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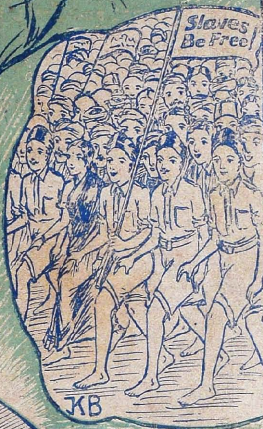
MAY 1935.

THE  
**NEW AGE**

Editor:  
H. D. RAJAH

VOL. 1  
NO. 12

SOCIALISM



Annual Number  
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# The New Age

VOL. I

MAY 1935

NO. 12

## A RECORD OF PROGRESS

With the publication of this Annual Number, *The New Age* completes the first year of its existence. The year has been full of trials for the Journal, but it can be now safely said that it has definitely come out of the woods.

It was started at a time when the country was emerging out of the struggles of 1931 and 1933, and when it was returning, as it were, to normal political life, thanks to the agitation of the right-wing in the Congress. But the victory of the right wing promises to end in a pyrrhic triumph; for along with its rise to power, the Congress Socialist Party has come into existence with a determination to turn the Congress, socialist. It is now functioning as the official opposition to the Congress majority, advocating at the same time its ideals and principles through the platform of the Congress.

Meanwhile the country has been subjected to systematic repression conducted by the minions of Impe-

rialism resulting in the declaration of progressive organisations of workers, peasants and youths illegal and in the imprisonment of the leaders of such organisations. The ban on the Congress Committees was lifted, but the ban against its allied institutions, some of which were very progressive and radical still continues.

Such were the conditions in the country when *The New Age* was born to propound its ideals and serve the nation. It has never placed its faith in one man or in one dogma. It believes that only collective action and collective intelligence can lead to the emancipation of the country. It does not wait to get inspiration for service from spiritual experimentalists or political dogmatists; neither does it wish to shine in the reflected glory of others. It has been an unsparing critic of men and matters and during the last one year of its existence it has strived to keep up its spirit of indepen-



dence and fearless expression of views. Though it has been in the vanguard of the political and social movements in the country, it has always felt its own limitations which prevent the journal from adopting a more revolutionary outlook. The press in India is under severe handicaps, and the laws governing the press make frank expression of opinion, well nigh, impossible. Therefore we do not pretend to have achieved things which are either heroic or calculated to have brought about a sudden transformation in human relationship.

But *The New Age* has been the forum for all the fearless thinkers to express their views. It has consistently stood by the down-trodden and the oppressed and it shall

continue to espouse their cause without surrender or compromise. It adds to the quota of the genuine national struggle for Independence—which means the establishment of a system of Government, to be controlled and guided by the masses of India—the workers and peasants in their own interests and for the creation of a classless society where exploitation of man by man will have ceased to exist.

Therefore we appeal to one and all to help us in our endeavour and do everything possible so that *The New Age* can continue to render active service to the country, and aspire for that millennium in which the sublimated brotherhood of humanity will not be an utopian dream, but an accomplished reality.



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Sgt. H. D. RAJAH, *Editor, "The New Age."*



## UPTON SINCLAIR:

### WRITER AND SOCIALIST.

By P. G. Sundara Rajan B. A.,

*Literary Critic of the Sunday Chronicle.*

It is the artist who causes upheavals in human thought. A contemplation of the changes that have marked the progress of world history will reveal this fact. Buddha, Jesus, Mahommed and Gandhi have caused historic transformations in the spiritual and consequently in the material life of man.

This faculty which has its rise in the heart of one man and which reorganises a whole society is revealed in the manifold phases of life. The importance of reforming the social order is felt only by the artist who holds converse with the Muses and basks in the light of the spirit. He feels the pulse of the renascent life.

In the reflowering of modern human life there are more thorns than petals. To the plucking of these thorns so that the petals may unfold with redoubled splendour many great artists are directing their energy and fancy. One of the foremost is Upton Sinclair. His heart has early felt the prick of these thorns; and he has made it his life's mission to protest against a social order which has caused him considerable mental agony and seeks to recreate and rebuild society on a basis ensuring complete happiness to every individual. His social protest has been made known to the world through his books—the medium of the literary artist:

He is not a mere pamphleteer, though he has issued some great pamphlets which have become literary

masterpieces. In the literary hierarchy of the world he will always occupy the highest pedestal among the great artists, for his purpose and motive have not in any way detracted the artistic excellence of his works. It is here that he differs from the 'pure artist'. The oft repeated phrase 'Art for art's sake' has no significance for him. He claims, and with considerable justification too, that his art is the only true art. Art, to be true, must serve some purpose; must be useful for some propaganda. This somewhat revolutionary idea is the bedrock of his art-consciousness. He has enunciated and evolved this principles in his *Mammonart* wherein he surveys the art and letters of the world and points out the definite ends to which they were directed.

What has an artist to do with propaganda? Sinclair's propaganda has to do with love, love and equality—the birthright of man which is known as Socialism in political parlance. It is the right of every man to be born, to exist and to grow. That impeding or the obstructing of this right by another man can never be justified is the cry of this artist who is immersed in his soul's agony. The process by which he realised his genius and began to lay bare his soul to the world at large may be classified into three aspects.

An American, he first took his own country for purposes of illustrating the cruelty of one group of mankind to another. He has described a phase of

the Civil War that was fought to settle the issue whether a section of mankind could be kept enslaved for ever in his great book "*Man atlast*." Parts of the book may be said to be written in blood. Thus, his soul first rebelled against the racial slavery existing in America even now atleast to a certain extent.

Next he directed his attention to the eradication of class-inequality; the emancipation of the toiling labourers who were being tortured by the capitalists. The wealth that grew out of the sweating of these wretched people, was being enjoyed by their bosses. He has painted a ghastly picture in lurid colours presenting all the detailed horror of the meat-packing industry of Chicago in his "*Jungle*." There has been nothing like this book since Harriet Beecher Stowe's heartrending story *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As a just measure of its value it has been translated into hundreds of languages all over the world.

While all this protest was going on he realised that he as an artist was up against a mercenary world which, not satisfied with ignoring art sought to soil it by commercial interests. The tragedy of a poet who has to pander to his Muse to the banal interests of tradesman just to maintain himself in the world for the propagation of his message is the theme of *The Journal of Arthur Stirling*. It is one long helpless lament of the individual fighting against circumstance.

The expression of the conquest of the soul through literature is the motive of this book.

The three books referred to above show the three distinct phases of his protest. They lay stress on the fact that the artist is always at war with the world and seeks to fashion it after his own fancy.

Sinclair can be said to be the only man who has written a masterpiece, a veritable gospel about Love the chief and the only true basis of society. It is unparalleled in the annals of literature.

*Love's Pilgrimage* shows the unrestrained growth of Sinclair's genius. He has painted an immortal picture of fadeless colours depicting Love, marriage, conjugal life and childbirth. Few books can lay claim to such literary distinction.

In politics, he is a socialist. An expert propagandist, he has propagated his principle in every one of his books. Yet his art has not suffered thereby. The force of commercial advertising and the spirit of fine art lend their combined brilliance to his works. It would be attempting the impossible if one were to take his books one by one for consideration.

He is nearing Sixty. He has given about fifty books to the world. Some of them exceed even 600 pages each. He has sold millions of copies. The whole world knows him. He could have been a Millionaire.

But he is a friend of the poor. He has spent all his money for the betterment of the worker. He wears only old clothes thus practising what he preaches. Has nothing which can be classified as private property. He distributes his books free to anybody who may like to read them and profit by them and, perchance, propagate them. He cannot bear the sorrows of man, especially those of the poor worker. His one aim is to establish equality in the world. He is watching for the arrival of the millenium.

He has two great enemies. One is the civilised and licensed robber, the capitalist. The other is drink. *Wet Parade*,\* his novel dealing with the

\* The author of this article is now engaged in writing a Tamil version of Sinclair's "*Wet Parade*" to be published soon.



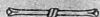
horrifying evils of drink is true of every land, much more so of ours. His chief aim is the destruction of capitalism. He is not satisfied with the praise the world has given him as a great writer. He will be content only when he has created an order which would give greater amount of happiness to humanity than ever before.

It is for this that he opposes society; and pits his energies for the demolition and the remodelling of it. He sacrifices fraud, corruption and falsehood at the altar of truth. Each of his books has shocked the world by its sensational disclosures. And the effect has been instantaneous in almost every case. What legislation there was against graft and corruption, cruelty and sweating in America was due to Sinclair's stupendous efforts and courageous outspokenness.

He evolved an 'Epic' plan to end poverty in his state of California. He demoralised opposition to an unexpected extent in his electoral fight for

governorship. Of course he 'got licked' by the vested interests who, he says stooped to any and every device to keep him out of office lest the poor people of America should happen to enjoy their elementary rights of existence. He wrote a book about what he would have done had he been elected. After his defeat, he has also written a book about how *I got licked*. Literature has reclaimed one of its great humanitarian votaries by Sinclair's defeat. He is one of those men whose art-worship is the inevitable support of all political and social propaganda. His art lends a dignity and a spiritual flavour to what would otherwise seem drab platform word-slitting.

His path is beset with many difficulties. But there is art to refresh him, social protest to support him, socialist plan of reconstruction to guide him. Following these sign-posts along the trail blazed by his illustrious predecessors, he plods towards his goal with untiring determination. His footprints have become literary behests.



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# FEDERATION AND FINANCIAL IMPERIALISM

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## BRITAIN'S HOLD ON INDIA'S PURSE

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By P. S. V. Mitra

About the most important aspects of the Indian demand for Swaraj are the financial and the military. Without freedom for the country to determine her course in either of these matters, she can not be said to have self-Government or self-respect. The proposed Federal Constitution will thus stand or fall in Indian eyes according as it satisfies the country or not in regard to her financial independence and to her ability to defend herself on sea and land and in the air. This is the touchstone of the coming constitution. And in utilising it, two considerations have carefully to be borne in mind. British misrepresentations of India's demands have to be rigorously ruled out. For instance, it would be absurd to imagine, as Britain wants the world to, that the moment India gets financial freedom, she will hit Britain directly. She will have to look round her, see what course is best suited to her interests and then adopt it. It may be that this will mean danger to British vested interests now and then. But to admit this, is quite different from saying that the sole object of a free India will be to injure Britain. Yet such is the false and unscrupulous alarm raised by the spokesmen of Britain's financial imperialism. Secondly, a lot of chaff has to be thrown out before the truth is arrived at in examining the constitution to be. In particular the high-flown language adopted as to Britain's goal in India in the course of Royal Proclamations, and other declarations

of policy has summarily to be rejected as being untrue in practice and quite misleading. The genuine test of sincerity lies in action. And it has to be carefully investigated whether behind all the verbiage about commercial reciprocity there is any progress recorded in India's interest regarding her own commercial affairs.

### *Financial and Commercial Freedom*

This article intends to examine only the amount of financial and commercial freedom promised to India. It does not concern itself with military affairs: for the matter of that, the British Government is quite clear on the point and says that no freedom in that direction can be hoped for even in the distant future. The question thus is, is financial and commercial freedom vouchsafed? Does the Government of India Bill genuinely and substantially give any freedom or does it merely throw dust into the eyes of India and the World? The conclusion of this article is that the freedom offered is only about two annas in the rupee and even that amount may not be—will not be—current and genuine coin but only counterfeit. It is not hard to see that such a conclusion is inevitable, for the British interests involved are enormous and no risk can be taken in regard to them. If need be, the entire gamut of imperialist tricks, from false promises to unscrupulous misrepresentations will be gone through in the cause of their preservation. Thus, to plunge into the subject with no

more delay, what is the meaning of commercial discrimination being arrived by means of safeguards in favour of British merchants in India or trading with her? Ostensibly, it means that Britain wants no more than a bare opportunity to trade with this country on equal terms with Indians. And this is the position as loudly held forth by Britain. But let the matter be gone into a little deeper. At the very doorstep, the question arises as to why India should accord terms of commercial equality to foreigners with her own children even when the latter are likely to suffer. The reference here is not to any terms mutually agreed upon by both the countries by means of a trade-treaty but to the imposition of commercial disabilities by virtue of political power by Britain on India. To overlook the preliminary objection however and to grant though not to admit that British merchants may be given equal opportunities with Indians to trade in India, the next question is, is it merely equality that is being asked for or statutory preference to Britishers in the matter of trade. A glance at history shows that British merchants built up their present position when Indians were too ill-organised to offer competition and with the active help of the Government of India given in the shape of guaranteeing interest on capital, non-imposition of import duties on British goods even when they were dumped to the virtual extermination of local manufactures etc. An advantageous position thus built up is now sought, in the sacred name of commercial equality to be fortified against all subsequent attacks and that is the real meaning of the commercial safeguards proposed. They do not mean equality at all but preferential treatment for Britain. The talk about a trade convention between India and Britain on the basis of reciprocity is quite meaningless. For one thing, the demand for such a convention in any particular matter has to come from Britain and

not from India. Thus India may not say, for instance, she is prepared to risk Britain's retaliatory measures but would take some steps to promote her own steel industry. Britain however may say this or something similar. The crux of this pseudo-reciprocity however lies elsewhere and it is seen clearest in the matter of shipping. India is accorded the meaningless privilege of plying her bottoms on British coastal waters in return for the same privilege accorded to British ships on Indian waters. When it is realised that India has no shipping worth the name, that her commercial shipping is being strangled at the very birth by interested British companies which have large resources and are as unscrupulous in putting down rivals as all Big Business is, the hollowness of the privilege given to India of plying her national ships round Britain is easily seen. From this it is clear that reciprocity is only another name and a convenient one for ensuring that the existing advantages enjoyed by British commerce in this country are not threatened.

#### *Economic History.*

These facts naturally lead to a momentary consideration of economic history. Britain's cry with reference to the commercial privileges she now wants to be continued in India is that she merely wants to compete on equal terms with Indians. And she points by implication that she has come to her present position of commercial eminence only by virtue of open competition and says that India also can flourish by going along the same path. But history denies this. It says that Britain has progressed only by statutorily shutting out foreign competition at the outset and even to-day the meaning of Ottawa is nothing else. To elaborate the point, the object of the old Navigation Acts was nothing else than to foster British shipping. Then came the Industrial Revolution in her borders which give a fillip to her in regard

to large scale production. Her colonies she utilised as markets and drew forth from them the raw materials needed. At this stage the economic theory that suited her was free-trade. And it was in the name of freetrade that the infamous excise duties on Indian cotton goods were imposed: Lancashire had to be appeased at any cost. In the course of time however other nations arose. Germany in particular girded up her loins for the industrial battle and France too. Matters gradually approached a climax when the great war broke out. The commercial superiority was the main objective of that catastrophe and Germany had been the main danger. The Treaty of Versailles marked the fulfilment of that desire and the pauperisation of Industrial Germany. But new dangers arose. The World Depression gave an opportunity to Japan to expand her trade. And the British now brought forth the need for Imperial economic unity to secure a privileged field for themselves for trade and industry. Freetrade was given up in the name of self-preservation and protection was resorted to. Such is the meaning of Ottawa. The Pacts were mainly intended to suit the needs of Britain and to secure to her a free field in the empire as against such efficient competitors as Japan. In other words, India and the other empire countries have had to agree to prefer Britain to Japan though to do so was to put a premium on British inefficiency as compared with Japan. No wonder then that every empire country except Britain of course is fretting to-day. This historical retrospect is confessedly a digression but its object is merely to show that Britain knows full well that she can not stand and fight in the open field even in India, that she has always had state protection for her industries against foreign competition and that her free-trade talk was indulged in only when she was strong and wanted freedom to crush the weak. When she is driven

to a corner as at present by Japan, she gives up free-trade for herself but preaches it to others like India because it just suits her. Thus reciprocity with Britain examined by itself is a hollow cry while historically speaking, it is only another word to express the need for protection to British industry and trade.

### *Commercial Safe-guards and Currency.*

Paras 342 to 360 of the J.P.C. Report deals with commercial safeguards. And equally stringent and pro-British are the provisions relating to financial safeguards at the centre particularly. In this regard, as in others, the Indian problem is two-fold. Not only should steps be taken in the matter of revenue expenditure and public debt which are calculated to benefit India but pressure has also to be resisted from Britain when India's interests are sought to be brushed aside in favour of those of Britain. This is not an imaginary danger at all as the British propagandist says and as the average Indian is likely to believe. The very vast extent of the powers vested in the Governor-General and their stringent nature are sufficient to show that there is something fishy and suspicious about them. To examine them now a little in detail, a federation was said to be impossible with financial autonomy till a Reserve Bank was constituted which would take over the management of the credit and the currency of the land. The connection however between a Reserve Bank and India's financial autonomy is not very close until it is seen, not from the viewpoint of India's interests but from those of Britain. The Government of India was managing the currency and credit of the country all along. That is to say, it was doing things as asked to by Britain in her interests. The establishment of the 2 sh ratio in 1921 and the linking of the rupee to a fallen sterling and not to gold are instances in point. But the same course would not be necessarily adopted by a financially autonomous India which on the con-



trary might choose to work in a way prejudicial now and then to Britain. The risk was too great to be taken. Therefore the need for taking away from the coming government of the land currency and credit powers was urgent. And that was effected by loudly proclaiming the need for preventing political influences from playing on currency management. Accordingly a Reserve Bank was proposed which would not be influenced by the "democratic" Government of India but would function on scientific lines. But equal care was not taken to see that British influences were not brought to bear on the Bank either. The power of appointing the Governor of the Reserve Bank was vested in the Governor-General who would indeed be super-man if he did not accept the nomination of the Bank of England working hand in hand with the Government of that country. Next, the constitution of the Reserve Bank is heavily weighted in favour of the rich as indeed the entire Federal system proposed is. Thus no shares can in practice be held which are less than five in number for in that case voting power is denied to the shareholder. And in the matter of allotment of shares, as between those who apply for less than five shares and those who apply for more than five, the latter are clearly preferred. Men with large "stakes" are in this manner supposed to be better patriots. But there is no doubt in any case they will be more amenable to British influence in the matter of financial policy in India.

