying :— 'Oh! Your Love and your Potatoes !'

Gopal Iyengar replied : —
"Love is a thing of the celestial world
The love of this earth may change but
not the nature of love ;
What Savitri and Sathyavan, Laila
and Majnu and Romeo and Juliet
had
Is the thing I call love.

It is an indestructible and eternal
principle,
Even if the Himalayas were to float in
the seas,
Love cannot be falsified.
That is the kind of love I have for
this servant maid.

At this stage, Bharathi, the author of the short story intervenes with his own words :—

Nobody can do anything to oppose
love,

It is like a forest fire ;
It will either have to burn itself out
Or by an act of God be extinguished
By a heavy downpour of rain.

Men cannot put it out by pouring
water thereon.

Bharathi transforms the frustration of love also into the intensities of Bhakthi.

He becomes the beloved of
Krishna and sends his maid Thangam to her lover Kannan. Intense moods of challenge and frustration alternate in a wonderful poem of Bharathi. The beloved says :—

" Oh, my dear Thangam,

go and tell him I will broadcast to
the entire town,
All that he told me, after taking me
to a lonely spot at the riverside
long long ago.

Tell him, too, all the tricks he plays
with his shepherd maid and
all his wiles

Will not pass muster with the women
of the heroic Marava caste.

As the beloved is speaking in such defiant words, frustration intervenes and changes her entire mood, and she sings :

Once you are born a woman on this
earth
You have to undergo great torture,
my beloved,
As he comes playing a tune on his
bamboo flute,
My foolish heart gets infatuated
with it

And can never forget it.
All that time my heart thinks of that
wicked sinner
And gets intoxicated.
If you get me his final reply today,
then there is God to look after me.

The originals of these songs, which have been inadequately translated by the author of this article, are examples of some of the most exquisite lyrics in Tamil poetry and will make Bharathi live as long as Tamil lives.

It is right that Subramania Bharati is universally regarded as the Poet of the New Age. He ushered in a new era in poesy both by way of content and expression ; and it is not surprising that all the poets who came after him show the imprint of the great pioneer. Bharati sang about burning problems of the day, the chiefest among which was the resurgent nationalism of an enslaved people. He also sang of social evils and of the emancipation of women. He discovered a new diction and fashioned new metres; he minted new metaphors ; he invented new modes in order to give expression to these new ideas. Very rightly he is regarded as the Singer of the New Epoch.

However the present writer would like to stress a different, even opposed, view-point on Bharati, partly because it is true to experience and partly also because a fresh view-point, not sufficiently talked about, needs to be given added emphasis. The view-point the present writer would like to stress is that Bharati may well be regarded as perhaps the last of the great classical poets. This is not to say that there is no novelty in his poetry; no poet can wear the mantle of a poet unless he has something fresh to say and Bharati's poetry is bristling with an aggressive novelty. However it is proposed to show during the course of this article how much of classicism one can find in his most ambitious work the "Panchali Sapatham".

The choice of the story for versification would strike the reader as a significant indication of the classic turn of the poet's personality. The plot of Panchali Sapatham is taken from the Maha Bharatha, one of the great epics of India. Maha Bharatha has been treated in considerable detail in verse by Villiputurar, a poet of no mean eminence, several centuries earlier. Parts of the Maha Bharatha story have been verified by other classical poets. Stories of Lord Krishna's life have been the subject matter of a considerable number of works in Tamil. It is not uncommon of course for great poets to borrow a classical theme for versification or dramatisation ; many of Shakespeare's plays are based upon Greek epics or the history of England and Kamban chose the Ramayana as the theme for his monumental work.



It is in excellent literary tradition that Bharati took up this classical theme as the subject matter of his most ambitious work. Great poets are innovators, not copyists ; like Shakespeare, like Kamban, Bharati did borrow a classical theme from a hoary source, but he lighted up a banal, over-worked idea with the lustre of his own creative genius.

Some critics would prefer to read a very modern inner significance in the Panchali Sapatham ; they feel that Draupathi represents Bharata Matha and the insults she suffers at the hands of Dussasana represent the indignities suffered by the personality of the Nation at the hands of the imperial power. The present writer does not feel there is much warrant for such an interpretation of the poem. It is

perhaps the well known nationalist fervour of Bharati that has prompted these critics to read such a significance in the poem. The present writer finds little in Bharati's epic that can be construed as of modern political significance. For one thing Duryodhana can by no stretch of imagination be compared to a foreign imperialistic power ; the latter every where is motivated by economic gains while Duryodhana's besetting weakness was the greenest kind of envy. Nor can we discover anything in the history of the country to correspond to the Pandavas' inexcusable indulgence in gambling, with the country and even the queen as the stakes.

The motivating urge behind the poem being a moral proposition that envy is pure evil that it warps the mind of the most cultivated man



gives a clear classic flavour to the poem. The plot of the poem is drawn from an ancient source; the characters are all of a classic mould, they have become legends in this country. These alone would put the stamp of a classic on the work. But one finds every where in the poem classic touches not discernible in his nationalistic songs, for instance, take the descriptions with which the poem is replete; the long passages in which Bharati describes the city of Hastinapura, the new building in which the gambling was to take place and the onset of evening are of a clearly classical mould. The last is, incidentally, a passage of a haunting, ethereal beauty where Bharati begins as a portrait-painter and ends up as an authentic mystic who peers into the secret heart of things; in the opinion of the present writer, it is one of the best things that Bharati ever wrote.

Apart from the long description there are protracted conversations, wordy quarrels, and acrimonious debates which again mark off the poem sharply from modern efforts. The poet and the readers in olden times had all the leisure to compose and savour long passages in which ideas may be repeated, if only to convey a fresh metaphor. As examples one may cite the long and contentious dialogue between the father and the son and the debate by proxy between a lecherous, power-drunk Duryodhana and an indignant Panchali.

And classic fashion, there is every where a tendency to moralise. Issues are viewed always in the light of rectitude and propriety in the Pandava camp and by the elders in the Kaurava camp, not excluding the blind king Dhritrashtra, who is portrayed by Bharati as a good person with ethical leanings. There is a criticism by western scholars that there is too much sermonising in Indian works, that Indians are compulsive moralists forever preaching homilies. This must certainly be admitted as the truth and as fair criticism; for whole works of philosophy like the Gita and the Sanat sujateeya are found inserted in the body of the great epic and two out of the eighteen parvas constitute moral teaching from Bhishma to Yudhishtira. And Panchali Sapatham of Bharati is cast in this epic mould; by way of comparison, I can cite the Kuyil Pattu, his other long poem. Search as one might it is not possible to find homilies in it; there is no moral teaching, there are no disquisitions indeed, there seems to be no central motif for the poem at all.