#### *The Railways.*

One large slice of power is thus taken away from the hands of the future Government of India and given to badly constituted Bank which has yet to prove its independence of British financial influence. A second instance of the same tendency is seen in the case of the Railway Authority. Nearly 50% of its members are hereafter to be appointed by the Governor-General in his des-

cretion and its estimates are not subject to the vote of the Legislature. What hold the latter has on the Authority if it does not carry out the policy of the Federal Government is difficult to see. The Governor-General may insist on due performance of duty by the members but that does not mean popular control. And besides, after all the verbiage of the J.P.C. Report, the truth is that high official is more looked upon as the Agent-General of Britain in India than as a Governor-General of this country. That is the only logical conclusion to be drawn from the various safeguards in favour of Britain placed in his hands as against India. That such a person can try to impose a policy not dictated by India's interests but by those of Britain on the proposed Railway Authority directly by means of his nominees and indirectly as well goes, without saying. For this state of affairs military policy is partly the reason without doubt: transport facilities are a *sine qua non* of military efficiency. But that is not all. It has also been proposed that changes in railway rates and fares should obtain the previous sanction of the General-General before being introduced into the Legislature. Of course this means British commercial interests in India should not be endangered under any circumstances. And the Governor-General is to be the watch-dog thereof. In the light of these facts, no legitimate doubt can exist as to the main object of the Railway Authority being to virtually remove railway matters from the sphere of popular control.

#### *Financial stability.*

A word about the special responsibilities of the Governor-General in regard to the financial stability and credit of the federation and to its budgetary arrangements and borrowing powers is needed even at the end of this long article in order to give a moderately satisfactory picture of the financial aspects of federation. The J.P.C. Report flatly refused

to specify the powers in this regard vested in the Governor-General. And to advise him in the discharge of his duties, it proposed to appoint a Financial Advisor. This worthy gentleman was to have no portfolio but merely to supervise India's finances and to pull up matters if he thought they went wrong. There was the danger of his coming to a hitch with the Finance Minister to the federation but it is expected that the latter would be "reasonable" and accept on bended knees the valuable advice proffered by the financial Solomon through the august medium of the chief guard of British Commerce in India otherwise known to a myopic world as the Governor-General. A moment's consideration will show that there is not one single item of the Indian budget which can escape the grasp of the Advisor for his powers are unlimited and almost inscrutable. Does the Government of India want to change the ratio? The previous sanction through the Governor-General of this official is needed. Does the Government desire to float a dollar loan? This gentleman can interfere in the name of India's credit abroad. Or does it wish to cheapen the post-card. He can stand in the way on the ground of budgetary equilibrium. It would be absolutely impossible to keep half an item of the budget away from his influence if he wants to exert it. What the position of Indian Finance Minister will be under these circumstances need not be imagined, for there is the standing warning offered by Egypt in this matter. No doubt men

can be found to accept the post in a country which has all but lost its backbone through centuries of foreign domination. But whether they can defy the popular will for all times is highly doubtful. Britain herself will realise very soon that she can no longer deceive India by a loudly-trumpetted show of things. In one word, the new constitution is bound to create more trouble than do any good for it is not based on a fundamental honesty of purpose towards India. Its main object is to consolidate Britain's political and financial position in this country and to weaken India's defences by setting up Princes against British India, one community against another and the rich man against the poor. Financial power in particular is ostensibly transferred to India but in reality it is entirely held by Britain as heretofore. The change is in appearances only. Instead of an irresponsible Railway Member, there will come into existence an equally irresponsible Railway Authority. A Reserve Bank is started which is as amenable to British pressure as the Finance Member of to-day. And for the rest a Financial Advisor is imposed over the head of the Indian Finance Minister to be and he will be in reality the official and authorised spy of the British Government and the Bank of England over this country. How long the proposed constitution will take to break, it is difficult to say. But a good deal depends on the capacity to see facts in the face on the part of those who look for the new age.

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Greetings to all the Readers of the New Age.

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# AGRARIAN DEBT IN MALABAR

By  
**E. M. Sankaran**  
**Namboodiripad**

*(The following article is, in part, a revised reproduction of the writer's replies to the questionnaire issued by Mr. W. R. S. Sathianathan, Special Officer appointed by the Government of Madras to enquire into the Rural Indebtedness of the Presidency).*

Rich in potential, but poor in actual wealth, Malabar is a typical District of India. Numerically the strongest, its agrarian class is politically and economically the weakest. Steeped in ignorance and superstition on the one hand and poverty and inefficiency on the other, it moves in a vicious circle which, if it must ever be broken, can be broken only by a conscious drive simultaneously made against economic backwardness and cultural reaction. It is not the purpose of this article to 'plan' out such a drive but simply to analyse one aspect, so that the reader may be enabled to gauge the immensity of the problem.

No systematic attempt has been made to estimate the total indebtedness of the Malabar cultivator and to analyse its effects on the social and economic life of the District. Consequently, though one may feel the gradual process of pauperisation of the cultivating classes in the very surroundings in which one lives, it is difficult to give 'facts and figures' to prove the distress. Still, the very authorities who neglect their duty of collecting 'facts and figures' dismiss the statements of others as 'vague generalisations unsupported by facts and figures.' Hence my attempt to show, with the help of fragments of statistics, that the agriculturist of Malabar is so immersed in debt that, unless soon radical steps are taken, he is doomed for ever.

The Madras Banking Enquiry Committee estimated rural indebtedness of the Presidency following various methods. The first is the calculation of secured debt through a multiplication of the average annual borrowing (taken from the registered documents) by 3 and doubling it by two to which must be added the interest of their amount for one year. The reasons given by the Committee for such a procedure are (1) that every loan sales into, at an average, for 3 years and (2) that the secured debt (for which documents are available) is roughly 50% of the total indebtedness. Though both these assumptions are not beyond question, let us follow the same method that the Committee followed for lack of any other.

The average documentary borrowing for the District (as quoted by the Committee) between Rs. 160 & 170 lakhs. Multiplied by 3, this gives a subsisting debt of between Rs. 480 & 510 lakh,—say 5 crores. Add to that Rs. 32 lakhs (being double the average annual amount of Bonds and obligations to pay which is calculated by the Committee to subsist only for 2 years) and multiply the result by 2. We get Rs. 10 crores 64 lakhs. The interest on this at 12% is roughly Rs. 1 crore 28 lakhs. With this, the total indebtedness comes to nearly Rs. 12 crores.

But this is not the only method that the Committee follows. Through Tahsildars and its own officers, the Committee made detailed investigation in certain villages and on the strength of those arrived at (1) an average debt

of Rs. 38 per head of population 2) an average debt of Rs. 53 per acre of cultivated land and (3) an average debt of Rs. 19 per rupee of assessment. If these averages are applied to the population (3,500,000) cultivated area (1,400,000 acres) and total assessment (Rs. 35 lakhs) of Malabar, we get the figures of Rs. 13,30 lakhs, Rs. 742 lakhs and Rs. 665 lakhs as the indebtedness of Malabar. Further, if we apply to these figures the average debt in Malabar (per head Rs. 34; per acre Rs. 94; per Re, Rs. 34), we get Rs. 1190 lakhs, Rs. 13,16 lakhs and Rs. 1190 lakhs as the total indebtedness of the District.

Thus, by simply following the methods of the Banking Committee, we arrive at seven sets of figures of which two are very much below, and the rest either near, or a little above, Rs. 12 crores. It is remarkable that both the figures below it are the results of applying Presidency averages (weighted, of course, with the figures of less involved Districts) to this District.

The Settlement Report of Mr. MacIwan also gives an inkling of the problem. On Page 35, he says that in 17 desams where he made detailed inquiries, the mortgage documents show a borrowing of Rs. 4,34 thousands for 5 years. Applying this as the basic figure for making the same calculations as that of the Banking Committee, we get the following result.

Mortgage borrowing for 5 years in  
17 desams Rs. 4,34,000

Mortgage borrowing for 5 years in  
2162 desams Rs. 5,51,94,000

Mortgage borrowing for 3 years in 2162 desam or Total secured debt for 2162 desams of the eight Plain Taluks of Malabar.	}	Rs.       3,31,15,000
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Total (secured and un secured) debt for the above are (double the above amount.)	}	Rs.   6,62,30,000
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Interest on the above at 12%  
Rs. 79,48,000

Total Debt for the eight Plain-  
Taluk Rs. 7,41,78,000

In this, one Taluk, i.e. Wynad is omitted. If that is also added, the total debt will come to not less than Rs. 8 crores.

It must be remembered that all these calculations are based on figures collected before the world Depression. It is indisputable that these must have been greatly swollen by the utter inability of the debtors to pay their liabilities—not only principal but even interest. No attempt has been made to go into the position as it is at present. But, if the estimate of the Devadhar Committee on co-operation in Travancore (Rs. 20 crores) is to be any guide, the share of Malabar must be somewhere near Rs. 15 crores. As the present commodity prices, this will be the equivalent of nearly Rs. 40 crores of the pre-Depression currency.

How does this affect the cultivating classes? It would be a very interesting and instructive study to take the agricultural production of the District for a year, calculate the value thereof in money, deduct therefrom the total cost of cultivation, the total Land Revenue Assessment and the Interest on the subsisting debt and see what remains for the cultivator as subsistence or for the landowner as rent. Since I have not before me the Agricultural Statistics of the District, I cannot at present make that study. I hope shortly to pursue it and establish beyond doubt how the actual cultivator and agricultural labourers are "bled white" by the oppression and exploitation by the Landlord and money-lender and the state. Meanwhile I make the following calculations based on figures collect-

ed by Mr. MacIwan and the Banking Committee.

Mr. MacIwan gives the following figures of cropped area in Fasli 1331.

Total area cropped ...	1,599,720 acres.
Paddy crop ...	817,920 "
Cocoanut ...	331,766 "
Other crops ...	450,034 "

The normal yield of paddy per acre in Malabar is 1400 lbs; and at this rate the total cost of paddy produced (at Rs. 3-7-0 per maund) is Rs. 487 lakhs. Though the Banking Committee does not give the normal yield per acre or the average price of cocoanuts, it gives the total value of cocoanut production for the whole Presidency (Rs. 57 lakhs). Since nearly 3/5 of cocoanut cultivation is in Malabar, it will not be far wrong to estimate the total value of cocoanut crops in Malabar at Rs. 40 lakhs. Now let us add another crore for other crops which brings a total of Rs. 627 lakhs. But since the Taluk of Wynad has been left out of Mr. MacIwan's figures, let us say the total agricultural production of Malabar can be valued (at pre-Depression prices) at nearly Rs. 7 crores.

Now, we have to make from this the following deductions.

Cultivation expenses	Rs.
("roughly half the value of the crop" Banking Committee) ...	3½ crores.
Assessment ...	35 lakhs.
Interest on a debt of Rs. 12 crores (at a rate 12 per cent) ...	144 "
Total ...	529 lakhs.

Thus, Rs. 161 lakhs remain for more than 2 million souls who exclusively subsist on incomes from land or nearly Rs. 8 per head. The situation has of late been much aggravated by the fall in commodity prices and the enhancement of Land Revenue.

I must here sound a note of warning. The above calculations are a very

incomplete attempt at arriving at certain conclusions based on imperfect data. It must be taken only as an amateur's attempt at studying Rural Economics. But I can assure the readers that the picture here represented is broadly faithful to the one actually existing in the country parts of the District. In fact, had it not been for the craze for facts and figures, it would be absurd to go in for such reports and investigations, when one gets daily reports of insolvency petitions, attachments for decrees, refusal of banks to advance except on ornaments, etc. In my own village, I had the opportunity to study at close quarters four cases of middle class families desiring to sell their present houses. It is remarkable that, in all the four, the motive is simply to dwell in smaller houses, utilising the difference between the selling price of the old, and the cost of constructing the new, house for liquidating the debts. Such instances can be multiplied to any extent. But I believe the reader must have had an inkling of the immensity of the problem. And I leave him at that to draw his own inferences.

Moratorium, control of usury, conciliation boards—all these are inadequate measures of protecting the heavily involved cultivator. Even a total wiping off of agrarian debt will suddenly recoil on him and leave him the worse for it unless some steps are taken to give him a proper place in the economic structure of the country. In other words, a complete economic reconstruction—a new spirit breathing throughout the social and economic life—that alone is the saviour of the "forgotten man." But, for that, you must begin on a clean slate. Thus, the liquidation of indebtedness is a necessary step—mark the word, only a step—in the direction of ameliorating the condition of the peasant of which so much has of late been spoken but nothing done both by the Government as well as the non-official organisations.

# ART AND SCIENCE IN FUTURE INDIA

By

A. Madhava Menon

Life is an art and living a science. So it is that art and science are very important factors in the Government of a nation.

A 'review' of the scope and possibilities for the development of art and science in Future India will prompt me to make some statements which may be questioned by others. But history has its own lessons to teach and a study of the past coupled with a comprehensive review of the present as well as a broad outlook on matters, artistic and scientific will, free me from the prejudices I may be accused of. Much has been said and more has been written on the art and science of the past and present; but none, so far, has taken upon himself the task of formulating a carefully outlined programme of action for the progress of art and science in Future India.

Bluntly speaking, the position of India, among the civilised nations of the world, in the field of Art, as in any other, is that of a back number although one can count such artists as Ravi Varma, Thyagaraja, Tagore, Vaswani, Sarojini and others). It is essential to point out here that art represents "all activities by means of which one person, having experienced a feeling, intentionally transmits it to others."

(Leo Tolstoi : what is Art ?)

And the same is true of science. Men may speak of Prof. Raman, J. C. Bose, P. C. Ray and even point out such political scientists as Mahatma Gandhi; but these are only singular exceptions which prove the nature of the raw material which we have to deal with under the Imperialistic and capitalistic

domination of life. For, these are the factors that really stand in the way of the progress of art and science and life and livelihood of the people in this country.

If a nation is to thrive, art and science should be cultivated simultaneously for the life and progress of the community. I might even add that it is highly necessary for the progress of humanity in general that every individual citizen of the world should be imbued with some knowledge of art and science so that the world will be helped in its march to betterment.

It is interesting and instructive to note that the development of postwar science is always in the direction of war. Since 1920, each and every nation, under the guise of disarmament was promoting scientific experiments which were to make a future and imminent war most abominable and irreparable. But Indians, being slaves and idealists cannot engage themselves in such work with the result that India is a back number among the nations of the world.

A socialist India will be a great asset to world peace. This will leave the scientists of all countries to work for scientific advancement of science.

As I pointed out before, there is exceedingly good raw material to deal with. In a vast country like ours and with not a bad tradition, it is possible to create good artists and scientists provided the pioneering work is properly undertaken.

But, it is necessary to take great care about the elements that go to constitute the future artists. They may not come



of their own accord. The people of India are, by nature, reserved and the inherent tastes and likes will have to be explored and explained. They will have to be greatly encouraged in their pursuits.

Another factor that is to be noted will be the purpose and utilisation of these arts and science. India has been, from time immemorial, spending money and time on such arts and science as have no real bearing on the life and prosperity of the nation as a whole. It is for the future Government of India (by the Indian masses of course) to encourage such science as will improve agriculture, Industries etc.

Speaking of art makes me think of the many young men and women who, not being given a chance to develop themselves in mind and body die in the gutter (literally broken and uncared

for.) Body building is both a science and an art in itself and will much influence the prosperity of the nation as a whole. The science of health and the science of Dietetics should form an important item of the programme of the future Government.

Literature, we have enough. But the sort of literature we want is widely different from that we have. We may be enabled to start an institution which will supply the millions of future citizens with books, books that shall teach them how to live and how to get others live.

A Free and Independent India will, be able to produce such an atmosphere as shall bring forth many a gem in the fields of art and science and their work for the country will be a standing monument for all posterity to come.



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# THE NEW AGE

By K. S. Venkataramani

What is meant by a New Age—a cry that you hear echoing down the corridors of history through the many centuries. Every age styles itself so—and every century lashes on to the shores of evolution the embroidered foam of an increasing purpose. Is it all real—is there progress towards a defined goal? or is it merely a changing name and form given with an air of urban decency to the same crude impulses that delimit man's own destiny within the range of a few inches like his own height? Or is it merely a vague humane aspiration glimpsed like the distant stars but never apprehended as a Reality?

These are large questions to answer within the compass of a page and difficult to answer through the vaporous and misty medium of words. Words in print are still-born creatures of the mind, and mind but apprehends life only in sections on a lower plane. Life's essential nature is beyond mind's utmost comprehension. Hence the striving of man, of all religions, is to achieve a consciousness, through any *sadhana*, higher than that of the mind. This quest after the eternal is the quest for a new age—an age that does not live in the perfection of the externals of life but in its harmonisation with the inner spirit, the bliss and unity of man.

To be active and yet to be happy is an inherited instinct of pleasure even to the insect world—the worker bee, the ant and the termite. But, alas, it is denied to man, the born rebel. He acquires but does not know how to be happy with his acquisitions because he acquires for himself and not for the commonwealth.

The acquisition of this new knowledge shall herald the new age, not the passing of mere centuries, when man shall emerge into a being of higher consciousness where he shall be both active and impersonal caring not for

the fruits of action—the bed-rock of true socialism.

Statutes and collective action may only prepare the atmosphere but cannot make the man. Collective organisation is to the inner spirit of man what scaffolding is to a building; a bee hive to a bee—the bee alone can make the honey; a cosy corner to the hen, the hen alone can lay the eggs. Hence the striving for the perfection of the individual is so paramount a struggle in evolution. Peace and *Ananda*, the real attributes of the new age can only be the product of individual effort and evolution. Take care of the individual society will take care of itself.

Therefore the two primary values of the new age are *ananda* and *peace* like the two faces of a single gold coin, duly stamped. This is the urge to perfect a human nature so near to the divine. How to evolve these values as the primary values of any society is the anxious consideration of the thinker, who visions a rhythmic life for man. It is enough to know and define the goal amidst the conflicts of life and every devout seeker after Truth knows in the deepening hours of his own meditation the star-lit winding track to that peak of higher consciousness where all the attributes of the Divine nature as described in the Gita shall descend on him like rains on sun-burnt plains from the clouds in the monsoon hour.

All this means a *dharma*, a definite and well-trodden way of life for all suited to modern conditions and blended in an atmosphere of both leisure and activity. The knowledge of such a *dharma* is self-taught to the soul that listens to itself and to the whispers in the winds that float from flowers. Till this is realised in the inmost depths of our consciousness and pursued to the meanest details of our personal active life there shall be no peace on earth and no new age for frail man.

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# SOCIALISM

## AS I SEE IT

By **B. S. Rangasayi**

*Secretary, Andhra Socialist Party.*

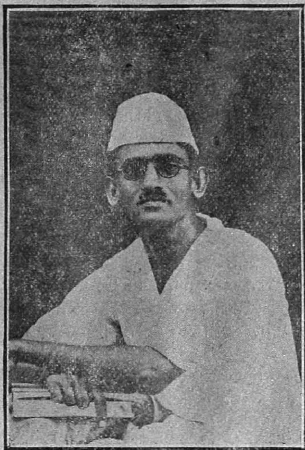
Socialism is the voice of humanity, hungering for work, bread and peace. It considers poverty to be the cause of the present day evils of society. Hence, it proposes to do away with it. Owners of fields, Factories and Work-shops, added to the Banking Houses that are consolidated in rings and combines take little note of how their dealings affect

the lives of men. Socialism proposes to do away with the ownership of private property and bring it under the control of the State.

In face of the scientific mass plunder the Capitalists are engaged in, education general strike and seizing of power are the only means for us to attain our end. The State may pay compensation and take over the instruments of wealth, as is done in so many departments even now; or, it may set up an arbitration court to go into the merits of ownership and merely expropriate in the interests of the people and go ahead. In whatever way it may come off finally, it is the law that sets the seal upon socialist progress. Factory laws and such others would have been

nowhere however hoarse Kierhardies might have thundered, but for their getting into the statute book. For instance, the Iron Manufacturers of Sheffield never furnished their factories with vacuum cleaners until the Government intervened and made a law penalising the defaulters. In that atmosphere laden with steel dust, workers

were too old at 30. With the few rich, not even the lives of children and women count, in spite of all the lessons of chivalry stuffed into them.



**B. S. RANGASAYI.**

Under capitalism, money is the nexus between man and man. It produces Shylocks who prefer their ducats to their daughters. Profits are all that count. (Capitalism is a scramble to get rich quickly). The rich financier looks to cheap investments

and quick returns; and the petty financier to keep pace with his bigger brother, charges high rates of interest and applies extra constitutional means like the Kabuli Money-lenders. Under the competitive Capitalistic system, all expect to win and ride in a coach and four. When competition can go on

further and trade slackens for want of buying power in men, the financier restricts credit. With that, the prices fall and bring about the slump we are in.

On national scale, the profit-gathering shows itself in never-to-be-balanced budgets, cramped production, unemployment, foreclosed deeds and destitute families with fathers unable to know what to do with themselves, and bloomless mothers casting anxious glances at their children drooping in physic, culture and spirit, cursing the day they conceived them. They cling as it were to the sides of the grave, till one day they drop into it. On International scale, the profiteering manifests itself in raised tariffs, increasing armaments, unredeemable international debts, and scandalous leagues of international traffickers in armaments threatening the dissolution of Governments.

These National and Inter-National repercussions acting and reacting on each other, produce dictatorships like Mussolini's and Hitler's that prescribe the baton and the castor-oil for the health of humanity. Futile meetings of disarmament and economic Conferences, are part of this vicious circle and dumping fruit and milk into the sea to stabilise prices, burning of coffee as fuel, not cultivating cultivable areas are some features of this system of profiteering.

The financier and the profiteer weave the web of Government; with the press in their hands, they exploit the ignorance of the 90% and lure them into their parlour even as the spider, shouting their absurd slogans, such as the sacredness of property and life, survival of the fittest, our country at stake etc., etc.

The Capitalists have provided machinery for preventing the have-nots from reacting against its deadly tyranny. From the cradle to the grave, there is not a thing that the profiteer

did not defile. Justice, Literature, Science and Economy are interpreted in profiteering terms. Stavaskys that could buy up all the government departments, beginning from the police right up to the Ministers, quack medicines and astrological bureaus, all these affect the nerve centres of capitalist society.

The capitalist states are like proprietors of gardens that have the most upto date electrified fencing against poachers, but could not find the where-withal to keep their garden houses in order.

Capitalism with highly centralised banks controls all the avenues of life. It lets life proceed while it fetches its returns. The proletariat are outside its orbit. Socialism frees credit from this strangle-hold. It does away with anomalies that declare property to be sacred by giving free rein to the individuals, to expropriate each other and create pauperism, starvation and death. The Congress Socialists feel that the workings of Indian and foreign capitalism have created incalculable harm to the country.

In the western independent countries because of the well-organised labour parties, there is an attempt to alleviate suffering. The British Government disburses among the unemployed a very large amount for the families of workers on strike and they are taken care of by the local bodies. Thus by organised effort, the labourers there could make the capitalist enact measures, to a certain extent. But we are asked by our capitalist and imperialist Pilots of Heaven to pray while the snares are at work. Here they shout "All is well" advertising this peace of the grave.

The Congress realises that the condition of the masses is to be ameliorated. And some of its planks like the village industries give some relief. They can serve the workers to help themselves when they finally come to

grips. They cannot be starved into yielding. The Congress is supposed to work hand in hand with the masses to secure working conditions as are existent in civilised Western countries.

To socialise the instruments of wealth, raise soldiers of industry and agriculture to make the political bodies representative of the workers and peasants and regiment for life is the socialist way for the conquest of bread.

A classless society is to be our aim. The hungry and the sick are not to be left to the sweet will of the benevolent. The welfare of the people and their all-round development, should be our first concern. The State will be the banker, the landholder and the industrialist; and all should work on the principle "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his need."

Is it a new thing? This is what every Government did during war days, that they may husband their resources and man power; and work at a tempo required to resist the onslaughts of the invading armies and not be stuck up in the anarchic capitalistic morass. The Governments found that with capitalists patriotism always subserves their profits. Why? Our very mill-owners scrapped the pact with

the Congress not to manufacture yarn of counts below 15 and entered into pacts like Lees-Mody Pact.

Capitalists make too much of their freedom, equality of opportunity and so on. Granting their claims as true, capitalism allows amenities to only to a few leaving the rest at their mercy.

It does no credit to the intellectuals who think themselves as the hub of civilisation, to allow this. It is intellectual and moral cretinism.

Capitalists made the world habitable; socialists propose to make it comfortable. Under the former even a Midas is not secure from nerve-wracking and destitution; much less his Marygold. Socialism resolved into the simplest terms is, bread and butter for us and our Marygolds and unfailing work. The people are assured of places to lay their heads on.

"It is the Law and the Prophets" and every revolution beginning from comrade Jesus down to comrades Mahatmaji and Lenin is aimed at it. These are the warblings of Shelly. This is Burns affirmation "for all that and all that the time is coming for all that when man to man shall brother be". It is the yearning of all great souls. Shall we fail them? It is ours to strengthen their ranks and fulfil their efforts: it is true culture.

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# CONFLICT OF COLOURS

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## THE STORY OF AN AMERICAN CHILDHOOD

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By Eugene Gordon.

Looking down upon it from the height of years and the comforting remoteness of a New England town, I realize that my whole boyhood in the South was darkened by a lowly lying cloud of subconscious fear of the white man; a subconscious fear that at times burst through to open terror. I do not mean that a fear of immediate physical injury possessed me night and day, haunting my dreams at night and my imagination by day; it was not a fear of that kind. It was instead an accumulation of ideas suggested by countless agencies—my mother, my teachers, the pastor of our church, the children with whom I played in the gutters of New Orleans, the very atmosphere I breathed, my whole environment—the white man was my natural and eternal enemy, regardless of the guises he might assume or of the methods of approach he might take. Some day, I believed, the white man would come swooping upon me, my mother, my father (although I knew they would have a hard time subduing my father), my brothers and sisters, and all my black, brown, and yellow playfellows, and would bundle us together and burn us like so much kindling.

At the age of two I was taken by my parents, with a younger brother from my birthplace at Oviedo, Florida, to

New Orleans, Louisiana. Here my education with reference to my white compatriots was begun in earnest. My mother, a brave, brown, small and stern-faced woman, taught me that I was "as good" as any other youngster. I often wondered, at first, why she so insisted on this detail. It seemed to me that so patent a truth should be taken as a simple matter of course. At the same time I was made to feel, by virtue of having learned this credo, that I should be a coward to quail at the insults my small neighbors pricked me with, and should only follow a natural impulse if I itched to punch their grimy faces. However, when I saw a white acquaintance called into his yard and spanked because he had played with a "nigger", I could not reconcile the contradictions in my mother's philosophy. Why, I wished to know did his mother whip him if I was "as good" as he, and why did his mother call me "nigger"?

Mother disliked such questioning. She would bite her lip and pretend not to hear; she would turn her back, and go about her housework. But when I repeated the question until it rang in her ears, she cried: "She does it because she doesn't know any better. She's showing her ignorance." Ignorance of what? I wondered. Why was she ignorant?



My mother taught me that to be called a "nigger" was to be outraged, humiliated, degraded. It was signal for immediate combat. A white man's smile of friendship, she insisted, was like Judas' kiss. My mother taught me that no white man was to be considered seriously as a friend: he was not to be trusted. They were all potential lynchers and abusers of black womanhood. If they appeared at any time to be friendly, it was because they had "an axe to grind." They were disloyal; they would desert one in a crisis, especially if one happened to be a Negro. They never performed a charitable act for, nor spoke a kindly word to, a Negro, out of the pristine goodness of their hearts. They were blackguards, rascals, cut-throats, rapists, and murderers. How they "got this way" was a perpetual puzzle to me. I had gone to Sunday school and had been taught that Christ was a Jew. Weren't Jews white? Then was Christ like that too? Were the Presidents of the United States like that? And the grocer at the corner—he appeared to be a kindly old fellow: was he like that? Yes, Christ had been a white man, but he was above petty hatred. The Presidents were no better than the rest of them. The grocer? Didn't I have sense enough to know why *he* acted in a friendly manner?

I did not see my mother's contacts with the harsher side of life. . . I sometimes wondered whether she was not afraid to eat the food bought of white tradesmen. So, wondering, I grew older.

I must have been between seven and ten years old when something happened in New Orleans to confirm, as far as I cared then to have it confirmed, my mother's repeated charges. It has been many years ago, and since my facts and impressions came from hearsay and juvenile observation, the incidents are now obscured on my memory. But I do remember very clearly going

out one morning to play in front of my father's small "ice-coal-and-wood" shop, and seeing the streets filled with policemen. We lived in the rear of our store, at the corner of Third and Rampart streets, and it was on Third street that I first glimpsed this awful and romantic spectacle.

Rumors whirled as thick as the dust from the board surface of Rampart street. White men shoved black men from the sidewalks and dared them to protest. And, of all unheard of dreams! most of these husky Negroes submitted meekly and went, hang-dog-like, about their businesses! I had been taught that black men were much braver than whites, in all circumstances. It did not occur to me that the whites were armed, while the blacks were not; nor did I realize that the police, representing the power both of the state and of the white ruling class, were leagued against the blacks.

Policemen went by all day, carrying long, slender rifles on their shoulders. My white playmates, who had played at horses and cowboys with me yesterday, regarded me today with hostility, answering my anxious questions with impatient sneers. They turned their backs and stayed close to their own doorsteps.

Late that afternoon I heard father telling mother the story. A Negro named Robert Charles had shot and killed two policemen last night, they having gone to arrest him for beating his common-law wife. He had eluded the police. Today they circled the block in which the murders had occurred; stood on rooftops, behind fences and walls; atop cisterns, and clung to the branches of trees. That night a mob burned the only Negro high school, and it held the fire department at bay until the building was destroyed. The mob whipped several Negroes who had dared show themselves after dark.

The police advised my father next morning to keep his store closed. They refused to be held responsible, in view of the circumstances, if certain "hot-headed members" of the mob wrecked the place. I remember that father clamped his jaws together and said to the policeman, "Let them try it!" He opened the store as usual but nobody bought anything. Later in the day he closed the place up.

In the meantime mother went about her work with tightened lips and hard eyes. She had a horror of seeing father leave the house or go out of her sight. Reports came in of Negro workers being dragged from street cars and beaten to death. Friends of ours were all but murdered on their way to and from work. But father went. I had unbounded faith in his courage. I worshipped the tall, lean, olive-complexioned, curly headed, stern-faced man who was my father. . . He has said that he expected any moment to feel the blade of a knife piercing his back as he pushed his way through the mobs.

One morning we got word that Robert Charles had been found in a house not far from us. Immediately the whole block was surrounded by militia, policemen, and thousands of excitement-seekers. The battle was on. Some stories said that Charles killed more than twenty of his attackers, picking them off one by one. Negro homes in the vicinity were burned as a pastime. The mob poured bullets and buckshot into Charles' hiding place.

I remember most clearly, of all the incidents of that frightful period, the boast of a white youth whom I knew well. He was talking to a group of his kind, all of whom my mother told me, had taken part with the whipping, burning, and murdering mobs.

"We don't want to hurt these gray-haired old devils," he said; "what we're

after are these smart young niggers that'll tell a white man to go to hell."

Finally Robert Charles was killed. Some reports said he walked out of his retreat, his hands above his head, and was instantly shot down. Others tell us that he was shot into bits through the walls behind which he had sought shelter. At any rate, all agreed that when every member of the self-appointed posse had fired a shot or two into his body, there was not enough of it left for an undertaker to trouble himself with.

The bolder outlines of this experience were dimmed in the ensuing weeks, but the deeper impression remained. Following those tense days, when hostility between whites and blacks was felt in the very air, I grew to believe more and more in the doctrine that my environment had repeatedly hammered into my consciousness: Trust no white man; even those who pretend to be your friends will lynch you if offered the slightest provocation. . . Robert Charles became the secret hero of the underprivileged black worker; more than that, I heard many a covert word of praise for him among certain whites. I was all confused. . .

#### *A Thwarted Friendship.*

When I was twelve, our family having been increased by two, we removed from New Orleans to Hawkinsville, Georgia. My grandfather, Charles Gordon, a well-to-do farmer, would have been labeled in the Hawkinsville *Dispatch* a "gentleman farmer" if he had been a white man. He was an ex-slave who had accumulated more than a thousand acres of the best farm land of Pulaski county. Some of the tenants on this place had been with him as long as they could remember. He was their "chief", and he possessed among them both influence and power. He was openly disliked by those "poor whites", whose hatred of the Negro is

(Contd. on Page 341.)

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(Contd. from Page 338.)

an inheritance from slavery. Among those of the same plane as himself—J. Pope Brown, for example, at one time candidate for Governor of Georgia and one of my grandfather's "friends"—he was "respected" but he was not accepted as a man.

To go as far as my grandfather had gone in the heart of Georgia, with its race proscription and its subtle psychology of Negro inferiority, a black man must possess both unusual mental equipment and unusual moral stamina. Yet, to my youthful amazement, the philosophy he had built out of the only life any of us knew (except my father, who having lived in Europe, knew something of freedom) was similar to that of the propertyless, submerged Negro farm hand: to avoid the white man except when expediency dictated otherwise; to temper your trust of the white man with scepticism; to accept his "loyalty" as so much bait to draw you into a hidden trap.

I could not readily understand this philosophy at first. I knew he was not a coward. Cowards did not in that place rise to such stature as his. His thinlipped, tight-fitting mouth, his penetrating eyes, the superb, proud manner with which he carried his almost square head—these, I knew, were the physical aspects of a mental attitude. It was not until much later that I understood fully the magnitude of his tragedy. An intelligent Negro in Georgia was (and is) like a king in exile. He is treated with a certain deference by those who hold his life in their hands, but he must not err, he must not for a moment "forget" who and where he is. Let him "forget", and he loses in a moment all that it has taken him and others all their lives to accumulate. My grandfather was an intelligent Negro in the heart of Georgia.

After a few years in the backwoods of Georgia we children were as wild, as free from any city influence, as

the field rabbits we hunted on Sunday afternoons. Our lands being extensive, we seldom came into contact with our white neighbours' children. But on those rare occasions when we did, I found that these youngsters were as friendly as my earlier playmates in New Orleans had been. I came to realize that as long as these boys and girls remained uninfluenced by their elders, they were human and lovable; that under the fear of punishment for having played with "niggers", they were hostile and insulting.

We went to school in a log hut on the main road about a mile and a half from home, and this change in our status brought us at once into contact with white children. We met them on their way to the "white" school, which was purposely located in an opposite direction. I recall vividly that the first time we met we stared at one another noncommittally and curiously. But a few days later we were smiling at one another, and before any of us had really thought about it or knew how it had come to pass, we were talking about our lessons and our teachers, flipping the pages of one another's books, and calling one another Gene and Ann, Ernest and Bobby.

One morning, proudly and chivalrously acceding to the request of the beautiful blonde daughter of a well-to-do neighbor to tell her what I knew about algebra, I looked down the road and saw my grandfather approaching us on horseback. The blond young woman—she was about ten—paid no more attention to him than we had been giving to the buzzing of spring insects, but I wilted in fright. No one knew better than my brothers and I that I had violated a fundamental law of the clan.

My grandfather reined in his horse. Our new friends looked on uneasily, wondering what would happen. They looked from him to us and from us to him.



Grandfather glared at them with unspeakable contempt. In a moment terror had displaced their mild stares of wonder, and they backed, sidled, slunk away; they hurried about their business, now and then looking back so as not to miss seeing impending tragedy. Alone with us, he said, in a voice that made us cringe:

"Dog bite it! I told you not to talk to any of these white youngones. What do you mean? Do you want to be lynched? Do you want to be burned at the stake? Get on to school! And don't ever let me see that again, or I'll skin you alive."

I admit I was in more immediate horror of being burned by the "crackers" than "skinned alive" by my grandfather. As a matter of fact, my brother and I had a mutual understanding that the old man was very much of a bluff. However, we did not lightly consider the temper and ferocity of the Georgia white man. We resolved to obey grandfather thereafter.

I wondered what my father would say when grandfather told him. I thought of it all day. It was hard to understand why anyone should even object, let alone wish to burn us alive, merely because we had been civil to a group of kids of our own age.

Next morning we were in a pretty mess. Having been ordered to ignore our new friends, we were at a loss how to explain the sudden change of attitude toward them. But we were saved that particular humiliation. The moment we came in sight of one another they hailed us. As on former occasions, it was the girl who spoke for the whites. She went straight to me and, thrusting a small pink finger at my nose, demanded:

"Why did your pa scold you yesterday?"

I stammered, hesitated, floundered; I told her who the old grouch really was and told her what he had said.

Her companions seemed to be deeply impressed; much more so, in fact, than she was. Her reply was prompt and emphatic: "I don't believe they'd do that to you. I'd tell 'em you didn't hurt me, nor nothing."

At any rate I thought we had better not be caught being friendly again, and, making the silly excuse that we'd all be late at school if we didn't hurry, I turned and ran, joining my brothers and sister who stood not far away.

I shall never forget the scorn in her eyes and the contempt in her voice when she called after me: "Coward! My mother says all niggers are cowards!"