In the use of metres, too, we find that Bharati has treated this

poem differently from his other works. Most of his nationalistic and even religious compositions are songs meant to be sung in contradistinction to vrittis; he has used vrittis in composing the Panchali Sapatham. The vrittis are of a varied pattern selected to express varying moods like Duryodhana's anger and the sorrow of his father. The diction employed, it will be noted, is throughout dignified and occasionally recondite. It is very different from (because it is higher than) that employed in his "modern" poetry. This is in keeping with the exalted nature of the subject matter and the sentiments manifested and this high diction is one more potent factor reinforcing the classic unmodern stature of the poem.

This is not to say that the poem has no modern touches. No poet, as has already been stated, can gain entry into the Hall of Fame unless he has something new to say even about banal, well-worn ideas. In the opening passage of the poem where the poet describes Hastinapura, the reader is struck by the very different manner in which it is done—different from that found in other classical poems. It is the custom of poets to paint the country and the capital city in the most idealistic colours: in them one can find only ideal conduct, ideal relationships. There is no crime, there is no evil to be found. Even Kamban's Ayodhya and the kingdom of Kosala are portrayed that way—as an ultima Thule of moral rectitude. But not Bharati. In his Hastinapura there are good and bad people, living together, men of true penance and austerity and cheats and hypocrites who lived on the gullibility of the people. Having shown a flash of realism here the poet proceeds to introduce classical touches by describing the valour of the city's fighters and the fabulous wealth of its bazaars, in the hyperbolic language familiar to the student of old Indian poetry.

Having sung hundreds of songs that had an urgent burning message for his harassed countrymen, Bharati decided to produce a poem in the grand manner after Ilango and Kamban and perhaps Villi. He selected a significant episode from a great epic and using exalted diction and classic metres he wove a tapestry of raw emotions and fierce clash of wills, of super men and larger-than-life situations to produce a truly classic work of art.

Poetry in Tamil, as in any other language, is no accident of history or an apport materialised in a seance. It is an inheritance and is the fruit of several centuries of human striving for perfection in artistic expression. The Tamil poem is grounded on the traditions of a great language that has grown over 2,000 years and even more. So when we say that there is something new or revolutionary in Bharathi's poetry, what is exactly meant is a freshness in approach and a new technique in expression. To be precise Bharathi sang his lyrics out of a contemporaneous urge and compulsion forced from within, in reaction to the environmental actuality.

In the realm of Art, any ideological change has always been preceded by a powerful technological change. The influence of the western civilization set new standards in social life and brought about vital changes in our disposition, conduct and comprehension ! As a sequel there arose a new awakening of the Indian people for liberty and freedom from foreign rule. Bharathi was exposed to all these revolutionary pulls and their manifestations. He saw various forces working for an effective demystification of privileges and social irrationality. The preachings of eminent reformers and various missions for a classless society and their determined effort to usher in a new era of equality and fraternity, accelerated Bharathi's speed. Gifted with a rare power of expression and an admirable capacity for the poetic protest, Bharathi came out with all his progressive might and sang in the voice of a rebel, with all the zeal and vigour of a social rebel. Still, in the midst of all these revolutionary out-pourings, what Bharathi had imbibed through his vast learning, through his environment, and through his inheritance, got quietly into his sub-conscious especially the abundant heritage that he took in from the great and unlimited traditional oral culture of the Tamil people. This had an equal impact upon him, equal and apposite to the revolutionary ideas that he drank with avarice. These two forces intermingled in his very being and out of their synthesis was born Bharathi's Kannan.

It is an interesting fact that in Tamil as in most other Indian



BHARATI'S KANNAN

Mi. Pa. SOMASUNDARAM
Director, Traditional Tamil Arts
Government of Tamil nadu



languages, lyric poetry has been closely integrated with religion and some of our greatest lyrics are associated with music and dance fostered in our temples, mainly related to worship. So it is that the concepts and thematic ideas of religion have permeated Bharathi's art in its finest form and his Kannan bears ample testimony to this harmonious blend.

Bharathi was greatly influenced by the age old Indian philosophical principle of the essential unity of the individual spirit with the Universal Spirit which is without beginning or end but is an infinite variety of modes and grace of manifestation. Kannan or the concept of Krishna is one such and Bharathi was drawn towards this in an intense affinity because the theme of Kannan by its very nature has limitless potentialities for poetic vision and lyrical expression. He visualized Kannan as a friend, as a mother, as a father, as a servant, as a king, as a disciple, as a preceptor, as a child and of course as the lady love and the lover and also as the saviour and his family God! The tradition of the Kannan cult lent itself to all these modes and moulds in his poetry and the charming episodes centering round this human God bewitched him so much that in some of these songs Bharathi's poetry reaches the lyrical zenith both in diction and form.

The traditional poetic privileges involved in extolling Kannan as the supreme lover or the beloved were fully availed of by Bharathi and in his poetic process the inherent charm of the theme and the linguistic rituals often lure him to transcend the accepted norms of the orthodox grammarian and his yard stick. The great Tamil scholar and literary critic V. V. S. Iyer, while commenting upon Bharathi's Kannan observes 'In the field of the Bhakthi cult, playing the role of the sweetheart is like walking on the razor's edge and even in Bhagavatham, there are places where no less a person than the great Sukabriham has transgressed. Therefore, let us not find fault with Bharathi for not holding the balance. What we should enjoy in Kannan, is the lyric-cry and Bharathi's poetic excellence.'

This is how V. V. S. Iyer precludes the earlier edition of Bharathi's Kannan. It is not my intention here to analyse in detail each one of these songs on Kannan. It would be an attempt to bail the sea with a spoon. Generally speaking, Bharathi's lyrics on Kannan are outstanding examples of the lyric form in Tamil where the initial rhyme vibrates the artistic sense of return and its companion in the artifice, namely, the rhythm, transmits all its lilt and the entire song

goes straight into the heart like an arrow skilfully shot.