Somehow I felt no resentment toward her. The quick, spontaneous retort had revealed as by a flash of lightning the towering and impenetrable wall of hatred that stood between her people and mine. Vaguely I blamed her mother and her father, her older brothers and her sisters, her uncles, aunts and cousins, her friends and neighbors, and every man and woman who boasted a white skin, for the wall. It was years later that I saw how unnatural and how flimsy it was; that I found out how easily penetrable the wall was; that I saw it not as a wall, but as the illusion of a wall; an illusion created out of the psychologies of blacks and whites for the sole purpose of keeping them apart. But that day at school I felt sure my mother was correct in what she had taught us about "white folks"; "all alike", and all to be mistrusted and hated like rattlesnakes.

My father never mentioned the incident to me, even though grandfather surely told him. My father's courage and thoughtfulness were always awesome to me.

### *Georgia Christmas Morning*

Christmas in Georgia was looked upon by whites and blacks as the one day of the year when murder was a

sport. Nobody feared being annoyed on that day by some nosey sheriff; that is, unless a Negro, for any reason, chanced to kill a white man. Then, of course, the whites would have the pleasure of putting their Christmas fireworks to profitable use. I knew all this as soon as I was old enough to comprehend even the most elementary of the ugly facts of Georgia life.

One Christmas morning they sent me to Hawkinsville to buy some more candies and fireworks. I drove a swift black horse hitched to a red-wheeled top-buggy. My eight-year-old sister begged to go with me. I was fifteen. We were very happy.

At Hartford, a scattered patch of buildings, through which we had to pass just before reaching the bridge that crossed the river to Hawkinsville, a lanky white youth, driving a team of mules, cut across my path, causing my horse to rear. I drew up quickly, suddenly mad with anger. Calling to him peremptorily, I asked him what the devil he was trying to do.

I was young. I had inherited much of my father's "nerve" and temper (if not his reckless courage). It was Christmas. I was driving a spirited and beautiful horse. Certainly I must have forgotten for a moment who and where I was!

I was soon reminded. Temporarily stricken dumb by a "nigger's" unheard-of audacity, the youth drew up his mules so abruptly that they nearly sat on his lap. Jumping to the ground, he stalked toward us, his pale eyes glittering. My horse stood champing on his bit and pawing the ground. I was uneasy, for groups of loungers who had seen the incident were already approaching casually, coming within hearing distance. Besides, everybody, including my little sister, knew of Hartford's reputation as a "mean and lawless hole." The village swarmed with illiterate, tobacco-spitting "hill billies" on a perpetual lookout for

"sassy niggers." So seldom were they fortunate enough to find one that I knew they would never let me walk out of this trap of my own making.

In less than five minutes we were surrounded. My sister had begun to cry nervously, which added to my wretchedness. The "offended" youth was spitting brown tobacco juice and detailing between shots his version of what had happened. His version was, of course, the "correct" one. The whole business had been unimaginable, unheard of, a crime deserving of nothing less than death. They were already discussing, on the outskirts of the crowd, possible methods of disposing of me. I heard them numbly.

Shaking with terror, but trying desperately to conceal it, I looked for a sympathetic face. I saw none. The number of heads across which I looked had increased; I thought vaguely that there must be thousands. One of the men, a gangling, redhaired fellow in green suspenders and a gray cap, went to my horses head. And I cut at him with the buggy-whip.

In a flash the horse was off. Tugging desperately at the reins, I turned him round toward home. Five miles stretched ahead of us, some of the road was none too good. The mob was after us, yelling for blood. They cried: "Stop that nigger!" "Shoot him!" "Don't shoot, take him alive!" "Don't let him get away!" Someone ran into the road and caught the reins. The mob surged upon us; swept on and overwhelmed us like a storm.

I looked pityingly at my sister. She was crouched in a corner of the seat, her great eyes wide and tearless.

"What'd he do?"

"Sassed a white man."

"Did, did he? Who th' 'ell is he, anyway? . . . Say boy, what's yo' name? Where you come from?"

I told him, a plea in my voice.

"Yea, I know. His pa's that sassy yaller nigger that rides round here with his hat on the side of his head, thinkin' he's white. Passes a white man without speakin'. Boys, we're in luck!"

"What'll we do with 'im? Will we shoot 'im?"

"No, jus' strip 'im an' give 'im damn good whippin' with that buggy whip."

"I'm in favor of shootin' 'im. Ef I don't kill that nigger today I won't be able to sleep fer a month. . ."

An austere elderly man, who had lost an arm in the Confederate army—I dazedly recognized him the moment he drove up behind his span of beautiful bays—questioned my captors sharply, and they answered him with a deference that amazed me. They seemed, however, reluctant to let him in on their fun. He did not question me; merely looked curiously in my direction every once in a while.

I heard him say, in a drawl I loved because his voice was raised in my behalf: "I know his granddad. And his dad, too. His dad's a right smart fellow." I noticed with a thrill of pride that he had not used that offensive epithet in referring to my father. "You men let that boy go on home, you hear me? If he's done anything that's deserving of punishment, I'll see that his dad whales the stuffin' out of him. . . Go on home, boy."

That was his first statement directly to me. My acknowledgment of it was too hurried to be gracious. I went.

I told my father everything, imitating gestures, mimicking the inflections of different voices. I showed how they had strutted back and forth before us, and I waxed dramatic as I described the tone of his own insulter. My father's tanned, lean face tightened, and his stern gray eyes became mere burning slits. When he called to mother to bring his revolver, his voice lashed but inspired me. Mother hesitated; father strode into the bedroom and got the

revolver out of the top bureau drawer. He tossed it upon the buggy seat.

Mother whimpered: "Papa, be careful. Those crackers will kill you, sure."

Father said to me, "Get in." He swung himself in and snatched up the reins. I felt the hard revolver lying on the seat between us.

During that long swift ride he said hardly anything. He asked: "Can you split out any of them? Did they do or say anything to your sister?"

The wheels of the buggy churned up a cascade of white sand as we curved into the space before a small Hartford general store, in front of which a crowd of laughing hooligans stood. The crowd split in two, dazed with astonishment. Father did not wait for it to recover.

"Who are they?" he asked me, loudly enough for all to hear. Outnumbered ten to one, I felt as secure as if I were surrounded by a regiment of friends. With irrepressible gusto I pointed them out.

They were regaining their wits now. They swayed forward, muttering threats; pressed against the buggy wheels and grasped the horse's reins.

"Pull 'im out o' there!" yelled someone on the outer edge of the crowd. Like an echo the retort came back:

"You don't have to pull me out," and, tossing aside the heavy laprobe, he stood up.

The loaded revolver suddenly glittered in the sun. It glittered into the eyes of the crowd, which wavered, fell back hesitated for want of an aggressive leader. My father was now on the ground.

"I want to give you fellows fair warning," he was saying, "that my boys are not to be trifled with any more. This is not the first time, but it will be the last. . . And who was it that passed an insult—"

He was interrupted by the same austere man who, earlier, in the

morning, had interceded for me. This man laid his hand on father's arm and called him by name.

"For God's sake, go home and leave those hot-headed young fools alone! They didn't mean anything. They..."

Father stood up in the buggy. He delivered a brief lecture, in which he relieved himself of an opinion for every man who had molested me. He offered to meet "personally" "the coward" who had insulted him. No one took up the challenge. I wondered why someone in the outskirts of the crowd did not shoot him down. I still wonder, and decide that his reckless audacity appealed to their imaginations.

He sat down, tucked the laprobe about his legs, took the reins from my hands, and drove through the crowd; it fell back on both sides. He drove across the bridge into Hawkinsville, where he bought the candies and the fireworks. Shortly afterwards he drove back beside a sullen but silent group in Hartford.

#### *A Negro Man of God*

There was a Negro preacher named Stanley. He was unctuous, mild, and inoffensive, often came to dinner at our house and we listened to his gossip of his wife and his boys, of his farm and his church. Was an ordinary sort of man in every way except in appearance. More than six feet tall, he had the features and the "unforgiving nature traditionally associated with certain Indians.

I once spent a whole day at his house. He was not there; his boys told me he had gone to carry some corn to the mill. We loafed about the field and we talked.

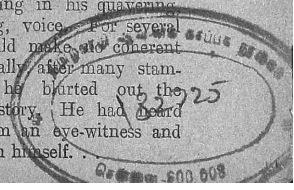
Late that afternoon, after a day of hunting, making partridge traps, and playing all sorts of games, we went in. I was to spend the night there. It was sundown after a little while. Evening noises were coming up from the

fields and the branches. A silken misty smoke hung low over the darkling treetops; they were already mysterious with dusk.

Reverend Stanley had not come and his wife was uneasy. We sat up in the dark, waiting for him. Mrs. Stanley now and then tried to join us in our foolish banter, but made out poorly. In a little while we too ceased to talk. The old wooden house grew silent. We sat in the kitchen around a table on which burned the yellow flame of an oil lamp. The old house sat almost a quarter of a mile from the main road, so that noises of the highway came to us faintly. . . Reverend Stanley should have been back in two hours. . . Midnight came.

Mrs. Stanley walked the floor; went silently into the soft unfathomable darkness of the yard; sat down on the kitchen steps to cry. We boys walked down the lane to the main road, keeping close together in the darkness; we spoke in whispers. What could be keeping him? We returned, and sauntered around the "lot," where the mules crunched corn and the pigs grunted and squeaked in their sleep. We saw the gray haze of dawn breaking through the black barriers of night. Daylight came. The sun struggled up bloodred through the silken veil of smoke.

We heard someone hollering out in front. Mrs. Stanley, her two boys, and I rushed around the house to see who was calling. An ashen-faced Negro, a "hand" on the Stanley farm, met us. He kept turning his whitened, glaring stare across his shoulder. He jerked his thumb over his shoulder, and tried to tell us something in his quavering, almost shrieking, voice. For several minutes he could make no coherent statement. Finally, after many stammering efforts, he blurted out the whole sickening story. He had heard some of it from an eye-witness and some he had seen himself.



About a mile and a half this side of the mill Reveren' Stanley heard the loud chugging and the vociferous tooting of an auto horn. Automobiles were rarities in those days. They were for the rich only. Reveren' Stanley knew, therefore, that one of the richest men in the county, and, doubtless, one of the most arrogant was clamouring for the road. The road here was really a lane, being very narrow and hemmed in by a wire fence on one side and a rail fence on the other. There was room for only one vehicle, and that fact was clear. The horses had never heard such a sound before. They got excited, terrified, almost uncontrollable. Exasperated, Reveren' Stanley reined in and looked back.

"For God's sake," he cried, "stop blowing that tin horn! Haven't you sense enough to see I can't turn out?"

What! That was enough. Another white man had been "sassed" by a "smart nigger."

"Why, I'll be damned," observed the confounded autoist, mildly. "I'll be double damned!"

He turned slightly aside and drove ahead. His car crushed two of the buggy wheels, ripped loose the already wildly frightened horses, and showered grains of corn upon the sandy road. The horses, still fastened side by side, disappeared in a whirling cloud of dust around a bend in the road. The Negro preacher got to his feet and looked, through eyes bloodshot with anger, at the remnants of his goods. The rich man, some yards ahead, had now stopped the car and was coming back on foot, a pistol in his hand. He aimed and fired. "You black son of a bitch! So you'll sass a white man, will you?" He kept repeating it as he continued to shoot.

Reveren' Stanley, struck a couple of times, managed to grasp his own

weapon from the seat of the buggy and to tumble to partial cover behind the rail fence.

"So that's the game you play, heh?" he cried, and returned fire.

The rich man keeled over. His wrist was shattered, and he could not fire again. One bullet had punctured his lung. He lay gasping in the sand, among Reveren' Stanley's scattered grains of golden corn.

A passing acquaintance—another wealthy white man—picked him up and rushed him to the nearest doctor. He spread the alarm as he went. But the best surgeon in Hawkinsville couldn't vulcanize a punctured lung. . .

The mob traced Stanley by the trail of blood. He was found in an old white farmer's hay loft. The white farmer begged the mob to "leave him be," since he was so nearly dead. They called the old farmer a "nigger lover" and shoved him out of their way. A trace chain was looped around Reveren' Stanley's neck, and, according to the *Atlanta Constitution* the next day, "outraged citizens dragged the Negro back to the scene of his crime and burned him at the stake."

When the man had finished his story he offered to conduct us to the place. On our way we gathered a large crowd, whites and blacks. I wondered how many of the whites had been members of the mob.

We found a blackened, charred, undraped trunk of a man chained to an iron stake beside the main road. The earth for yards around had been churned, cuffed, and ploughed by a thousand broganed feet. All the hair had been burned from the victim's head. His face was merely a blackened skin, drawn taut over the cheek bones; it was like the head of a drum. Great empty holes had displaced the eyes: they looked to me like torn and stretched button-holes. His feet and hands were gone.

(Contd. on Page 355.)



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### Message to THE NEW AGE:—

"I welcome with pleasure the Annual Number of *The New Age* whose special articles, I dare say, will be one of attraction and special interest to its



Sreemati Rukmani Lakshmipathy.

readers. Ever since it saw the light of day *The New Age* has been having a pretty successful career inspite of all its difficulties. Its open and fearless criticism of men and matters of state deserves mention. The need for such a journal of advanced views on political, social and economic problems cannot be better served than educating the public to a sound and progressive view of current political affairs. Its unobtrusive style and clear manner of exposition need hardly any comment. It has undertaken the mission of bringing about a revolutionary mentality thereby to usher in a better order of society. I wish it therefore every success in its endeavour to do service to all

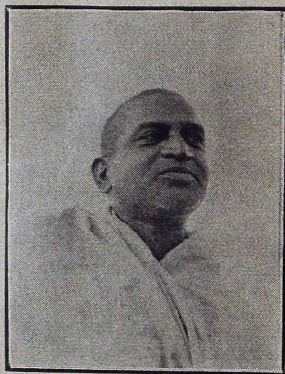
the progressive ideals that we stand for—more particularly in its endeavour to espouse the cause of Independence and Socialism for India."

RUKMANI LAKSHMIPATHY.

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### Message from Bulusu Sambamurti.

"*The New Age* has passed through the first year of its existence successfully under very severe handicaps. It has enthusiastically kept up the banner of liberty of thought and action before a subject people struggling for freedom. I trust that it will continue next year fearlessly advocating independence thereby contributing its quota of humble service for the uplift and full realisation of humanity as such."



BULUSU SAMBAMURTHI.

Sjt. Bulusu Sambamurti.

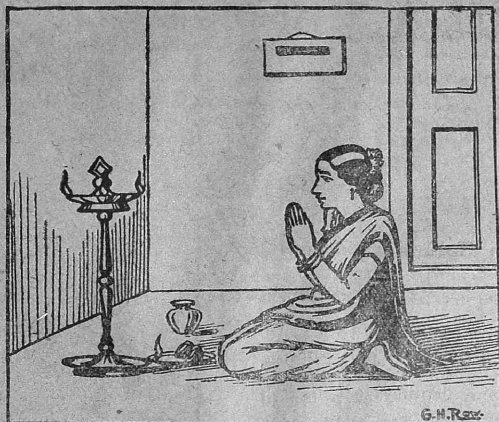
## THE HAND OF FATE

By Miss R. C. Sarojani

Far away on the banks of the holy river Ganges, there dwelt Kannan belonging to a respectable family. He was very orthodox in his manners, quite unaware of the modern ways and methods. Near his house stood a dilapidated old building in which bloomed a beautiful creeper like damsel with a very graceful body. She was called by the

were now bearing, by finding out a customer for her!

Soon they found Kannan and knowing that Kannan was rich, at once jumped at the thought of having him as the son-in-law. They settled the marriage after some bargains and at last Kannan and Karuna became man and wife.



Karuna praying to God.

name Karuna. She was growing in the hut and now she was aged 15. Her parents ashamed of the rumours that were floated by the relations for keeping her still unmarried thought of sending away the daughter and thus freeing themselves from the heavy burden they

Kannan, though a descendant of a good family was no better than a common man. He had the most horrid face with a narrow forehead and dark, sunken eyes which glittered like fire balls inside the depths of the deep eye sockets. His nose was long with wide

\* The above story was written by a young school-girl—Ed.

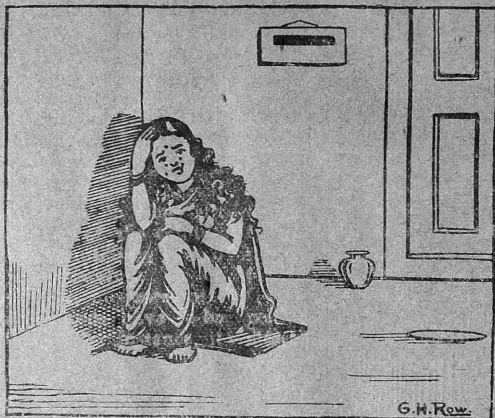
nostrils enough to breathe a big quantity of air, when he was angry.

Kannan and Karuna both led a miserable life together. Karuna had many chances of crying and describing to her mother and father how she got black marks all over her body due to beatings. The parents were sorry and all the castles they had built at the beginning were blown to pieces when they realised the true nature of Kannan.

Kannan and Karuna were not at all wife and husband when seen in a broader view but still they were husband

Sumangala, past her childhood and babyhood now grew into a beautiful girl.

Then did she see many things for herself. She left all the toys severely alone and even hated to see them anywhere near her. She no more cared for her doll which she kept tight near her bosom, when she was a baby. She became fond of books and writing things. Whatever book she found, she took it eagerly and attempted to read it. When she couldn't understand it, she would sit down and cry.



Karuna in a dejected mood.

and wife and brought forth a beautiful child in due course. This child was named Sumangala. Sumangala resembled her mother in everything, in features, build of her body and in many other things.

The dark life of Karuna was lit by the sparkling light of Sumangala, and Karuna had thrills of joy and sorrow, joy because she was blessed with a good daughter, sorrow because she hadn't a husband to match them both. She went about parading Sumangala in her slender arms and thanked God the Almighty for the gift.

Kannan, having wasted all his wealth was now very poor. Whenever Karuna opened her sweet mouth to give advice Kannan almost made her dumb by saying that everything was his and he knew his job.

Sumangala was now aged 7 and she was sent to a school near by.

As Sumangala was a girl full of enthusiasm and of enterprising nature, she entertained her studies very easily and always topped the list of the girls in her class, with the result that she got double promotion. She went from



4th class to the first form which set all the girls' tongues wag and their lips to pout whenever they met her. Having got jealous of Sumangala, they spoke ill of her and said that the head-mistress was partial, she was in Sumangala's favour, and so on as the girls always speak, when they find themselves defeated by their classmates.