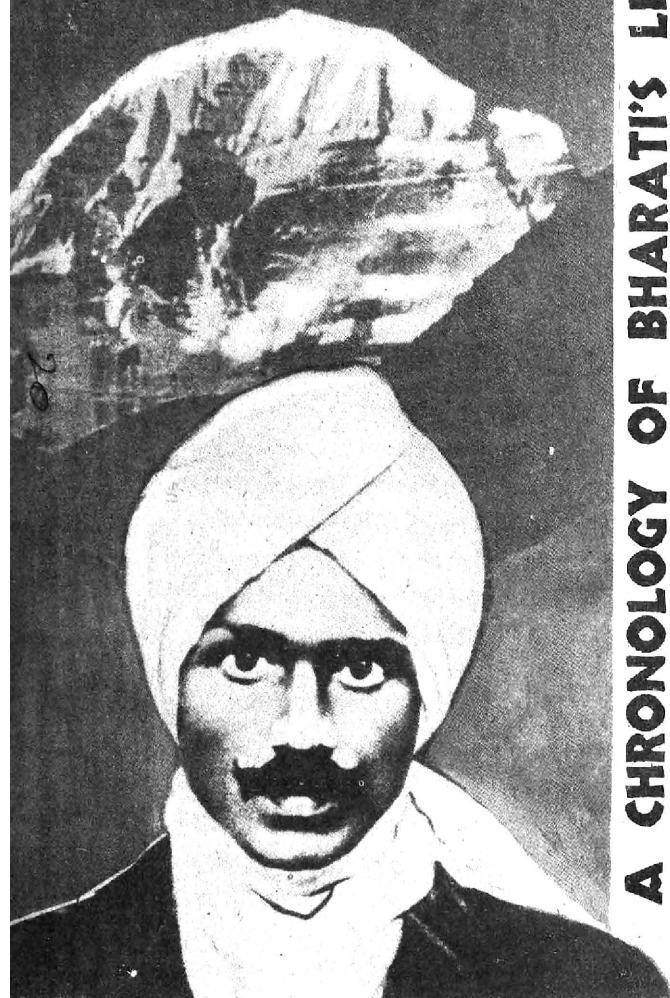
It is true that Bharathi has followed Manikavachakar, Aandal, Sukabrihammam, Ramalingar and others in his treatment of celestial love. But it must be said to his credit that in so doing, he has forged in the fires of his creativity many new and charming variations upon the old rhythmic forms with all the glow and shine of his poetic genius.

Consequently, these songs on Kannan are far different in kind and timbre from other lyrics on the same theme. They are replete with the liberties and competence that are born out of Bharathi's absorption in his Divine love and his awakening into musical raptures over it. That is why in the midst of an enticing mysticism, there runs an under-current of deep and intense personal love which is all embracing and comprehensive as the omnipotent subject itself!

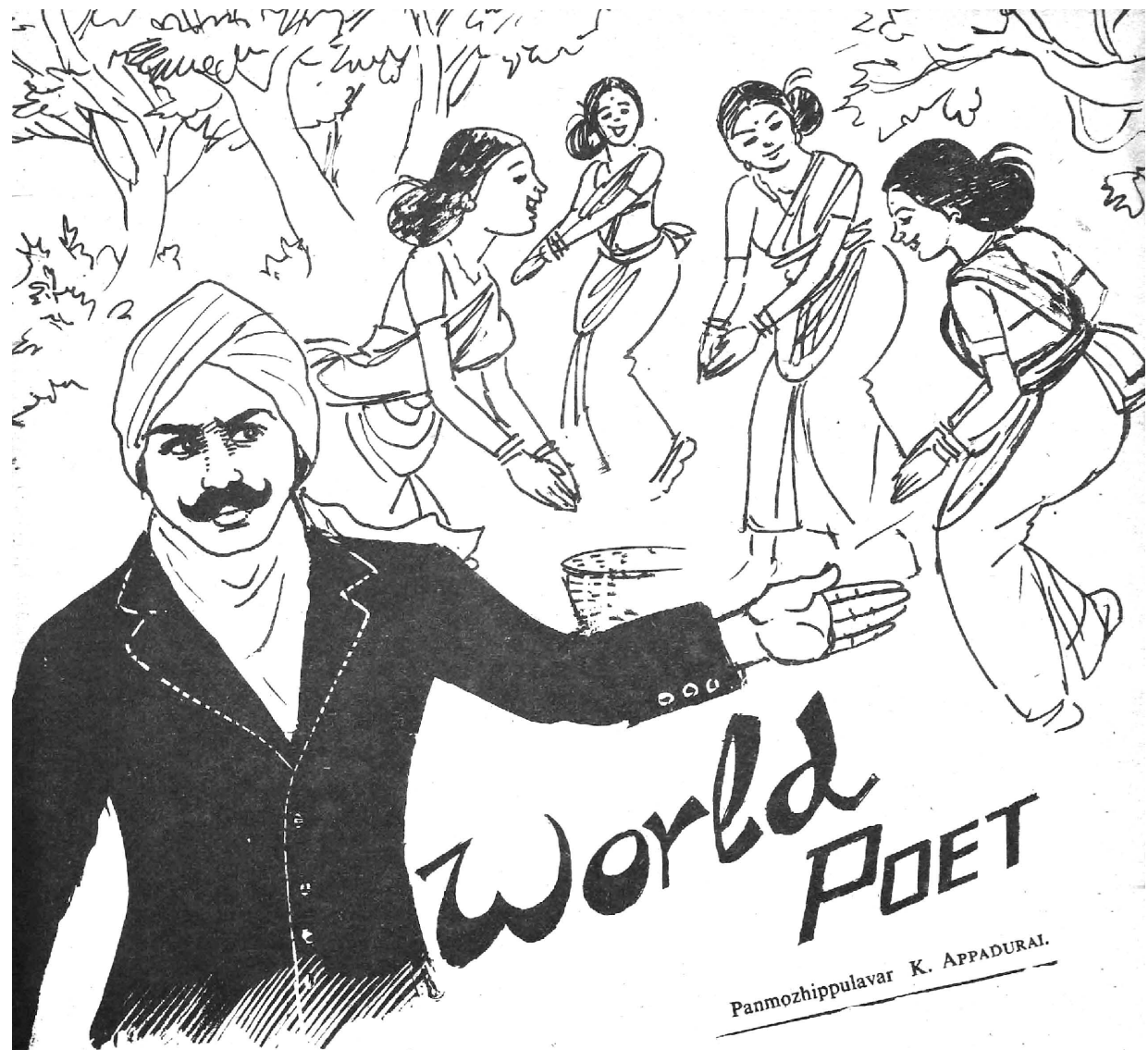
Kannan being a well known theme and the language being simple direct and musical, these songs have been reigning over our music concerts and dance recitals gloriously during the last three decades and more. They have had a tremendous influence on the elite and the commoner alike. Many of these lyrics have been the listener's favourites over the Radio and the Television. They have been rendered by reputed musicians on commercial discs. Our children have learned them in their music classes. There is hardly a school function without Bharathi's Kannan either in the congregation or in the dances by children. In the academic field also, Tamil scholars have done elaborate research in their thematic content as well as their structural variety. Our films have used them lavishly and many have proved real hits!

What is the secret of this universal popularity of Kannan songs? Even though the subject is old and even conservative, the poet has breathed freshness into it through his revolutionary approach and lyrical inventiveness. Not only that. Being a people's poet, Bharathi has done all his poetic innovations in a language spoken by his common brethren, whose hearts he articulates in these songs. That is why, like all great poetry, Bharathi's Kannan appeals to all hearts!

A CHRONOLOGY OF BHARATI'S LIFE



- 1882 December, 11 C. Subramaniam was born, in Ettayapuram.
- 1887 Death of Mother.
- 1887—97 Schooling at Tirunelveli.
- 1893 Title "Bharati " (Saraswati) conferred.
- 1897 Marriage with Chellammal.
- 1898 Death of Father (Chinnasami Iyer).
- 1898—1901 Schooling at Benares. Passed Entrance Examination of Allahabad University.
- 1901—1904 Court Poet to Raja of Ettayapuram.
- 1904(3 months) Tamil Pandit in Setupati High School in Madurai.
- 1904—1907 Sub-Editor, "Swadesamitran" from 1906 also edits fiery nationalist Tamil weekly "India", Tamil Monthly "Chakravarthini" and English monthly "Bala Bharata."
- 1908 First Book—" National Songs"—published first prose work " Gnana Ratham " written and serialised in "India."
- 1908 Aug. Voluntary exile in Pondicherry. "India " too shifted to Pondicherry.
- 1909 " Vijaya " Tamil daily thunders from Pondicherry, Bharati intensifies activities ; Starts "Karma Yogi" Tamil monthly ; plans multi-lingual cartoon monthly. Government bans "India's" entry into British territory.
- 1910 " India " ceases publication. Other Bharati papers also come to grief.
- 1911—1918 Bharati concentrates on books. 1912 very busy year as poet. "Panchali Sabatham " Part I published, 1912. Aurobindo, V.V.S. Aiyar, Kulla Swami and other Yogis and patriots provide happy company.
- 1918—1920 War ends, Bharati returns from exile, arrested on way to Cuddalore, and after 21 days released. Spending some time in Kadayam, wife's place in Tirunelveli. Rejoins " Swadesamitran ", Madras.
- 1921 June Hit by Triplicane temple elephant, narrowly escapes death. Recovers.
- 1921 September, 11 At 39, after brief illness, the great soul leaves the mortal coil.
(night 1-30 a.m.)
(i.e. September 12, 1921)



Panmozhippulavar K. APPADURAI.

The place of Bharati as a great Poet, even a great World Poet, of the 20th Century, may be properly adjudged as his greatness in three successive levels or spheres of Life. The first level is, ofcourse, the basic one, for it marks his dynamic influence on the literary life and traditions of the Tamils themselves. He is basically the full-blown Poet of the Tamil Renaissance, bringing up the twenty-five centuries or more of their age-long literary life and Culture and traditions in proper relation with the wider sphere of their activities in the life and thoughts of India and the world abroad. This is what lifts him to the next level of greatness, that which makes him one of the foremost, if not the foremost among the Poets of India—a Poet of Freedom as well as of the Freedom Fight and also a

Poet Visionary of Renascent India. It is again this second level that raises him to the third, for he lived and thought and sang in an age that was not only the Age of India's Freedom Fight—it was in essence pre-eminently the age of the awakening and the upsurge of the suppressed and the oppressed Nations and peoples all over the world towards a New Freedom as equal partners in a world Brotherhood and Sisterhood of Nations.

Though a Poet of all Times in the first two levels, so far as the third level of the World arena is concerned he was literally the poet Representative of his age, the age of the Renaissance of the East-of Asia and Africa and the other distant corners of the civilised world.

Bharati was an admirer of the

other great Poet Visionary of India, Rabindranath Tagore and like him, dived deep into the spiritual lore of India's hoary past, singing and dancing in the joys of spiritual ecstasy as well as deep meditation. Again like the other great Fighter for the Freedom of the peoples of the world, Whittier and in consonance with his own great Disciple and Successor in Tamilnadu, Bharatidasan, he raged incessantly against social iniquities, superstitions and the outworn customs and institutions of a Medi-æval age of Slavery in the near past that ran counter to the Ideals of the Moderns as well as those of the Real Past; the Ancients in India and the East.

Bharati was a Poet of the Youth and the New Womanhood and the Renascent New World of the Future. Like the great poets of the French

Revolution, Shelley, Byron and Keats, he was a Votary of the eternal ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and combined the qualities of all those three poets in himself. We see him often floating in the clouds of phantasy like Shelley, but unlike Shelley and more like Tagore, he had his firm grip on the

soil of the life—experiences of the people of Tamilnadu and India and also on the pristine glory of the Ideals of the India of Asoka, the India of the Upanishads as well as those of the Tamilnadu of the Sangam Age and the Age of the great World Sage Poet, the illustrious Tiruvalluvar. He was at times as mad as Keats in his chase of the Naked Beauties of Nature in a sheer Materialistic spirit and also lost himself in pensive sadness over the insufficiencies and failings of his age and society and environments. But these never held him long, for like Byron he was a Fighter in the Field of Life as well as in the Battle-fields of Freedom and like Shelley, he too was a visionary of the distant Future. Hence instead of losing himself in pessimism over the surrounding ills of Life, he rose in heroic and prophetic fury against them and also prophetically invited his generation to join in his battle for the coming victory and the forthcoming Glory of a Golden Age.

Bharati was as impatient and furious over iniquities at home in Tamilnadu or India as over those in the distant regions in the wide world. He welcomed the Dawn of the New Age of Freedom abroad in other climes with the same gusto and fervour as he did, even in anticipation, in the case of Tamilnadu and India.

In his long poem, the Vow of Mazzini, we see him ardently joining the crowd of Italians and taking the vow along with the Italian patriots arrayed under the leadership of Mazzini in the cause of a New United Italy. We see him rising in ire against the atrocities of imperial aggressors and at the same time admiring the heroic stand of the petty state of Belgium against the enormous Juggernaut of the Destroying Oppressor. Above all, Bharati appears before us as the Fearless Prophet and the Harbinger of a New Glory (Scarcely seen by any other poet of the world at the time, probably even by any in the land of the Glory itself) in his ever-Immortal Song, the New Russia.

This one poem alone, if nothing else remained, would be more than enough for the world of the Future to hail Bharati as a World Poet. For no lines of poetry in any language of the World, Past, Present or Future, can rise to the almost Superhuman heights of Fury as well as Ecstasy as the lines of this

Poem of All Time cursing all Tsardoms and describing the resounding Fall of the Forest Trees of Tsardom caused by the Storms and Lightnings and Thunder flying from the Fiery eyes of the Goddess of Revolution, the Mighty Mahakali. The poem also welcomes in the same breath, the coming of a New Millennium, of a New Paradise on Earth in the form of the New Soviet Russia.