There was not enough money in the house to pay for their food as well as for Sumangala's studies. Besides this, Kannan became a regular drunkard and whenever he got money he took a lion's share as his own pocket money, to drink and waste. He would make his way from his working place straight to the toddy shop. He would come late in the night and act a drama with his wife and daughter by whipping them and ill-treating them in whatever way he liked. Poor Karuna would sit still with her heart inside almost eaten up by the life long sorrow that had overtaken her. Sumangala too, small and innocent to know anything, would sit and cry because her mother was crying every now and then.

Sumangala, on one evening after coming home from school, took her coffee and then played about. In the night she read her lessons for the next day and after meals fell asleep. There she was on the bed with her legs and hands gracefully stretched and her body swayed a little to the left. Her locks were loose and were spread, each in a different direction looking as though they were forsaken in the world.

The next morning as wont, Sumangala got up as the rays of the sun flooded her room and made it bloom like a lily. The chirping of the birds and the noise of the street indicated the morning. Soon her heart was filled with joy. Sitting on the first bench in 1st form alone thrilled her. She went to the school as usual listening to the birds and admiring things of nature on her way. Her teacher spoke very kindly to her and also gave her a long list of books! Sumangala returned

home in the evening and handed over the list to her mother who took it and once more shed tears. Sumangala asked her mother why she was crying. Karuna replied that there was nothing particular. Sumangala kept quiet, took her food and was tempted to sleep by the fairies of the night who made her sweet little mind free from cares of any kind.

Karuna continued to think what to do with the list of books her daughter gave her. It was only eight 'o'clock. There was plenty of time for her husband to return. She got up and made her way to her parent's house with the list in her hands. When she kept her foot on the threshold of her mother's house, the thoughts of her childhood sprang up in her mind. She looked around the compound where many a time, she had played with her neighbours. Her old days came back to her memory and she burst into tears. She wiped her face lest anyone should see her crying. She was ashamed when she thought of going and asking her parents for money. She drew back. But her intense love for Sumangala would not let her see Sumangala suffer. She was determined to face anything for her beloved daughter. She knocked at the door, once, twice, thrice and the servant came out and requested her to come in. She went forward and after a chat with her mother gave the list to her and demanded some money. After explaining how she too was poor, her mother gave her the sum asked for. Karuna was an intelligent girl who understood everything. With the money, her mother gave her, she returned home.

There she saw her husband fretting and fuming near the window of her room. Poor Karuna, who was at a loss to know what to do in that condition hid behind the door as her frightened legs wouldn't carry her any further. But the cruel fate that shaped Karuna's destiny was not satisfied with all the troubles it gave her but began to work more havoc. As Karuna was standing



behind the door, her face quite pale with fear, her eyes fell on a snake that was slowly moving to the room. Unable to keep quiet any longer, Karuna shouted out for help. But instead of help, Kannan appeared on the scene with his fiery eyes and sprang forward like a tiger, catching Karuna and dragging her to the room. Karuna, who was too slender to be so roughly used, dropped down and swooned. Kannan did not leave her there and went on beating her due to his drunkenness. The neighbours, who were disturbed woke up and being beastly brutes never stopped Kannan from torturing Karuna, but they in turn shouted out that, they would at once go and complain to the police if Kannan continued disturbing them in the night. But Kannan was not the man to listen to threats. He went on his way. The neighbours reached the limit of their patience and they went to the police and complained against Kannan.

By that time the snake that brought in all the troubles, crept into the room and wriggled past Karuna. There was Sumangala sleeping with a sweet broad smile on her lips, as if she cared not for the hard life but took things as they came and went. The snake sprang on Sumangala's leg and bit her. A shriek and a cry calling her mother were clearly heard in the room. The cruel man looked back and once more turned his head away as if nothing had happened. He did not see the snake. With her last word, "Mother," on her lips the angel like Sumangala breathed her last.

Karuna, unconscious of all that had happened around her was lying on the floor, as calm as the unruffled sea in the night.

No sooner the policemen heard the complaint than they made their way to the house, hoping to get some money. The neighbours went into Kannan's house with the police men following them. The policemen made thundering noises with their boots and throats

and knew the whole matter. Kannan looked very calm and pitiable then. His eyes met the policemen's and the policemen thought that Kannan would very easily yield and give them what they wanted. But they were unable to get money from Kannan, and they chained him and took him to the station.

Meanwhile Karuna became conscious with the aid of a neighbour, who was sympathetic towards her. She told Karuna the whole story but was herself unaware of what had happened to poor Sumangala. She did not say anything about her. But Karuna after hearing the story was not so anxious to see her husband as much as she was, to see Sumangala. She got up and walked towards Sumangala's bed. There she saw Sumangala sleeping quietly. Karuna unable to know what had happened to Sumangala, did not wish to disturb her child and went to sleep. The next morning, as usual, Karuna got up and attended to her work. The clock struck 9. But still there was no sign of Sumangala waking up. Karuna was astonished. She went to Sumangala and shook her and called out to her. But there was no reply. And when Karuna lifted up Sumangala, she was stiff like a tender log of wood. Karuna was perplexed and confused. She feared that Sumangala was dead. She kept her hand near the nose to feel her breath. But to her great distress, it had stopped. She burst out crying that brought in all the neighbours. She cried and cried for a long time. Will the dead come back to life? After sometime she buried her daughter and grew a tender plant there. She abandoned her husband, renounced everything and joined the Seva Samiti to do service to others with many other girls. Though her sorrow was forgotten a little by the lapse of time, still, every Sunday she used to go to the little mound, look at the plant, shed tears for sometime and then return home sadly. The hand of fate is really inscrutable!

# MY MORNING ON A SCHOOL DAY

By Miss S. Padmini

A weird face was chasing me, while I was running breathless. God! How long it seemed to me! I often strove to shout, but the lump in my throat would not suffer the voice to escape forth on the empty wandering air. At last my voice was about to burst free, when I heard pattering of steps and a number of sounds. When I turned what did I behold? My mother standing by my side scolding me, "What Padma! It is six o' clock and not got up yet? Get up soon."

What a relief! It was after all a dream—all that about somebody chasing me and my running to escape from him! No sooner was my mother's back turned than I replaced my shawl and winked at my sister who pretended to sleep and then closed my eyes once again. Two minutes later, I shyly opened my eyes and saw my sister's bed empty. Of course, I could not sleep anymore, but was too lazy to get up and have my wash. I heard foot-steps and so got up and stretched myself, all the time yawning and trying to see if anybody was coming. I sat down with a big thud on an easy chair. I heard a creaking sound. Before I could see what the matter was, I was sitting on the floor on the torn canvas between the arms of the easy chair.

I soon got up and went to take my tooth brush only to find it gone. In the meantime, Mother, finding me not on my bed, came to the room and found me standing idle. Aren't you still ready for coffee?" I got into temper and shouted at the top of my voice.

"What am I to do if the brush is not in its place?"

Mother then searched for it and gave it to me with anger. I then went to the bathing-room, had a wash and then ran to the kitchen for my coffee.

I found that my sister Kamalu had had all the slices of bread including my share of it also. I demanded bread only to find all my attempts go in vain. In the meantime, Kamalu came there with a plate full of Jasmins. I ran up to her and gave her a good beating to avenge myself. The plate was upset and all the flowers fell down. "Serves you right! Why did you eat my share of the bread also? No wonder you weigh a ton!" I shouted.

My sister lodged a complaint with my mother, who was in the garden busy scolding the gardener, who had not planted the seedlings, sent by uncle, in the right place. I found my sister returning, her eyes filled with tears, because Mother had given her a good scolding for having disturbed her, while she was scolding the gardener! I laughed aloud which irritated her more.

I went to my room and scarcely had I opened my drawer to take out a book, before Mother came in with "Padma! have you tidied your rooms?"

Mother seems to give me eternal commands.

"No! I will do it this evening Amma."

"Leave that book there, get up, go and do it at once. You, come out with 'Procrastination is the thief of time'

when Kamalu is lazy and now, doesn't it apply to you as well? Go, after all it is a work of five minutes only."

"Yes! Yes! five minutes only! If you do it you will know. App-p-p-phal!"

There was no way out of the cage. I had to do it. It was eight O'clock by the time Kamala and I had finished tidying our rooms.

"Padma and Kamalu, go and have your bath soon, one by one. I have got to have my bath also."

Kamala and I obeyed, rushed to the bath-room with our clothes and I got in first and took possession of the tap. My sister shouted "Mummy! Look at Padma not allowing me to bathe"

Mother then said "Padma! you being older, be a little considerate and let her bathe first."

I got angry. "Why Amma? Oh! spoiling Kamalu? I came to the room first and according to the proverb 'First come, first served' I must bathe first."

See mummy's solicitude for her younger one!

"Doesn't matter, let her bathe."

"App-p-p-phal! go and bathe, but mind you come out very soon!" I had to obey mother you see.

Kamalu had her bath first and then I had mine. I now played a trick. When the time was half past eight, I made it nine and so by the time both of us had our bath, it was nine O'clock! Kamalu had asked the cook to keep the breakfast ready. As soon as I came out of the room, she asked me to have my meal, but I would not do it, before I had finished combing my hair. Kamalu got wild.

"What were you doing, when I had my bath? This is how you waste time and then get angry with me, if we are

late to school! Very fine! I am not to blame if we go late to school today."

Kamalu expects me to comb my hair before my bath! I then had my meal but, I finished it earlier than Kamalu, a lover of eating. Mother now offered me an orange.

"What do you take me for, Amma! Am I a glutton?"

I asked. To my surprise, I found, Kamalu had nearly finished one full orange. O God! I wonder how she managed to have the orange after meals.

I said to her, "Kamalu, it doesn't matter. Only an orange, you can gain more weight. What is there, after all only weight!"

"Yes Pam, you needn't make fun of me!" Kamalu retorted.

"Now Madam, who is late? Am I?" I asked her.

I came out and found that the rickshaw had not come. I cursed him, "Oh! how late! Amma, we had better dispense with this man." I then walked up and down, trying to think out a plan for going to school, when suddenly I heard the rattling of the wheels of the rickshaw and I took my books, asked my sister to come, bade 'good bye' to my mother and before we could make out anything, we were right on the road.

The Rickshawman was going at a very slow rate, while I was impatient. I asked him to hurry along. The more I asked him to hurry up the less seemed his speed, until at last I could bear it no longer. I then burst out with indignation. This seemed to have speeded him a little. He walked with longer strides for some time, but soon fell back to his own toddling gait.

At last our school was in sight. Oh! what a relief! Cars with their 'Bom!', Bom' coming out and going in and it really is surprising how accidents do

not occur. As we entered the school, we found that the bell had gone and all the children going into the Assembly Hall. Kamalu got angry with me and went on rebuking me all the way up the stairs. We at last went into the Hall and joined our respective forms. Thus ended the morning of our school day, inspite of my playing a trick on the clock!

### Dawn.

How doth the busy day dawn?  
The Sun from the Horizon Shone  
Like a King from the realms of light;  
Hurrah! for the morning is bright!

Then up up in the morning early  
For the earth is all green and Pearly  
When the bright sun is shining  
Sky has a golden lining.

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(Contd. from Page No. 346).

Mrs. Stanley dropped just as I had seen a hog drop when struck on the head with an axe. I thought she was dead, and I remember feeling relieved, because she wouldn't have to dream of it for years.

Two men laid her on the side of the road, where presently, I heard her groaning and calling her husband's name. We pulled the stake from the ground and thus removed the chain which held the torso. Some men spread on the ground a large piece of bagging, such as is used for bailing cotton, and they laid the remains upon it. Grasping its corners, we trudged with it to the house. One of the men supported Mrs. Stanley on his arm. She was moaning, and mumbling her husband's name. . .

When I reached my own home that afternoon I found my mother almost insane from fear. She had heard the news and, although she knew that Reveren' Stanley alone had been lynched, she was nearly out of her mind because I had been close to the place where it had happened.

I told the family of what I had seen. I could neither eat nor sleep. Every

post in the ground held, for my charged imagination, the blackened, crisped, faceless, handless and legless body of a man who had often laughed and talked with us. Mother later surprised me with the statement that, "after all, there are *some* decent white men left in the world; now, that old man who let Reveren' Stanley hide in his hay loft. . ."

But it was too late then to attempt undoing what had been so assiduously done through the most plastic years of my life. Mother had instilled in me, first, the fear of white men; later, when I was old enough to judge for myself, this fear had given place to hatred. Hatred was intensified by what I saw white men do. It was many years later, while going to school in the North, that my mind was able finally to evolve out of, shake itself free of, the grotesque "race" psychology in which the environment of my youth had clothed it. But those Southern boyhood nightmares have now become such memories as aid me in bringing the historical background of that section to the class conscious workers who are making such nightmares impossible.

## SPARKS FROM OUR LIFE

By H. D. Rajah.

AS. 4.

It is a collection of short stories written on close observation of men and matters. The pages bristle with the cry for the establishment of a new social order. The themes of the stories are brilliantly conceived and remarkably portrayed.

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# CONDEMNED !

By K. Bhashyam

Tomorrow morning, exactly at 6, they will do as the Judge has ordered in his verdict. They will "hang me by the neck till I am dead."

Yes. "Till I am dead." Dead! that does not worry me at all. Death has never had any terrors for me. I am not afraid like Hamlet to take a plunge in the waters of Lethe that I may enter that "undiscovered country from

is an infinite tragedy in my death, which you outside the prison walls will never know; They will not allow me to write what I feel just now. They will never permit me to tell the youths that I am bitterly disillusioned. For in that disillusionment I have discovered the truth. And truth is dangerous.

There is a fire burning in me. It is consuming me faster than the hang-



"There is a fire burning in me."

whose bourn no traveller returns." The day I saw them dragging out seven corpses from the well—a man, his wife and their five children—I knew that there were occasions when death was a release.

It is not, therefore, my impending doom that now troubles my mind. Not in the least. It is something else. There

man's nose can take away my life. It is the fire of an irrepressible desire—the desire to make one last speech before I go down the gallows. One speech! A few words from the depths of my being, from the burning crucible of my heart. Something that will go home to my desperate comrades, to the noble youths who

are throwing themselves like moths into the flame. I wish to speak to them—the fiery, freedom loving youths for whom I see a great future. If the Government, who will relentlessly see me hanged to-morrow, would only permit me to deliver but one address to the youths! If they would only allow me to tell my comrades what I know and what I feel? What a terrible thing it is to die with the most precious truth in the world in one's bosom and its message undelivered! What an unutterable tragedy, what a Himalayan waste of experience! And that is what fills my heart just now with infinite sadness—not the fact that I have only twelve more hours to swing.

Swing! Yes, I shall swing, not in the air, but in the dark pit, whose darkness my eyes will never perceive. I see before mine eyes the noose, shining, glittering, inviting me to my doom. I can see myself dangling, lifeless, no longer a menace to that Justice and that Law, which I abhorred and which have condemned me. I shall cease to trouble them corporeally. But will I not haunt them eternally, visit their sleep like a nightmare and rob them of the peace which they are vainly purchasing at the price of my life and that of many others?

Yet will I leave them in repose if they would only grant my one request before they take me to the scaffold. I would entreat them—I who am ready to lose my life without shedding a tear and with not one pang of remorse—I would beg of them to allow me to speak but for ten minutes to those young men and women.

I would tell them—were I permitted—what a terrible futility this *game* of theirs is. Yes. It is only a game and a dear and futile game at that. I would open my heart to them, tell them with all the sincerity I can gather, what

dreadful thing it is to take, or even attempt to take, another man's life in vain.

They will listen to me. They did not listen to others, for they were suspect. They know that these "honest" folk who hasten to inform the world about their "horror" at "dastardly outrages" are the worst terrorists in the world, terrorising into submission the mass of men by organised violence, by Law, by economic power and by the threats of dismissal and starvation. But I have been accused of terrorism and sentenced to the extreme penalty the law can inflict. The youths whom I want to address will not suspect me. They will even be eager to hear me. They would be yearning to know what one of them, who had been the victim of like passions, now felt about his bitter, fatal experience.

But will the authorities permit me? They will not. I know, *they* don't trust me. They will think all I am asking for is only one more opportunity to incite the youths to more homicidal ventures. They cannot believe that I am now anxious with all my heart to turn the youths from their suicidal course.

I cannot tell them—in case I am allowed to address them (surely, a vain-hope)—I cannot tell them, of course, to reconcile themselves to the existing system. No, not for all the worlds. That is unthinkable, sheerly impossible. I believe in social equality, in the liberation of man from exploitation. I believe in a society in which speaking the bare truth will not land one in the gaol. I believe in a social order in which peace and "order" will not be maintained by bayonets and the C.I.D., but by the voluntary desire of men and women to live in the fellowship of common labour and common enjoyment of the fruits of labour. Nothing can persuade me to believe that the present system secures any of these. And these are what I feel so vital and indispensable for a

meaningful life that in their absence I feel my only obligation is to revolt. Not blind revolt. That leads only to self-destruction. No, what I want is intelligent revolt—revolt in which the means are suited to the ends and do not get themselves lost in their intricacies.

And, therefore, even if I am permitted to deliver the message of my life and my death I shall not be singing a tune agreeable to the ears of those who have condemned me. By everything I hold dear I shall not do that. But I shall certainly plead, with all the sincerity of one who has only a few more sands of the hour-glass to live, that "terrorism," the murder of individuals who are only the tools of this system of exploitation, is futile and is against all the principles in which they profess to believe and for which they appear to be ready to lay down their lives. I shall tell them that it is even unworthy of people whose aim is to bring about a new human social order into existence. I will tell them how I passed through a living hell since the moment I missed fire till I was caught in a lone alley by seven armed police; what an excruciating torture it was—suspecting and dreading every body, afraid to show one's head by daylight, unable to move about freely, and at every moment in bitter expectation of the inevitable arrest. And all this for what?

"Comrades!" I will conclude, making a last desperate appeal to sanity. "Comrades, in a few hours I would be paying for my folly with my life. But that would not be too big a price if even one of you, after hearing all that I have said, will give up entirely the notion that freedom can be achieved by 'terrorising' a few officials. I entreat you in the name of all you hold precious to ponder over what I have said. You will then realise, as I have realised, that the road to freedom is long and different. Let us bury all this tragic stupidity which has cost this fair land of ours the life of many a

great youth full of that enthusiasm and will to suffer out of which a nation makes its history. When I think of those gallant but wild youths, who have offered themselves hastily, unwisely to the Moloch of the bomb-cult, a vast, uncontainable sadness fills my heart. I feel bitterly the tragedy of wasted lives and blasted careers. A fire has been consuming me from the moment the Judge passed the sentence of death on me. I have been burning to tell you what I felt and what I feel about this monstrous futility, which I thought was heroic, noble and glorious, but which appears now to me an ugly, wicked and stupendously foolish thing. There is not, in my opinion, one good thing to be said about it. It clouds our vision and blunts our thought and makes us slaves of the means and forget the ends. All our time and all our energies are spent in acquiring the petty means of destruction and then in eluding the vigilance of the minions of the law. Meanwhile the masses remain steeped in ignorance, superstition and destitution.

"Comrades," I shall cry, ere I end my peroration; abandon this cult and go to the masses. Bring light to them. That light will open the eyes of the masses. And when their eyes are open they will thirst for liberty. That thirst will destroy all the rubbish of ages. Comrades adieu!"

But what is the use of all these thoughts? To-morrow I will be no more. They will all read in the papers "Anantaram, who was sentenced to be hanged on a charge of attempting to murder Mr..... of..... was taken to the gallows precisely at 6 this morning. The youth, it is reported, was calm throughout the proceedings."

They will then (some after a slight pause, with a feeling of resentment and pity) pass on to the next column to know who has won the Governor's Plate or how many runs Bradman has made in the Second Test.

## STRUGGLING WITH TIME

By S V. V.

The barber's practised professional eye alone could have discovered it at that stage—the sprouting of the first white hair on Uncle's head. "Los! Sir, you are getting old", interjected the barber; and Uncle was terribly ruffled. The first warning against the perfidy of Time always comes to us from that quarter. Time has a habit of commencing its operations with the hair. It ushers the first exuberance of youth by marking your upper lip with a thin streak of black; and when it grows on you, it takes hold of your tuft first and gives you a shake down; with hands previously dipped in whitewash. Uncle collapsed in his chair at the idea. He was unwilling to become old. In fact no one wants to do it. We would all of us be rather young and foolish than grow old and be wise. Uncle resented even the suggestion.

"Pluck the damn thing out", shrieked Uncle, as if Time was in front of him, and he was then and there putting his foot firmly down upon it. The offending hair was uprooted. When, next time, he surrendered his head to the barber, "There are two of them this time, Sir" he observed with quite a professional stoicism. Uncle bellowed a hideous imprecation.

"Pluck them out too, and as many of the infernal things as appear" he yelled.

"I won't do that, Sir, if I were you", advised the barber, "I have known them ever since I took the razor in my hand. They have a way of avenging you by sending quite a crop of them if you meddle with one or two. It may be due to temporary anemia, Sir. Try a tonic, healthy food, fruits, salads or things of that sort" he suggested.

The situation was sad to contemplate. Uncle looked into the mirror. There were yet only two of them, and ought to be nothing in the midst of a whole head of black foliage, but they seemed to blink aggressively and dominate the whole cranial landscape (that is always the way with the whites). Healthy food and salads left only indigestion (probably due to too anxious eating), and Uncle's head was gradually turning into iron grey, with the colours arranged in inartistic patches too. He tried dyeing and went in for hair oils that made grey hairs black—but to no purpose. There was nothing left for Uncle to do except to hide his head under a turban, which he did by making it a permanent organ of the body. Uncle at once went to the tailor and ordered a smarter set of clothes! Have you ever seen a grey haired man? You would find him always over-dressed, wanting the world to believe that the white hair was not due to old age but to some internal cause, the disorder of the liver.

Time next pulled Uncle by the tooth; and two of his front teeth dropped down even without notice. Uncle became grief stricken, and began to feel, as a first effect, that life held nothing further for him down here in this world. He went into sulks and locked himself in, (as he believed), better to think the matter out. But we never thought that he would do anything so rash as pulling out the remaining teeth and wait moodily for new ones to be made, with his mouth receding into the back of his head. But he was resolved to be young, if art could make it.

Life after this event was a bit of a strain in our house. We really couldn't understand Uncle when he told us to do



anything, for his articulation became so difficult to catch. And then we could never know what Uncle would eat. Our old cook who himself had a new set of teeth last November, and knew what it was like, sympathetically suggested that kanji and milk were the only things for it. And Uncle absorbed them mournfully, betweenwhiles ringing up the dentist every hour to ascertain what progress he was making with the new set. When Uncle was sometimes in a brighter mood, the little kiddy would climb up his knee, and ask mischievously, "Why Uncle, would you crack some nuts?" And Uncle would laugh, shake his fist lovingly and say "Wait, wait, let me get my new teeth." Every dainty in the house was put off until Uncle got his teeth. After visiting the dentist for a "preliminary fitting" or two, and a final 'try-on'; Uncle came home one evening in his new teeth, snapping them vigorously, we supposed, for practice. There was at first a little murmur that they were a little too tight somewhere, or that they ought to be a little fuller in the front, but Uncle on the whole expressed satisfaction.

"Let us have a good solid meal now," he said, and while the solid meal was getting ready, Uncle was observed doing a bit of a trial grinding, preliminary gnashing, and other anticipatory

movements of the lower jaw to fit himself for the eating. The meal was a success, though Uncle couldn't manage the new teeth with complete confidence. They met where the natural ones did not, and did not meet where the others did. It, of course, took some days before complete contact could be established all along the front between the upper and the lower rows; but gradually everything came alright. And Uncle looked as young as he wished himself to be.

Time next gripped Uncle in the loins, and he gave the struggle away. "There is no use of tampering with Providence" he said, and declared himself an old man. Uncle now sits in his arm chair in a cosy corner of our house quite grey, and ergo, wise. He tells us stories of his early days how his life was one of simple living and high thinking, how he never cared for the frijolities of the flesh but put his goal high in the heavens. When we do anything he disapproves, he says it was never so in his time. In his time youths never lost their heads as we do, never cared for pink ties or holland shorts, but shone in their natural unadorned beauty. And we sit under his feet and strive to become Saints, except the eldest of us, who always said "Uncle never got this wisdom except by kicking against it."

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# RELIEF OF AGRICULTURAL INDEBTEDNESS

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## THREEFOLD ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM

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By V. Ramadas Pantulu

The problem of relief of agricultural indebtedness has, in my opinion, three definite and distinct aspects. The question of providing seasonal credit to the agriculturist for his occupational and domestic needs and organising and reforming the agencies from which such credit is derived is a different problem from that of relieving him from the effects of his indebtedness. Credit which is advanced to the agriculturist and repaid by him annually out of his agricultural and other income is a form of indebtedness which is more helpful to him than harmful, provided such debt is obtained on reasonable terms and contracted for productive purposes. It is estimated that about 70 to 80 crores of rupees are thus borrowed annually and repaid in a large portion by agriculturists and other small scale debtors in this province. When such credit is derived on usurious and excessively onerous terms or utilised on wasteful expenditure, portions of it become incapable of repayment and the proportion of the debt which thus remains unpaid will largely depend upon the magnitude of the burdens imposed on the borrower in the shape of interest and other conditions of the loan. This unpaid debt gets accreted to the prior debt and is thus a potent cause of increased indebtedness. The problem of providing normal credit on reasonable terms to agriculturists is therefore one of great importance as a check on the growth of indebtedness and its solution consists in organising and reforming the

credit agencies which cater to the financial needs of the agriculturist.

The question of relieving the agriculturist from the consequences of indebtedness is different from that of providing seasonal credit. The chronic indebtedness of the agriculturist has been an outstanding feature and a troublesome factor on Indian rural economy. If indebtedness of the agriculturist is a perennial problem, then something must be done to prevent his being unduly exploited by creditors and pressed below the margin of economic usefulness in the larger interests of national economy. This is an aspect of the problem which stands by itself.

The acuteness of the problem has become intensified by the effects of the economic depression which has brought about substantial curtailment of the agricultural incomes and an unbearable increase in the burden of the outstanding debt. A large portion of this debt has simply become incapable of liquidation in a large portion. The abnormal conditions brought about by the economic depression have given rise to a third aspect of the problem namely, necessity for the application of extraordinary and desperate remedies to meet the present situation. It is to be hoped that this will not be a standing problem with us.

Unless we keep these three different aspects of the problem definitely in mind and proceed to deal with them as

such, it will lead to a good deal of confusion. The divergence of opinion and disagreement on the question of concrete legislative and administrative action that has to be taken to give protection and relief to agriculturists is in some measure due to the mixing up of these three aspects of the problem.

*Investigation into the causes of  
Rural Indebtedness.*

There is now no disposition in any responsible quarter to deny that the position of the agriculturists as regards indebtedness is too serious to admit of a stand-still policy. Therefore, many provincial governments and some legislatures are actively engaged in the search of remedial measures, transitory and permanent, and programmes of urgent action to be taken. Nevertheless, the questionnaire framed by the Special Officer appointed by the Local Government "to investigate rural in-

debtedness in the presidency" makes the gravity or otherwise of rural indebtedness itself an issue for investigation (vide question No. 13). The rest of the questionnaire is mainly devoted to an enquiry into the general causes and consequences of agricultural indebtedness and other allied fundamental matters on which more than one committee had already reported and on which it is difficult to throw any fresh light.

An enquiry into the causes of indebtedness at the present stage will be useful only in so far as it helps to find remedial measures by the removal of those causes to the extent possible. Otherwise, it becomes academic and not of immediate practical value. In the questionnaire issued by the special officer, the following causes of indebtedness are mentioned: "Over-population, fragmentation of holdings, cattle mor-

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tality, vicissitudes of seasons, lack of insurance facilities, the inherent character of the people coupled with lack of education and the presence of the moneylender in the village, and this enumeration is followed by a question, "What proportion of the total debt would you ascribe to each of the different causes?" No one ever suggested, so far as I know, that a specific proportion of rural debt is attributable to a particular cause, and it is certainly impossible for the most expert economist and statistician to allocate particular proportions of the debt to each of these specific causes. Moreover, this enumeration of the causes leaves out the more important causes of indebtedness to which the bulk of it must be attributed. More than half a century ago, the question was considered by the Commission appointed to investigate into the causes of agrarian riots which occurred in the Deccan in 1875; and

later Sir Frederick Nicholson investigated the same question with special reference to this province and in many of the conclusions, the Deccan Commission and Sir Frederick Nicholson were in agreement. Both of them have mentioned *the chronic poverty of the agriculturist* as one of the main causes for his indebtedness and said that debt is itself a potent cause for further growth of debt giving rise to a vicious circle. Both the Deccan Commission and Sir Frederick Nicholson mentioned the rigid land revenue system of fixed demand on land as another cause of rural indebtedness. Other commissions and committees have dealt with the unecological and unremunerative nature of a large proportion of agricultural industry carried on in this country by small agriculturists and the curtailment of the agriculturist's income by loss of subsidiary occupation as contributory causes for poverty of the masses

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and of indebtedness which is the result and not the cause of the poverty. There is no reference to these causes in the questionnaire of the special officer, and if, he is of opinion that no portion of the debt is attributable to these causes, it is difficult to agree with him.

### *Measures of Relief and Protection to Debtors*

It must be admitted that by far the most important causes of indebtedness do not lend themselves to a simple legislative or administrative solution. General poverty of the masses, vicissitudes of seasons and climatic conditions, uneconomic nature of a large part of agricultural industry by small peasants, diminution in the agriculturists' incomes by the loss of subsidiary occupations, effect of fluctuating price levels on credit, social habits of the people and the like, so far as they can be said to be contributory causes of indebtedness of the rural masses, require for their removal State action and economic planning on a nation-wide scale. Measures to increase the income and purchasing power of the agriculturist, by construction of irrigation and drainage works to overcome the physical and climatic conditions, moderating the burden of land revenue, promotion of cottage and subsidiary industries, improvement of agricultural industry, improvement of communications and marketing facilities, adjusting of currency and banking policies to the needs and interest of Indian agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, schemes of social and economic reform and the like have no doubt an intimate bearing on indebtedness, but are essentially parts of State policy to increase the earning and purchasing power of the masses, and are not measures of debt relief except in the sense that mitigation of poverty will reduce indebtedness.

I shall therefore confine myself to measures of debt relief as such in respect of which immediate and definite

action is called for. In formulating measures of debt relief, the most important thing to be borne in mind is that the question of protection to and relief of agricultural debtors must be looked at from a purely economic standpoint and that measures adopted in relation thereto should be placed above all political, communal and social prejudices and controversies. Further, our endeavour should be to adjust the relation between creditor and debtor in the most equitable manner avoiding injustice to either as far as possible. In making my suggestions, I have tried to act on these principles. I shall classify by the measures of relief under these categories according as they pertain to one or other of the three aspects of the problem I have already referred to.

### *1. Organisation and Reform of Agencies for Rural Credit*

(a) *Cooperative credit*:—The expansion of the co-operative credit of all varieties through rural credit societies and land Mortgage banks is in my opinion, the best solution for providing credit on reasonable terms and under beneficial conditions to the agriculturists. I feel that no other agency is equally capable of serving his economic needs. I plead for a larger appreciation of the benefits of co-operative credit and for greater interest in its development on the part of the friends of the agriculturists. It is to be hoped that the proposed Rural Credit Section of the Reserve Bank will put agricultural finance and Cooperative Credit in this country on a firm and satisfactory basis.

(b) *Regulation of moneylender's Accounts and practices*:—The question of credit to agriculturist is intimately bound up with the regulation of money-lending as the urban and rural money-lender is still the chief agency from which the agriculturist derives his credit. I feel that legislation for the regulation of moneylenders' accounts and practices is an essential measure of reform connected with the placing of

agencies of rural credit on a sound and satisfactory basis. The Central and Provincial Banking Enquiry Committees which have gone into the question very fully, made very valuable recommendations on this question and in the Punjab and United Provinces some definite legislative action to regulate moneylending has been taken on these recommendations. I hope and trust that Madras will begin to act. The moneylending profession itself has, in my opinion, a great deal to gain by coming under State regulation. Such regulation will help to raise the status of a moneylender to that of a recognised banker and to link up the indigenous banker with the regular modern banking system of the country.

## *II. Prevention of Undue Exploitation and Economic oppression of debtors by creditors:—*

In regard to *the nature and scope of measures necessary to deal with the problem affording protection to debtors against usury and other forms of economic exploitation by creditors*, there is a great divergence of opinion. There is a controversy practically on every measure that has been hitherto suggested.

I beg to suggest the following lines of action, though I am alive to the fact that it will be difficult to secure any substantial amount of agreement on them.

(a) *Rule of Damtupat*.—I think there must be very definite statutory limitations on the rate of interest which a creditor can charge. The Law of Damtupat has the sanction of ancient Hindu law givers and is both just and humane. In accordance with this rule, the aggregate amount of the loan (principal and interest) should not exceed twice the principal amount. The adoption of the rule of Damtupat by modern legislatures will, in my opinion, be fully justified. In many countries the period of limitation prescribed for recovery of loans is rigorously curtailed so as to prevent the augmentation of the loan

by accumulation of interest. The law of Damtupat has the same effect.

(b) *Fixing Limits of Interest Rates*.—A maximum rate of interest on different kinds of loans may, in my opinion, be also usefully fixed by the legislature. I know that it is almost taken for granted that it is legally and economically impossible to fix any such limit. I am unable to see why it should be impossible to do so. If for instance there is a law in a province that the rate of interest charged by moneylenders should not exceed the prevailing rate of interest charged by co-operative societies, I do not find anything unjust or iniquitable in such a law. I am only mentioning it by way of illustration.

(c) *Exception of certain income from attachment*.—The recommendation of the Royal Commission on Labour to exempt salaries, wages and earnings up to a limit of Rs. 100 from attachment is, I think, a very necessary measure of relief. It must be extended to other classes of debtors besides industrial debtors though other limits may be fixed suitable to each trade or profession. The provision of section 60 of the Civil Procedure Code fixing the limit of unattachable salary at Rs. 40 is clearly inadequate. Moreover, it applies only to public officers and servants of railway companies and local authorities and not to other classes of employees. In most of the Statutes enacted in the last three or four years in the dominions of the British Commonwealth such as Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, Farm Debt Relief Boards which are constituted to give relief to agriculturists are directed to leave an adequate sum to cover the sustenance—allowance of the indebted farmer before meeting the claims of the creditors and even of the Crown. The recommendation of the Whitley Commission is more or less in accordance with the spirit of these Modern Statutes.

(d) *Rural Insolvency Act*.—A suitable machinery to give speedy discharge to

rural insolvent debtors who are honest and willing to place all their assets at the disposal of the creditors should be set up as recommended by the Royal Commission on Agriculture. Under present conditions, an agriculturist who is unable to repay his debts but is ready and willing to place all his assets at the disposal of the court or his creditors is unable to get a discharge without enormous expenditure and delay which almost amount to denial of relief, and is unable to get out of the shackles of his debt and earn an honest livelihood elsewhere as a free man. This must be remedied.

(e) *Power to revise contracts.*—Tribunals who decide claims for recovery of debts must be invested with very wide powers of interference with contracts between creditors and debtors so as to relieve the latter from the effects of usury and penalties under these contracts. The existing statutory measures such as the Usurious Loans Act and the provisions of the Indian Contract Act have been found to be inadequate and they should be strengthened. As the relief to the debtor in these cases comes as a result of a judicial determination by impartial tribunals, there need be no apprehension of the misuse of such powers.

(f) *Abolition of arrest and imprisonment except in the case of recalcitrant and fraudulent debtors.*—I feel that provision for arrest and imprisonment of debtors is undesirable and should, if possible, be deleted from the Statute Book except in regard to recalcitrant and fraudulent debtors, who are able to pay, but wilfully evade payment, in the opinion of the Court executing the decree. This is a reasonable and sufficient provision to safeguard to the creditors' interests. I consider that in no system of civilised jurisprudence, poverty should be penalised to the extent of putting an honest debtor in jail. It is an extreme form of coercion which should be done away with.

Moreover, the imprisonment of the earning member of a family deprives his dependents in the family of means of livelihood and works considerable hardship.

(g) *Restraint on alienation of agricultural land.*—There is another measure of relief which has been adopted in the Punjab, part of the United Provinces and the Deccan, viz., restraint on voluntary and involuntary alienation of agricultural land to prevent such lands from passing from the hands of the agriculturists into those of the moneylenders. This measure is sometimes advocated for adoption in this province also. I personally think that legislation to prevent alienation of land in this province is undesirable. It will place the agriculturists in this province, who are peasant proprietors with heritable and transferable interests in their holdings at great disadvantage, and on the whole I feel that it will operate more to their detriment and prejudice than to their benefit. The experience of the provinces, where it is being tried has not been happy. Therefore, I shall not advocate it.