Though Bharati was writing in Tamil, and living and singing in the land of Ind, any Italian or Belgian or Russian who may have a smattering of Tamil Just enough to hear the Sounds and feel the rhythmic rise and fall of the above songs of international import, would indeed be proud of this great Poet of All Nations and would even regret that this poet was not born an Italian in Italy or a Belgian in Belgium or a Russian in Soviet Russia.

There is an English proverb, 'Nobody is a prophet at home'. In Tamil itself we echo this in the saying 'the Jasmine flower in our own courtyard conveys no fragrance to us'. But this is not indeed true of the poet Bharati. He was as much a prophet at home in India or in Tamilnadu as he is in regard to the Nations of the world. For as aforesaid, his very greatness as world poet is one deeply rooted in his greatness as a poet of India and as a Poet of Tamilnadu. If his world poetry is a trumpet-call from the top of the Mount of Poesy, in the arena of India it is a bugle—song that thrills the heart of every Indian while in his own soil of the Tamil region, it is nothing less than the ringing tones of a society—singer or a singer of an army on the march that brings literature from the shelves into the active life or the rattle of battle in the open field.

Mahatma Gandhi has described Kabir and Tulsi (what is almost equally true of Kamban in Tamil and Ezhuthachen in Malayalam) as Saints and Poets that have brought religion and poetry from temples or courts into the forum or the street or the hearth. This is far more true of Bharati than of any other poet before or since that one knows of. For the Tamil language of his poetry is as near to the speaking idiom of the Tamils as a poetic or a literary style can transform itself into. This is true of his poetry also. After the stilted artificial and



monotonously repeated figures of speech long in vogue in the Medieval ages of Tamil as well as other Indian languages, one feels the free air of the atmosphere of contemporary real speech and real life in the new poetry of Bharati. It is indeed a coming back of Age of the Poesy of the Upanishads or of the Sangam. Further, he sings rather than writes his poems; his songs themselves run and cry and dance, rather than read.

This is indeed in line with the age-old Tamil tradition of the Three Tamils, the Reading Idiom or Iyal, the Singing and Hearing Idiom or Isai and the Dancing, Acting and Seeing Idiom or Natakam. It should not be forgotten here in this context that the great poet of Bengal, Tagore and the great successor Bharatidasan of Tamil are in happy company with Bharati in keeping to this three-fold aspect of the Art of Human Language.

If it is remarkable that poet Bharati was prophetic in his hailing of the Glory of the Russian Revolution before the normal Russian citizen himself could have been aware of it, it is far more so with regard to his unerring Judgement of the full greatness and glory of Mahatma Gandhi when that glory had just begun to blossom. For Poet Bharati lived fully only in the days of Dadabhai Navroji, Gokhale V. O. Chidambaram and Tilak; dying in September 21, 1921, he could have been conversant only with the opening fringes of the great Gandhian era. Yet his poems on Gandhi, especially that entitled 'Hail, Our Great Leader' uncannily depict the Mahatma as the Leader of All Time and as the Father of India that he was to become.

Our Independence came only on 15th August, 1947, a full quarter of a century or more after the demise of the poet—prophet Bharati who could have only dreamt about it but who yet sang about it with his heart dancing with joy and with an ardour and fervour that the very contemporary witnesses of the event could scarcely have felt or emulated.

For he sang it as Pallu, literally the song of the Agricultural Labourer

"Dance we our Pallu, Dance we our song

In abandoned Jubilee
Since we have obtained our Freedom
Full.....

Freedom is now the talk every where,
The equality of all is now quite assured !'

In the song Freedom, again he literally dances and sings as a revelling labourer would do :

" Here is Freedom to the Pariah
(Outcaste)
As well as to the Accursed Puliah.
(Untouchable)
Also to the Fishermen and the Hillmen
And to the Warrior "

He sings of our Indian Republic even as the best and the most far—seeing among us would like to see it or view it as an achievement in the near future, for he sees it as a thoroughly socialist, if not communist one, where Living Democracy would reign supreme

" Hallelujah to the Society of the Land of Bharata !
To the Society that shall be quite novel to the World

We shall enact a Law that
If a single person would have to go without food
The whole world should be destroyed

All shall be as one Family
All shall be of the same Rank
All shall be the Rulers of this Land."

His prophetic utterances with regard to Tamil are equally remarkable. The glories of Tamil History or those of Tamil Literature as we know, but as could not have been known in his days, were seen and described by him due to his prophetic or poetic vision.

The history of the South, especially, Tamilnadu had not been written properly in the days of Bharati—its later researches must have been slumbering altogether in quite a scattered manner in the archives of the scholar in his days. Yet in his poem on the Sentamilnadu, he gives us a full list of the Overseas exploits of the Tamil powers of the bygone ages.

Oh ! She is the Mother land of those
That marched on Pushpaka, Simhala and Chavaka,
And proudly planted in those lands abroad
Their emblems of the Tiger and the Fish ;

Oh ! She is the Tamil land that sent
Their fame aloft over China, Misra, the Yavana

Spreading their Arts and Crafts and Trade
And their Divine Wisdom besides.

Oh ! the Tamil land, the prowess
Of whose potentates subdued the proud heads

Of the Himalaya Mounts and broke
The insurgent Kalinga's dark rage.

In my Tamil historical work the Battle fields of South India, I made the great poet's poems the preface to my recounting of these historical phenomena. One of the foremost of the votaries of Bharati in Tamilnadu expressed his surprise on the poet's prophetic insight into the darker regions of historical research.

The greatness of the glorious poetry of Ilango was properly gauged only after his great work along with its old commentaries were fully made available to the Tamil people through the labours of savants like Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer. Yet we find Bharati the poet mark him out as one of Tamilnadu's foremost Jewels along with the illustrious Tiruvalluvar and the immortal Kamban.

"We have not, search far as we may
Found any poets equal to Valluvan or Kamban
Or Ilango any where in all the earth.

The world has known devotees sing the praise of God in Churches or Mosques or Temples. India has been seeing Devotees singing the praise of Gods and Godly Men along the streets in a march (Bhajana). Possibly Tamilnadu alone, in the form of Bharati's songs, has known of the songs of Freedom, songs of a Happy Life to come, songs on the Glories of the Tamil Literature and songs on the precious sweetness of the Tamil tongue itself sung by young and old in streets and hearths from the days of the Freedom Fight onwards.

Would it indeed be too much, one would like to ask, if the Lovers of Bharati would beseech the powers that be to arrange for the proper presentation of this World Poet as well as India's Greatest National Poet and the National Poet of Tamilnadu in proper form to India and to the World Abroad, even as he wished in thought and expressed in his songs that the Tamils may do in the case of the Celestial Tiruvalluvar, the Peerless Ilango and the Immortal Kamban.

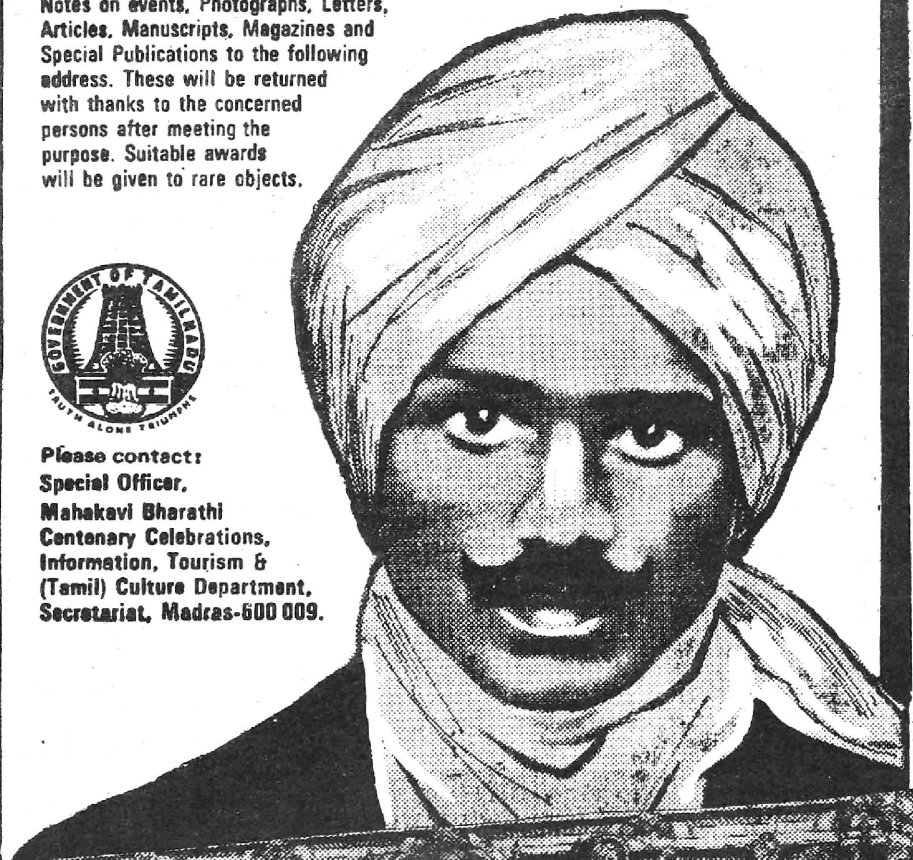
CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE GREAT POET BHARATHI

An Announcement

The Government of Tamilnadu have decided to celebrate in a grand manner the Centenary of the Great Poet Bharathi from 11th December 1981 to 11th December 1982. In connection with the celebrations the Government are planning to release the works of Bharathi and bring out a Commemoration Volume. In addition, an Exhibition, an Art Gallery and Memorials are also being planned. People associated with Bharathi are requested to help by sending substantiated Historical Notes on events, Photographs, Letters, Articles, Manuscripts, Magazines and Special Publications to the following address. These will be returned with thanks to the concerned persons after meeting the purpose. Suitable awards will be given to rare objects.



Please contact:
Special Officer,
Mahakavi Bharathi
Centenary Celebrations,
Information, Tourism &
(Tamil) Culture Department,
Secretariat, Madras-600 009.





POET OF PATRIOTISM

Dr. PREMA NANDAKUMAR

Bharati first came to prominence as a patriotic poet. He was himself endowed with a rich, almost flamboyant voice, and could electrify masses of people when delivering his songs on India's multifaceted heritage, the lacerations and humiliations of political subjection, and the promise of an early bright future. People sometimes wonder whether these patriotic poems are not rather anachronistic in independent India. Actually Bharathi's patriotic poems have escaped irrelevance and oblivion's curse alike because he always eschewed narrow sentimentalism, jingoism, parochialism or tear-jerking self pity. He went to the roots, he sang of the liberating consciousness, and he gave inspired utterance to the infinite freedom of the spirit. Shackled as we are in many intertwining slaveries in spite of our political freedom, we can now see how his ideas and concerns have agonising relevance even today.

The cardinal inspiration for his patriotic writing came from Bankim Chandra's 'Bande Mataram', which had become a holy chant for nationalists and revolutionaries after the notorious 'Partition of Berigal'. To quote Sri Aurobindo :

"The mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion



of patriotism. The Mother had revealed Herself. Once that vision has come to a people, there can be no rest, no peace, no further slumber till the temple has been made ready, the image installed, and the sacrifice offered."

Subramania Bharati was to twang the victorious bow of nationalism for the resurgence of the Tamils to the mantric tune of the same words 'Vande Mataram'

Be victory ours
Or defeat and death,
We stand united
And raise the chant
Vande Mataram !

Bharati brought to the knowledge of the Tamil People the context in which the song had figured in Bankim's novel Ananda Math, and he also wrote a poem describing the greatness of Bankim's immortal song :

When the creeper of Love
That twined around Mother Arya
Was drying up,
Came Vande Mataram
As freshening shower.
Vande Mataram is mantra
Of sky high Mother Bharat.
When impenetrable darkness
Enveloped my land
Stifling its strength and knowledge
Came Vande Mataram
Rising as the Sun
On the Bay of Bengal.
Hail, the mantra
Of Aryan queen Bharat :
Vande Mataram !

As an ardent nationalist and admirer of the political extremists, Bharati roused his rapt audiences by pouring withering scorn on Britishers and Moderates both, and dramatising climactic moments in the independence struggle. The conversation between Colonel Wynch and V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, who was forced to work in an oil mill, is justly famous. If the oppressor holds on to his diabolical right to torture his victims into submission, the struggling patriot is equally determined to cast away the bonds of slavery, come what may.

There are poems that angrily denounce the tamasik myopia of smug Indians blithely wallowing in slavery as piglets in a gutter, and Bharati would rid the Motherland of these feckless living ghosts :

You weak shouldered mannikin,
away, away,

You with the shrunken heart, away
You of the listless face, away, away,
You with lack lustre eyes away, away,

Bharati eagerly welcomes the ideal patriot as 'the Sun that rises over a darkened land.' But the darkness is temporary. By far a larger number of Bharati's patriotic poems describe or evoke only India's past of Light, that will be followed by a future as bright as Everlasting Day. This firm conviction makes his poems an undying paean of India's abiding greatness. He was do-

ubtless fond of his native Tamil Nadu ; he loved his mother tongue with all his heart, for it was verily like 'joyous wine' to him ; and he admired the great Tamil poets, thinkers and nation builders. But he saw beyond Tamil Nadu too, visible diversity were the unbreakable hoops of Love binding them all the Mother ; and poem after poem to the Mother, Bharati.

celebrated this concept, this living reality, of unified India splendidly alive :

The mighty Himavant is ours.. there's no equal anywhere on earth.