### *III. Measures to deal with abnormal conditions created by the depression.*

(a) *Conciliation of debt.*—Adoption of measures for the compulsory conciliation of debts so as to scale them down to the extent of the debtors capacity to repay is, I think, a very necessary measure of relief which is called for in the abnormal conditions created by the acute economic depression. There seems to be much scepticism about the chances of success of such a scheme. We are however not asked to write on a clean slate. The experiment is being tried at least in one province in India, namely, the Central Provinces. A review of the working of one of the debt conciliation boards in that province, namely, Khurai Debt Conciliation Board, recently issued by the Central Provinces Government is

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*Contd. from Page 368.*

a very interesting document. The review says that during the period of a year and a half covered by it, 2790 applications involving debts amounting to Rs. 30.67 lakhs were received. Certificates under section 15 (1) of the act declaring that the creditors had unreasonably refused amicable settlement were issued in 901 cases for debts aggregating to Rs. 12.96 lakhs. This means that these debts will not carry any further interest and that the creditors will not get their costs if they go to Court. To that extent it is a tangible means of relief to the debtors concerned. The review goes on to point out that agreements under section 12 (1) between creditors and debtors were executed in 1693 cases for debts aggregating to Rs. 16.17 lakhs and that debts were conciliated for a sum of Rs. 8.37 lakhs, resulting in a remission of 48.3 per cent of the demand. It is further pointed out that even in regard to secured debts, 20 per cent had come under agreement. It is also reported that a certain amount of private conciliation of debts has been carried out in the area, owing to the moral pressure of the atmosphere created by the existence of conciliation boards. The Government of the Central Provinces proceed to say that *there is no evidence to indicate that operations of the Board have resulted in any appreciable restriction of agricultural credit for current needs.* The experiment tried in the Bhavanagar State under the guidance of Sir Prabhasankar Pattani is another instance of the success of a debt conciliation scheme. Those who doubt the efficacy of debt conciliation as a measure of relief of agricultural indebtedness, especially the Government of Madras, will I hope revise their opinion in the light of facts disclosed in the review of the Central Provinces Government and the Bhavanagar experiment. I hope and trust that the predilections of our Govern-

ment will not be allowed to influence their decision in regard to the matter and that the Debt Conciliation Bill introduced into the Council by Dewan Bahadur T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar will be allowed to be placed on the Statute Book at the earliest possible opportunity.

*Conciliation of Co-operative Debt:—* It may be asked whether co-operative institutions are to be exempted from the operation of such schemes by which their loans would be scaled down, because they have been lending to agriculturists at distinctly lower rates of interest and no unfair dealing could be associated in respect of their loans to their members. It cannot be said that in Madras, co-operative societies are in all cases lending at distinctly lower rates than private moneylenders, particularly agriculturist moneylenders, especially where land is mortgaged. Again, it will be creating bad blood between our institutions and private creditors by any invidious distinction between the two, especially where there had been no foul play by the latter; lastly an understanding has been arrived at that where the reserve funds of co-operative societies could be utilised for the purpose, scheme of conciliation would work in co-operative institutions also. After all, why should this opportunity of writing off bad debts be lost by co-operative societies? I therefore unhesitatingly advocate that co-operative credit must also come under debt conciliation operations.

(b) *Protection Orders:—* Some further transitory measures of relief are called for to deal with the situation created by the abnormal conditions now prevailing. Prevention of sales of agricultural land under conditions which will result in its passing away from the hands of the debtor for very low prices which now prevail and issue of protection certificates to agricultural debtors during specified periods or pending debt conciliation operations are measures

which must be said to be reasonable and are called for under the present circumstances.

*The Main objections to measures of protection and relief answered:*

Those who object to such measures of relief of indebtedness urge various grounds against their adoption. I shall deal with two of them which are pressed with great vehemence and which are also specifically referred to in the questionnaire of the special officer:—

(1) It is said that measures of the nature suggested above destroy the sanctity of contract between the creditors and debtors. It is true that no relief can be given to a debtor unless the creditor foregoes or is denied a part of his "legal" claim. But it cannot be denied that the contracts between the creditors and debtors have undergone serious modifications to the prejudice of the latter for causes beyond their control by the effect of fluctuations in price levels, curtailment of incomes and other causes. As a result of these factors, the burden of the debt has greatly increased for no fault of the debtor and no merit of the creditor and there is nothing in justice, equity or good conscience to compel the enforcement of these contracts in their entirety to the disadvantage of the debtor and to the advantage of the creditor. Such sanctity as there is, is a mere "legal" sanctity *created by an act of Legislature* and not "moral" sanctity of the nature of immutable divine law. *Law must sometimes* undergo modifications in the interest of larger public and national interests.

(2) The other objection raised against such measures is that they will result ultimately in restriction of credit to agriculturist and thus operate to his disadvantage, instead of being helpful to him. I am unable to agree with this view. There is no reason for credit on reasonable terms not flowing through usual channels simply because money-

lending is regulated or power of putting an honest debtor in jail is taken away or salaries and wages which are absolutely necessary for the bare sustenance of the debtor are exempted from attachment or debts which are piled up by addition of compound interest and other extortionate claims are sought to be conciliated and pared down. The Central Provinces Government have said that debt conciliation operations in that province have not as a matter of fact restricted credit. Credit is advanced in the hope that in the majority of cases, it will come out of the industry for which it is advanced and repaid because it will benefit the borrower himself to do so, and not merely because power of coercion to effect recovery exist on the Statute Book.

*Conclusion.*

The problem of indebtedness is in its larger aspect and ultimate effect on national economy, not a mere matter between creditor and debtor. The burden of debt with its annual drain of interest at exorbitant rates will severely reduce the balance at the disposal of the peasant to improve agriculture. The low economic standard of the ryot, will in its turn, lead, among other consequences, to deterioration of the soil and impairing the productivity of the land. Land is a national asset and the State is bound to preserve it in an efficient condition for the benefit of future generations. The State also derives substantial part of its revenue from land. These considerations alone ought to be sufficient to induce the State to intervene in the solution of the problem. There is yet another and perhaps from the standpoint of the State, a more serious aspect of the question. An experienced British administrator has said that "if a large body of people is oppressed by a load of debt, they must necessarily become dispirited and discontented not only with the load of the debt itself, but also with the classes to whom debt is owing and with the agencies to whom the severity of

the debt is attributed." It is therefore necessary for the Government, not only in the interests of the people but also in its own interests, to see that the evil does not spread too far and that its consequences are mitigated as much as

possible. I plead for economic betterment of the agricultural classes by the adoption of prompt and adequate measures to lift the crushing burden of indebtedness from his back under which he is bowed down.



## WHITHER CONGRESS ?

By N. Bharadwaj.

Congress members of the Assembly, as the rest of them, have returned home—but there is a difference. The others have not been holding meetings and delivering lectures on "What Congressmen did in the Assembly." They are content, perhaps, to let their achievements speak for themselves. But our congress M. L. A.s with a genius for "taking the people into their confidence," (and even asking the Government to take them into *their* confidence) are losing no time to acquaint the people with their work in the Assembly. "We inflicted defeat after defeat on the Government. We showed to the whole world that this Government is irresponsible and has not the support of the people. We wore Khaddar Caps. We did not generally attend the bureaucracy's social functions."

### Future Work.

It is significant that our Congress M.L.A.s and the Congress Parliamentary Board are strangely silent as to what they are going to do next. In all their speeches and their more prolific interviews to the press one learns nothing about their future plans. Of course, they are going to contest the elections, both in the provinces and the elections to the Indian legislature, whether under the present constitution or under the 'reformed' one. That is the only definite programme which they seem at present to be having. Beyond that all is a cloud of words.

The truth is the congress leaders' tactics have failed miserably. The congress can no longer lead any mass movement against imperialism for the simple reason that the masses will not come out against imperialism alone but against the Indian landlord, money-lender and capitalist also. And that the congress, on its own account, will never allow.

The congress leadership has become degenerate. The policy of filling up jails (Satyagraha), which was the highest expression of militant opposition to Imperialism launched by the congress, has proved to be a weapon intended to extract a few more concessions from the British. British Imperialism is now perfectly aware that Indian capital can be bought, that while the congress is making its wail (inside and outside the jails) it can strike a bargain with Mr. Mody and engage Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetty to advertise the benefit of Ottawa. And Shanmukham was also once a great congressman.

Indian capital (along with Indian Landlords and princes) is no longer anxious to fight Imperialism. It is afraid of the middle-class, (of which the congress is mainly composed) of the workers and the peasants. And without these classes in the struggle, British Imperialism can never be fought.

The question is therefore quite pertinent, "What is the congress going to do

next?" The proceedings of the Jubbulpore session of the All India Congress Committee and the speeches and statements of congress leaders before and after the session provide some sort of satisfactory answer to this question.

### The Congress Policy.

The most striking fact about Congress policy in recent years is that it represents an era of reaction. I mean by this expression the progressive shifting in the policy of the congress in the direction of making it less and less offensive to British Imperialism and the adoption of methods intended to prevent any kind of clash with the Imperialist authority.

The first step in this reaction was the absolute abandonment of Civil Disobedience. Abandonment of a struggle need not always lead to reaction. There are stages in a struggle like the nationalist, which forms a whole epoch itself, when a retreat would not mean a *reaction*. But that is a retreat which is dictated by the circumstances; and which is intended only to be temporary and just to afford breathing time for launching the offensive again. Was that the kind of retreat intended by the congress leaders when they withdrew civil resistance in its entirety. I cannot concede it was a retreat of that kind. I contend it was a retreat of a party, which having waged a futile struggle and lost it was retreating in confusion, *losing confidence in itself* and in the possibility and necessity of launching a struggle when the next occasion arose. Is this view correct? I believe this view is substantiated by every decision made by the congress and every statement made by official congressmen since the Poona decisions.

(1) Firstly, there is not a single congress leader who is keen on the revival of civil disobedience even as a remote contingency. In almost every statement made by congress leaders, emphasis is laid on this "change of

heart" on the part of the congress and accusing the Government of showing no "change of heart." The accusation was repeated for five-hundredth time by Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant in his speech on the resolution he moved at the Jubbulpore meeting of the A.I.C.C. on the ban still retained on certain congress organisations.

While not making the slightest reference to Civil resistance, every attempt is being made to convince the bureaucracy that the congress is no longer an unconstitutional organisation. The pretence, therefore, of being different from the liberals in standing by the fetish of "constitutionalism, through thick and thin has been given up in fact, if not in words.

To maintain the prestige of Gandhiji as an unbeaten Satyagrahi, as one who cannot give up his principle of civil resistance on any score, he has been allowed to "retire" from the congress. The main object of this "retirement," again, is to convince the bureaucracy that the only inveterate "unconstitutionalist" is not inside the congress.

### Attitude towards Congress Socialist Party.

(ii) The congress attitude towards the new born Congress Socialist Party has been one of suzerainty, as a tiny bit of nuisance. It will be remembered what a fuss the Working Committee made when the Socialist Party came into existence, saying that Socialism could not be achieved through non-violence and therefore opposed to the Congress. Of course, the resolution was intended to serve two purposes: for one thing, it was intended to demonstrate to British Imperialism that even if the Indian masses were wiped out to a man not a little finger would be raised against it; for another, it was intended to assure the Millowner, the money-lenders and the Zamindars and Landlords that whatever might happen, the Congress would



see to it that the Socialists did not do any harm to them. And our Congress Socialist Comrades instead of pointing out the real reactionary character of the Working Committee's resolution, hastened to show that in regard to non-violence they did not yield the palm to Gandhi or any one else. One may think that they did not mean that their socialism was anything serious.

Further, every congress leader has been attacking the Congress Socialists, in season and out of season. Nothing shows more unmistakably the reactionary nature of the present congress leadership than this condemnation of socialism. All the world over, the biggest and the smallest independent capitalist countries are in the throes of an economic crisis out of which there appears to be no solution except the socialist reconstruction of society. And our self-satisfied leaders of the congress, in their supreme understanding, believe that if the substance of independence, (by which Heaven alone knows what they mean) is granted India's problems will be solved. They will not touch the landlords, the usurers, the Zemindars and princes, they will not touch British investments in India or the Indian debt to Britain (it must be noted the Congress has absolutely repudiated the suggestion that it ever thought of repudiating India's public debt!)—they will not touch any of these. And yet one wonders, what kind of independence the Congress is going to secure for the masses. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the great Congress leader in the Assembly, whose zeal for serving the interests of the Indian princes is only comparable with his inveterate opposition to socialism, in a statement to the Press soon after the Jubbulpore Meeting, said that the "Socialist attitude was based on entirely wrong facts." His defence of his work and that of his gallant colleagues in the Assembly was praiseworthy. Such *esprit de corps* was all the more needed, as in the future he would need all his

eloquence and sophistry to explain away his and their actions. Mr. Desai is reported to have stated (*Vide The Hindu*, 29-4-35, p. 11) that "he did not think that the struggle between classes would take us nearer our goal, but would only retard our progress." This betrays a pitiful ignorance of the struggle that is going on in India. Will Mr. Desai deny that the Indian struggle for freedom is a class struggle, of the Indian workers, peasants, the middle class and the progressive section of the Indian bourgeoisie against British Imperialism and its Indian allies, mainly its own bureaucracy, feudal elements like the landlords and Zemindars and the Indian princes? Can the Congress leaders hide this naked fact that the nationalist struggle is a class struggle; and that the dismal failure of the congress methods hitherto has been due to the fact that the Congress has tried to create a supra-class and even a super-human struggle?

It is, therefore, clear that the prime motive in the criticism of socialists by "congress leaders" is to assure the Imperialists and the Indian vested interests that the congress is giving no quarter to the "extremists."

Is it not because of disgust that the Punjab Congress Socialists' Party has chosen to drop the epithet 'congress' in its name? Even poor Mr. Ranga, a Congress M.L.A., has been roused to reply to the criticisms made by Mr. Satyamurthi of the socialists. Mr. Satyamurthi, of course, believes that India has produced no greater politician than himself, but some believe that there is no greater friend of British Imperialism than he and men of his type.

### Constituent Assembly.

III. An infallible indication of the reactionary leadership is provided by the manner in which the Congress has treated the question of a 'Constituent Assembly.' The Congress owes the expression to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who him-

self took it from M. N. Roy. Roy himself vulgarised the slogan of 'Constituent Assembly' and now, by the time it reached our esteemed friend Mr. Satyamurthy's hands it lost all shape and meaning: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru intended by 'Constituent Assembly', a revolutionary representative organisation of the people convened to draft the constitution with the strength of the people to enforce it. But in Satyamurthy's hands it is a dignified all parties' conference, meeting under the auspices of British bayonets, drafting a constitution which would be approved by Parliament. The congress leaders went on talking about the Constituent Assembly and the "rejection of the White Paper *ad nauseam* during the Assembly elections, as though really they meant to do something of that sort. But what actually happened? The Joint Parliamentary Committee made a report which made the White Paper look as pale as a ghost of Die-hardism compared to itself. And Parliament in right earnest set about the task of embodying the report in an Act which would take away with the right hand, what was feigned to be offered with the left. What did our congress members do in the Assembly, when the Reforms came up for discussion? 'Constituent Assembly' was clearly forgotten. It had been left in the limbo of cast off slogans. Even the word 'rejection' was not remembered. The Congress resolution on Reforms, is, in short, a shamefaced example of complete betrayal. Mr. Satyamurthi, speaking at an election meeting in Madras said, 'The Congress would reject the White Paper and ask for the convening of a Constituent Assembly to settle India's future constitution.' The White Paper, of course, could not be rejected, as it had already been rejected by the Parliamentary Committee. And as for Constituent Assembly, as that would mean rubbing Imperialism on the wrong side, it was not mentioned at

all. The Parliamentary Board's manifesto definitely, stated: "We do not despair of its (a constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly) acceptance (by the British Government) if the electors choose their representatives in the forthcoming elections with the clean mandate that the Constituent Assembly is the only alternative to the White Paper." They chose all right. But Bhulabhai, Satyamurthi & Co took care to see that nothing of the kind was done once they were chosen.

An elaborate defence of the congress policy in this regard was made by Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar at Jubbulpore. The argument was subtle, but was reeked with evasion and that creepy feeling which comes to a man when he tries to wriggle out of a false position. C. R. said, there was no use passing a resolution demanding a C.A.? Was there much use in passing any resolution, after all? What happened to the resolution on Red Shirts, that on the Indo-British Agreement and the innumerable other paper "defeats" inflicted on the Government? All resolutions are only aimed at creating mass consciousness and not to "change the heart" or mind of the Government. If resolutions could do that miracle, freedom would have been ours many years ago.

IV. A significant example of reaction is again provided by the congress attitude towards the Silver Jubilee and the instructions issued regarding the behaviour of congress members of local bodies on ceremonial occasions. In either case, the congress has recommended an attitude of neutrality and not of active opposition. Why this concession? The reason is obvious. The congress bureaucracy no longer wants to oppose the Imperialist bureaucracy tooth and nail.

### Neo-Liberals.

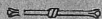
To elaborate this point of view further is not difficult, but it is not

necessary. The purpose of this article is to show that the congress is becoming increasingly a Liberal organisation, by its lukewarm opposition to Imperialism, its vulgarisation and abandonment of semi-revolutionary slogans like the demand for a Constituent Assembly and its attitude towards socialism and the socialists.

Some among the Congress M.L.A.s may talk about socialism in one breath and the congress in another, but every congress socialist must realise that congress and socialism are contradictions in terms. It is possible that the congress socialists might one day capture it; though as far I can see there is not the ghost of a chance of their ever doing it. If the socialists succeed in capturing the Congress and establishing their power within it with a view to launch a fresh offensive, it should be welcomed. But what is more probable

is the expulsion of genuine socialists from the congress.

So far as the immediate tasks are concerned, the congress socialists and other radical elements in the country must launch on a terrific campaign against the moderate policy of the Congress and start themselves organising the workers, peasants and youths. They must see that vacillating elements like Giri and Co., and frankly opportunist and anti-proletarian groups like Mr. Basudev & Co., have no place in the workers' movement to exploit them. These are the two essential tasks before the "Left" groups in the country. The fact that the Trade Union Congress and the Red T. U. C. arrived at a common platform of action at Calcutta is of happy augury. The task before the Anti-Imperialist Socialists in India is great, in fact, over-whelming. But history, justice and the people are on their side.