The generous Ganga is ours which other river can match her grace ?

The sacred Upanishads are ours what scriptures else to name with them ?

This sunny golden land is ours she's peerless, let's praise her !

Bharati was aware of the many races within India and celebrated their integral contribution to India's unbreakable hoops of Love binding them all the Mother ; and poem after poem to the Mother, Bharati.



BHARATI SAW GOD MANIFEST IN ALL HIS FRIENDS

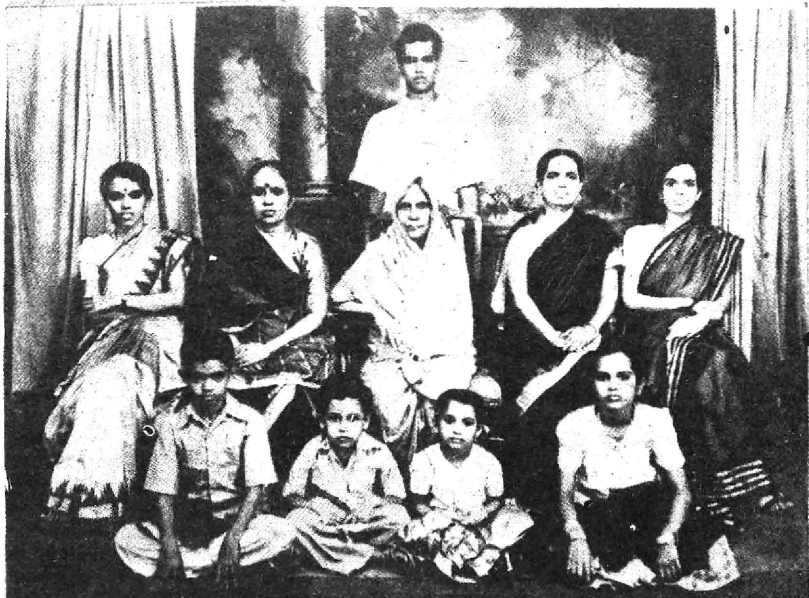
DR. S. VIJAYA BHARATI

The realisation of the self came to Bharati through his many relationships with friends and relatives. Kannan songs, the most mature of Bharati's philosophical poems, resulted from his experiences with his many relatives. He considered them as different forms of Lord Krishna, through whom He preaches realisation. To regard God in terms of the relationships is different from beholding God in all the relationships around a person. Bharati experienced Lord Krishna's Presence as the inner truth in every relationship. On that basis, the Kannan songs describe the varied experiences, God leads man gradually and by degrees to maturity of mind; He lives with man in various relationships in order to purify him and to lead him to wisdom.

Kuvalai Krishnamachariar was one such relationship. Bharati visualises the Lord in him, manifested as the master and disciple, and patron as well as the servant, as friend, philosopher and guide, and sings of the experience. Kuvalai himself memorised Bharati's songs early in the mornings, singing in his hoarse voice and with much disharmony. He used to irritate Bharati most of the time with his inquisitive nature and seemingly witless but very wise questions. Such was Bharati's generosity that he sings of Kuvalai as the Master who came to enlighten him in the guise of a disciple. The disciple, Bharati's Kannan, pretended to be less wise, to be desirous of progressing on listening to Bharati's language and teaching, and appeared to think his poems were glorious—only to augment the pride of the Poet's heart. It was with a view to final destruction of pride that the disciple praised Bharati and his learning and swelled his ego beyond limits. He praised Bharati on the one hand, and disobeyed his commands on the other, and did exactly the opposite of whatever Bharati ordered. Finally, Bharati realises that it is not his business to make or change or destroy other's qualities; when he accepted his



Kuvalai Kannan



defeat in trying to change his disciple's qualities, he perceived the ultimate truth of karma yoga, that he should perform all tasks without passion and desire, and this would be possible only when ego is destroyed. Paradoxically, the disciple preaches karma yoga to his guru. In conclusion about Bharati-Kuvalai relationship, it may be noted that Kuvalai Kannan saved Bharati's life when the poet was caught under the feet of an angry elephant in Parthasarathy temple, Madras.



Subramania Bharati was born on the 11th December, 1882, in Ettayapuram in Tirunelveli District, a place well-known for the great arts of poetry and music. Tamil scholars and musicians sought patronage in the court of Ettayapuram.

Subramaniam's father, Chinna-swamy Iyer was an erudite Tamil scholar. He was in the zamin service. He also had knowledge of mathematics and engineering. Therefore, the father wanted to see his son as an English-educated Officer or engineer. Subramaniam was Iyer's first son and was a motherless child from infancy. He spent long hours with his maternal grandfather lavishing in the glorious Tamil poetic heritage. Before he was ten, Subramaniam could already compose Tamil poetry. He was conferred the title "Bharathi" during a court function when he made an impressive exhibition of his poetic gifts.

Within a year of his marriage Subramaniam's father passed away leaving his family in straightened circumstances. Bharati left for Varanasi and stayed with his aunt for two years.

MAHAKAVI SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

He learnt Sanskrit, Hindi and English and duly passed with credit the Entrance Examination of the Allahabad University. Varanasi was a place which suited Bharati's poetic personality and he enjoyed the stay there very much. The river Ganges occupied Bharati's poetic dreams, and he spent almost all his leisure out of school in gazing at her beauty. The stay also brought about a great change in his personality. He wore a turban, a long coat and sported a moustache. He walked with his head held high and acquired a bold step in his walk.



Bharati returned to Ettayapuram in 1901 to serve in the Court. But the free-spirited Bharati could not continue his service in the Court. He worked as a Tamil Pundit in the Sethupahti High School for a brief period. A chance introduction brought him to the notice of G. Subramania Iyer who was then the editor of the leading Tamil daily, Swadesamitran, and Bharati joined the paper as Sub-Editor in 1904. This was the kind of work that Bharati had always wanted to do; free, intellectual, suited to his character, a channel for his writing talent, and a service for the nation, at this critical time in the nation's history.

During this period, Bharati lived in Thambu Chetty Street in Madras and had an office in Armenian Street. He had many good friends at this time; to name a few, S. Duraiswamy Iyer, V. Chakkarai Chettiar, Paul, Jayaram Naidu, and C.S. Raghunatha Rao. All his friends met regularly in the High Court Beach and thrashed out various problems then facing the country.

He kept close to the political





Bharathi's brother C. Viswanathan



Parali S. Nellaiappar.



A. Rangaswamy Iyengar.

scene and was soon an ardent supporter of the Nationalists or Extremists in the Congress fold. The ill-conceived partition of Bengal in 1905, provoked and embittered the entire nation. Bharati attended the All India Congress Session at Varanasi, and on his way back he visited Calcutta and met Sister Nivedita. That noble spiritual daughter of Swami Vivekananda was to effect an immediate transmutation in Bharati who now pledged himself to three major tasks; the political liberation of India, the eradication of casteism and the emancipation of Indian womanhood. Throughout his life be remembered Sister Nivedita as his spiritual Guru. He also dedicated his first two volumes of patriotic poetry Swadesa Gitangal (1908) and Janma Bhoomi (1909) to Sister Nivedita.

Bharati's impetuous contributions could not be published in the rather moderate paper, Swadesa Mitran.

A new Tamil Weekly, India, was launched in 1906 by the patriotic Mandayam brothers, Tirumalachariar and Srinivasachariar. Bharathi became the editor of India which pro-

vided a free outlet for his flaming words. This was the beginning of an era of originality, individuality, experimentation and novelty for the journalist Bharati. India Magazine was closed down in September 1908, due to governmental interference. The legal editor of India was arrested and imprisoned for five years. Aurobindo Gosh and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai were locked up in jail and Tilak was deported to far-off Mandalay. Bharati's arrest seemed imminent. Bharati listened to the advice of his friends and agreed to go away to Pondicherry. The Mandayam brothers also shifted to Pondicherry and started publishing India from there. Other short-lived magazines were launched too-Vijaya, Karma Yogi and Bala Bharata.

The British Government took punitive action and banned India from entry into India, and the paper closed down on March 12th, 1910. Not long after, the other papers also had to stop publication.

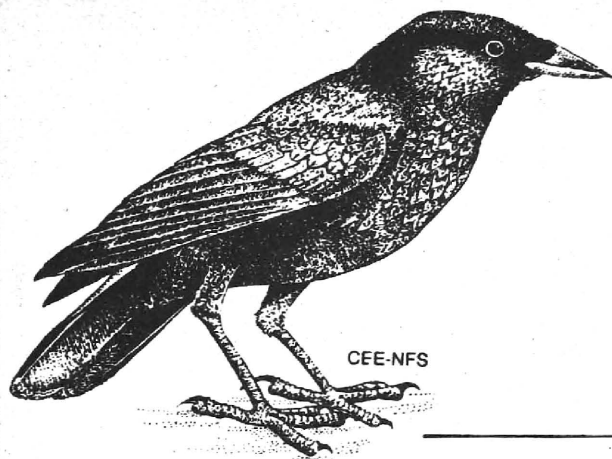
Bharati spear-headed the Swadeshi movement in Madras and in the process arranged public meetings in

Madras for leaders like Bepin Chandra Pal. While the Moderates in the Madras Congress were reluctant to receive the great Bengal leader Bharati took the lead and helped shape and crystallize the political outlook of Tamil Nadu. In the Surat Congress Session Bharati was greatly helped by the other extremist leader of Tamilnadu, V. O. Chidambaram on behalf of Tilak.

Bharati's exile in Pondicherry lasted ten years and that was a golden age in the history of Tamil literature. For it was during this period that his literary genius blossomed. He had already published a volume of poems, entitled the "National Songs".

In 1910, Aurobindo Gosh arrived in Pondicherry. Other political leaders like Subramania Siva and V.V.S. Iyer also sought refuge in Pondicherry. These revolutionaries, who were besides fine intellectuals as well, gave Bharati the needed stimulating mental and spiritual companionship.

They studied the Vedas and the Gita. They exchanged literary notes and queries. They were united in



THE COMMON INDIAN HOUSE CROW

by *L. Balasubramaniam*

Crows are known for their ingenuity and craftiness. Most children come to know of this fact when some tasty morsel gets snatched from their hands by a cunning crow. Crows figure in the immortal Sanskrit classics the Panchatantra and the Hitopadesha, where much is said in praise of their extraordinary intelligence. Crows are birds that seem to enjoy the company of man. They are found wherever his dwellings are, in towns villages and cities. The crows depend largely on him for food. It has no special food preferences and will eat almost anything. But for the scavenging habit, our cities and villages would be much dirtier, with dead animals and refuse scattered about.

Crows are usually seen in flocks or in ones and twos. The solidarity amongst the crow tribe is well known. If one discovers some food, it calls others to join it. Similarly when in difficulty, they utter a peculiar call to attract other crows.

Breeding Season

The breeding season of the crow seems to differ slightly in

different parts of India, though June/July is the most common period. With the advent of the breeding season large flocks, which feed near markets, dumping grounds etc., start breaking up.

Mating usually takes place on trees and no particular time of the day is preferred. The first step towards the construction of the nest is the selection of a suitable site. Construction then starts in right earnest. Both birds go hunting twigs and other material. The finished nest is usually a large shallow cup of sticks and twigs, occasionally metal strips and wires, and lined with soft, fibrous material.

Four or five eggs are normally laid at intervals of 24-48 hours each. The eggs are pale blue-green, speckled and streaked with brown. The nest is never left unattended. One of the birds mountsguard when the other is away and does not ordinarily leave the nest till the partner releases him or her. But the sight of a koel in the neighbourhood is too much for the crow to endure. Losing all self control it launches a sudden attack all by itself or with others.

Outwitted by Koel

In fact the appearance of a Koel at the nesting site of the crow is not a coincidence but a well planned strategy on the part of the male and female Koel

When the female Koel is ready to lay her eggs, the male flies up to the crow's nest and announces his presence in loud notes. The crow who normally incubates alone, immediately rises and rushes at the Koel. The Koel turns tail and makes a show of escaping. Being a better flier, he stays a little ahead of the crow and leads him away from the spot. The nest is meanwhile unattended. The female Koel emerges from the hiding place from which she has observed all, and lays her egg in the nest of the crow. She then flies away emitting a shrill note apparently to tell the male that the plot has worked.

The crow is the most successful of all birds, there are more crows today than ever. Man has developed a healthy respect for this intelligent bird, and it is not surprising, for the crow has that uncanny knack of surviving in the most adverse conditions. (CEE-NFS).

Be a man

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
On being lied about, don't deal in lies
Or being hated, don't give way to hating
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise.

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stood and build with worn-out tools.

If you can make a heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch—and—toss
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone;
And hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the will which says to them ' Hold on! '

If you can talk with crowds—and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men court with you, but none too much
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run
Yours is the Earth and every thing that's in it,
And which is more—You'll be a Man, My son.

—Rudyard K pling