## THE FOUR LAWS OF CAPITALISM

By K. Santhanam

*Editor, The Indian Express.*

The depression has been cursed and abused by all and sundry. It is a trite saying that nothing that happens in this world is ever an unmixed evil or blessing. The depression in the midst of the suffering and ruin it has caused has had the wholesome effect of teaching elementary economics to the whole world. The common people may not know what all the confusion of currencies is about though they have the consolation that the economists and bankers know no better. But, there is no one who doubts that the problem of work and food is the one problem that matters above all

others. It may be as the Bible says that man does not live by bread alone. However, the Russian intellectuals, the German Jewish Professors and Indian graduates have come to see that religion, culture, art and everything else depends and if needs be, must give place to the cry for bread. The materialistic interpretation of history is no more a mystery to be learnt in the massive volumes of Karl Marx. It has become the axiom of modern thought.

The ground for socialism has thus been cleared. Still, it is surprising what a bogey is conveyed by this word

to many respectable people. Perhaps their alarm may abate a little if they can be made to realise the basic laws of capitalism under which they live.

In my opinion, they are only four and extremely simple. I shall content myself with stating and explaining them.

The first great law of capitalism is 'Thou shalt take more than you can give'. In the jargon of economists this is called 'profit'. It is a pity economics did not arise as a part of elementary mathematics. Then it would be clear to every school boy that all cannot take more than they give. This law therefore becomes in practice 'the few shall take more than they give'. This is the gospel for the trader and the industrialist. Give as little as possible and take as much as you can. Your name and fame will depend on the size of the difference between the two.

The next rule is even more striking and splendid. It is, 'Get something for nothing'. Have you managed to scrape a hundred rupees. You then deserve to get five, eight or ten rupees a year gratis for your wonderful action. Go on repeating it and in course of time you and your descendants will become objects of worship and society will maintain you and them for ever and ever. This is the golden rule of 'interest'.

If you have got a spare house which you cannot occupy or spare acres which you cannot cultivate, you become one of the chosen. Your duty is clearly cut out. "Your neighbour's need is your opportunity" and this is the third law. There are many homeless persons and many starving devils who will slave for you for the privilege of keeping your house clean or covering your barren field with smiling crops. Your luck depends on the number and the need of these people and you should never cease to pray that the homeless and the hungry may always increase.

The god of 'Rent' will hear your prayers and shower his blessings on your devoted head.

The last and crowning principle of capitalism lays down that it is not enough if the workers pay to the rich but that they must also pay for them. It says, 'I have now made a beautiful arrangement by which out of your work, you shall pay profit to some, interest to others and rent to some others. Now, this system will go to pieces unless proper arrangements are made to ensure their punctual payments. So, you must pay for Kings, Ministers, Governors, Judges, soldiers and policemen. Do not be afraid you have too little to pay. Arrangements will be made to collect the amounts painlessly. You will pay a little on everything you eat or wear and while you will not feel it, the drops will swell into mighty rivers before they reach the capital cities.

It is really a great and creative effort. Capitalism may be likened to the Hindu Brahma with the four faces of 'Profit, Rent, Interest and Taxation'. The God confers wonderful boons to his devotees. If you cannot strike oil or gold, you may speculate on cotton or silver, win in the races, or pass the I.C.S. Some way or other you must leave the common people and cross the rubicon. If you turn back and enquire what happens to the rest, you are lost.

Unfortunately in this Kali Yuga, too many are turning back and asking themselves whether these laws are really unchangeable axioms. The canker of doubt has gone even so far as to encourage some to call them vicious superstitions. They say that the rickshaw is not a human conveyance, that no man need carry another and that the many need not be enslaved for the benefit of the few. My allowance of space does not permit me to explain the sacriligious thoughts of these impious folk. It is enough to say they are called 'socialists'.





Madras

13—5—'35

My Dear Rajah,

I have to deny myself the honour and the privilege of being a contributor to your Annual Number of "The New Age" on account of some unforeseen pressing engagements. I have been following the journal from its beginning and I am glad to note that it is going strong everyday. You have taken upon yourself a serious responsibility of educating the public in a new philosophy of life and action, but I dare say you also know what trials and tribulations you have to undergo in the process of such education.

There is no doubt Socialism is growing; at any rate it is out of fashion to be ignorant of its principles and tenets. I am not a Socialist, but I shall certainly like to know all about it, and perhaps turn a Socialist someday.

I wish you success in your endeavour.

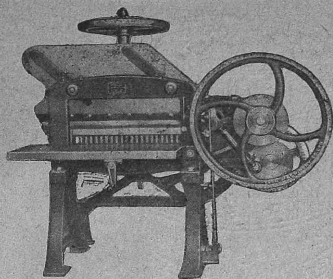
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## REVIEWS

### **Kandan the Patriot** *By*

*K. S. Venkatramani (Swetaranya  
Asram, Mylapore, Madras Price Rs. 2.)*

The author needs no introduction to Indian readers. He has already made his mark as one of the best Indian writers of English prose and that ability of his is amply seen in the work under review. The language is simple but so chaste and vigorous as to appeal to all but the dullest of readers. Mr. Venkatramani's forte lies in describing the quiet and langorous life of the village and his delineation of the toddy-shop events at the opening of the present book will stand comparison with the best of the kind in any literature.

The story of Kandan is easily told. He is a patriot, feels the call of Gandhiji and joins his force. He then takes to fighting against drink at the outset. Events so transpire that he is soon made the centre of a small coterie of admirers who are not in the good books of the Government. On the other hand, there is a contemporary of Kandan in Britain who has returned to India as an I.C.S. man. And the contrast between the two pictures is inevitable and striking. Connecting the two is a lady who was also in Britain along with the two young men and who has taken to national work under the banner of Gandhiji. The course of events runs fast with pen-pictures of the various types of sycophants who fawn on power. At the end the police precipitate a riot. Kandan is wounded to death in the firing that followed and sickened at the sight of things around, Rangasawmy, I.C.S. resigns his job. The treatment is very realistic throughout and displays a vivid imagination. But there is no propagandist fervour about it. Mr. Venkatramani is an author to whose future works the public, we are sure, will be eagerly looking forward.

S. P. S.

### **Indian Budgets 1921-34** *By*

*S. P. Sarma (G. A. Natesan & Co., Price  
Rs. 5. 1934.)*

Of the various aspects of national economy, none is more important than that relating to economics and finance. And in the case of India, Britain's hold over her is as much financial as political and military. The Montford Reforms gave some opportunity to speak aloud on financial and other matters at the central legislatures through the elected representatives. Mr. Sarma's effort has been to give a critical survey of those proceedings from 1921 to 1934 inclusive. His treatment is quite objective and is not calculated to influence the reader one way or the other: he just gives facts. But his own view point is given out in the introduction which is quite clear. Therein he says that Sir Malcolm Hailey the first Finance Member under the Reforms was a virtual failure and that his successor, Sir Basil Blackett was a great and brilliant financier. Regarding Sir George Schuster, his analysis shows he was a well-meaning man but that the depression in the trade world and a reactionary government in Britain were together too much for him. There is truth in these judgments. The book itself anyway is one which is bound to help all students of Indian finance and all Indian legislators and journalists. The statistical tables provided therein of revenue and capital accounts every year are specially useful. We should confidently recommend it to the public.

D. R.

### **Children's Everyday Science** (in Tamil.)

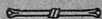
*By M. S. Subramanian, Price As. Twelve.*

This is a book in Science written by Mr. M. S. Subramanian for children studying in schools. The book is written in conformity with the new

syllabus and is perhaps first of its kind. It is written in such an easy and flowing style that even the dullest of the students will find interest in his reading.

The book is profusely illustrated and even the latest inventions in science are mentioned in the book. The book deserves a wide circulation.

T. V.



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### Our Thanks

With this issue, *The New Age* has completed one year. During this period, it has passed through many vicissitudes, but we are glad that it has survived all of them. In the course of our work, we have to deal with men and matters according to our own light of reasoning, and if we have pleased a few and offended the rest or offended a few and pleased the rest, it is quite inevitable. We can only promise our readers that it shall continue to do its bit of service without fear or favour.

We are thankful to all those who have helped us in the conduct of our journal and especially to those contributors on whose time and energy, we have very liberally drawn. It is only with the help of such friends that a journal of this type can continue. We request them to take up the cause, for which this journal is devoted as their own, and continue to render help which they never grudged us before.

Our thanks are due to all businessmen who have used this journal as a medium for popularising their institutions. We are thankful to *The Indian Express* for kindly lending us the blocks of leaders which appear in this issue.

Our record has been one of continuous progress, and given the requisite help and support, we are sure that we shall be able to do more effective service than what we had done already. We therefore appeal to one and all to help us in our

attempt with a view to the complete realisation of our objective.

### The Enemy in disguise

The May Day Celebration this year took a new and somewhat startling turn in our country. In other lands, the working class as usual marched in their thousands to demonstrate their solidarity in their great fight to overthrow the domination of the parasitic capitalists. But the Indian working class which has not yet become class conscious was driven by the lackies of capitalism to demonstrate their eternal subservience to tyranny and exploitation. The May Day is the day of self-assertion on the part of the workers. But such pseudo-leaders as Mr. Basu Dev and E. V. R. Naicker poisoned the mind of the working class with talks of peaceful class collaboration. They even went to the extent of passing loyalty resolutions at May Day meetings! There is a new game set afoot by some of our political parasites by which the enthusiasm of the ignorant masses is yoked to the fulfilment of the selfish designs of their masters. The poor worker attends a May Day gathering in the hope that he may contribute to the expression of the solidarity of the workers of the world. But the platform is usurped by the agents of capitalism with the result that resolutions, the very opposite of those that should be passed on such occasions, are proposed and carried without the ignorant worker being given any opportunity for self-express-

sion and the working class is made to dig its own grave. Arise ye workers of India from your ignorance and your lethargy! Discriminate between your enemies who now pose as your leaders and your real friends. Overthrow the leadership of the lackies of capitalism and informers and organise yourselves to fight for your rights.

### Is it War?

Is war imminent? What does the re-armament of Germany mean? Will the French protest be pressed to a declaration of war? Will Italy make of Abyssinia another Manchukuo? What are the limitations of Japan's land hunger? Will she attempt to bite off Soviet Siberia, or will she be content with munching in further bits of China? Will the U. S. A. try its naval strength in the Pacific against Japan? Will Britain again intervene on behalf of France against Germany? These are the questions which are agitating the minds of the people to-day. Events are moving fast. The world is kept on the tip-toe of expectation. Our eyes are rivetted to the gestures of War lords. Our ears are glued to the words of Dictators.

But what are the facts behind all these sensations? What is the real current of life behind this moving phantasmagoria? Is humanity getting tired of peace and security? Are the armament manufacturers promoting a war with a view to profiteering? Are the communists engineering a break up of capitalism with a view to bring about the world revolution?

No. It can be none of these. The world has not yet lost its memory of the horrors of the last world war. The fate that overtook the Kaiser, the Tsar, the Austrian Emperor, the sultan of Turkey and other progenitors of the last war acts as a wholesome restraint upon the Warlords of today. America tried the business of profiteering at armaments manufacture and has burnt her fingers. Soviet Russia is making such desperate

attempts to conclude pacts and alliances with the capitalist powers and has such obvious interest in the maintenance of peace that war, if it comes, cannot be a war of communist making. What then is the cause of the coming war?

Let us have a look at the war zones, the danger spots to world peace. Of the great powers Britain, France, America and Russia are all for peace. Germany, Japan and Italy these three powers are talking of war, have organised deliberately for war and are instigating war by their actions. It would be a profitable study to investigate whether there is anything in the make of these powers which heads for war and militates against peace. It is not important in which political grouping any one of these powers may temporarily find itself. It may be, that the threat of German expansion in Austria on Italy's eastern frontier will induce Italy to fight on the side of France against Germany. Or again, it may be that French designs in Yugo-slavia and the Danubian region may obstruct Italian expansion in the East and will induce Italy to fight France on the side of Germany. France may buy off Italian friendship by grant of colonies or by promising benevolent help in Italy's attempt to swallow up Abyssinia. Whatever causes make up for temporary political or military alliances, the fact of Italian war mania is an abiding factor. So is the case with Germany and Japan. Why are these three states so war minded and so warlike?

The cause is patent and lies on the surface. Owing to historical causes into which we cannot probe at present these three nations have adopted a philosophy of life and have organised a state machine which would be inconsistent with the maintenance of peace. Fascism has taken hold of these three peoples and has driven them to organise for war and against peace. Nazi Germany is the most logical and the most honest exponent of this philosophy. The Nazi leader has said that even as



woman fulfills her mission in life by risking her life at child birth, man fulfills his mission in life by risking his life at the battlefield. Man should kill and be killed if woman should create and should nourish. Between such opposites of birth and death does Nazi philosophy conceive of the progress of life. To people in other parts of the world such a teaching may appear barbaric but they should not forget that the teaching is backed up by the armaments of three of the greatest powers of the world and there can be no peace for the world so long as these powers continue to be dominated by the teaching.

### The Jubbulpore Meeting

The first meeting of the All India Congress Committee after the Bombay session of the Congress was held at Jubbulpore during the last week of last month. Naturally all eyes were turned towards that historic city hoping that it would make fresh history by leading the country to a forward course in its struggle for Independence. But such hopes were belied and it would appear as though the meeting was held only to congratulate the Parliamentary Party in its paper 'victories' over the Government. It is unnecessary here to repeat the charges against that Party which has grossly betrayed the country and given the go-by to its own election pledges. As a famous politician once remarked, "Promises made during elections and love-making are not meant to be kept" the Congress Parliamentary Party forgot all their promises in its zeal to please and dance to the tune of a few mountebanks led by Jinnah, and lost sense of its own responsibility to the electorate whom they were representing and compromised their position. During the election time, the Parliamentarians did not fail to blow their trumpets by trumpeting the blows received by the volunteers in the struggle for freedom to get themselves elected; but when once they got in, they forgot, what they

spoke outside. Indeed, we were told that the capturing of the Assembly and the councils is only intended to effectively enforce our demand for national Independence and help us in our fight for freedom. But the record which is before us tells us a different story altogether.

The truth is the Party has virtually degenerated into a mere constitutional opposition to the existing regime. It cannot make any headway without compromising with other reactionary groups in the Assembly. This would mean that they could not stand by themselves and put forward their point of view, but would agree to the propositions of the 'key' parties who hold the balance of power between the Government and other parties. The reactionary groups cannot be expected to side with the Congress Parliamentary group unless it pays them to do so and the Congress Party in spite of its strength has to lean on to such reactionary groups with the result that these minor groups 'exercise influence out of all proportion to their number' as Mr. F. E. James, the European M. L. A. said recently. Was this to be the fate of the Congress Parliamentary Party? Did they go in only to surrender their cherished ideal? Cannot the Party stand on its own legs and adopt a more revolutionary outlook thereby infusing spirit in the nation and helping the other forces in the country in their struggle for Independence? When the party does this and not oppose the more progressive elements then and then alone they are entitled to our respect and congratulation. Not otherwise.

No doubt Mr. C. R. spoke with mental reservation. He knew what he was talking. The lot of moving the resolution of congratulation would have fallen on Gandhiji had he not retired from the Congress; but now it fell on the next best man. Sjt. C. R. said that there was no use of passing a resolution on Constituent Assembly. "Could a

Constituent Assembly be got by a resolution?" he asked. But he did not ask this question during the election time; neither did he answer those who put that question. The truth is that the Congress with its present programme can neither enforce the demand for a Constituent Assembly nor succeed in shaking the manes of the British lion—a fact which is known to everybody.

### The Socialist Outlook.

Hence the socialists in the Congress want to push up the Congress to a more dynamic course. All their amendments or resolutions were intended to rejuvenate the spirit of that great institution and meet the demands of the progressivists in the country. Their analysis is that the Congress cannot achieve anything useful with its present programme and so they give an alternative one. But the newly formed A. I. C. C. resembling more of a fascist group than of an institution of the people rejected all the amendments and the resolutions. Moreover the forensic subtleties of constitutional lawyers or Pandits were very much in evidence and their interpretation of the Congress constitution and the procedure laid down in it made it impossible for moving any fresh resolution. Thus the whole show went on according to the scheduled programme and after adopting all the resolutions sponsored by the Working Committee and confining the socialist resolutions to the dust bin under some plea or the other, the session came to a close.

But has it given any fresh lead to the Country? It has asked the people to strengthen the Congress by joining it in large numbers. What are they

expected to do afterwards? Wear Khadi, remove untouchability and preach prohibition? The people have been doing it ever since the triple slogan was raised in the country and the people will go on doing it as long as the slogans continue or all these exist. But will they lead us to the attainment of our freedom?

We must take the time by the forelock and make use of every opportunity to wrest our freedom. So the socialists anticipating another great world war (which by the way is not very unlikely to happen) wanted the Congress to pass a resolution asking the country not to help the war in any way, either with money or men. They knew well what is in store for us in the event of a war and so they wished to carry on a campaign against war. One would expect that the Congress should jump at the idea of boycotting the war and its protagonists, but on a strange plea that the passing of such a resolution might lead to the revival of the C. D. movement, the Congress Committee rejected the resolution. The Congress Committee was more concerned with its attitude on a prospective revival of the C. D. movement than with a menacing proposition like war and its horrors. One will not be surprised to find veteran Congress Leaders, in the event of a war being declared, engaging themselves as recruiting agents to the British Army.

Such are the conditions facing India today and our A. I. C. C. has failed us miserably. Can we not hope that better times are in store for us and the country will be drawn out of its morass to a high stature of its glory and freedom?

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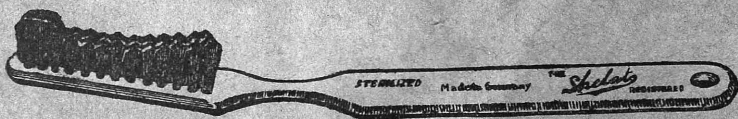


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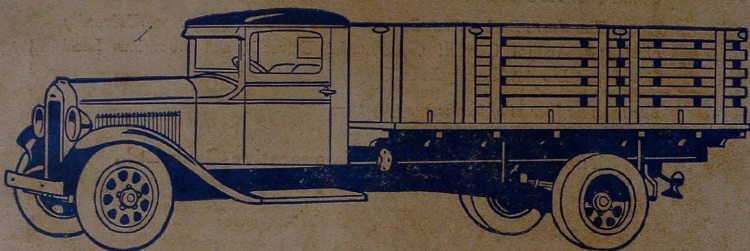
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