

VANDALISM

N I C H O L A S R O E R I C H



CULTURE and peace the most sacred goal of Humanity! In the days of great confusion, both material and spiritual, the disturbed spirit strives to these radiant strongholds. But we should not unite only abstractly in the name of these regenerating conceptions. According to our abilities, each in his own field, should bring them into actual surrounding life, as the most necessary and undeferrable.

Already for forty years we are combating vandalism. By our Peace Pact in 1929 we proposed a special Banner of Peace for protection of all cultural treasures. Committees for promoting the Peace Pact had been elected in New York. An International Union for the Pact has been established with its central seat in Bruges, where a Congress for spreading the ideal of Peace through Culture was in session with most significant results, proving how close this aim is to the hearts of all positive people of the whole world.

From all light-bearing centres should thunder ceaselessly the world-wide call elimi-

nating the very possibilities of wars and creating for generations to come new lofty traditions of veneration of real cultural treasures. Untiringly unfurling everywhere the Banner of Peace, we by this destroy the very physical field for war.

Let us also affirm the World-day of Culture, when simultaneously in all schools and all educational institutions, the world will be reminded of the true treasures of humanity, of creative heroic enthusiasm, of betterment and adornment of life. For this purpose we have not only to safeguard by all available means our cultural heritage, but we must consciously value these treasures remembering that every contact with them will ennoble the human spirit.

As we have already witnessed, wars cannot be stopped by interdicts nor can malice or falsehood be prohibited. But undeferrably, patiently striving to the highest treasures of humanity, we may make these issues of darkness altogether inadmissible, as breed progeny of gross ignorance. The ennobled expanded consciousness having contacted with the Realm of Culture will naturally enter the path of peaceful constructiveness, discarding

as shameful rubbish, all belittlement of human dignity generated by ignorance.

The lists of adherers to the Banner of Peace are already long and glorious. The Banner has already been consecrated during the Congress in Bruges, in the Cathedral of the Holy Blood and by this had been given the sacred oath to introduce it everywhere by all means. Friends from all ends of the world, who trusted and have saturated space with their heartiest wishes, will not in vain look for the Banner over all shrines of real treasures. Everyday brings new letters, new response. The election urn "for Peace" has been filled with precious tokens. Verily, Peace and Culture are at present especially urgently needed.

It is not so much a new law, but the imperative wish, the one panhuman desire to safeguard the achievements of mankind which is so badly needed. Every endeavour, even the most evident, requires an active start. For Peace and Culture, one does not even need unanimously world wide *votum*. The beautiful principles of General Good can be affirmed on every scale, still retaining their vital potentiality. Let us greet wholeheartedly all co-workers; "Proceed victoriously without any delay, in your full abilities along this glorious path!"

Verily, time is short, lose neither day nor hour! Kindle the flame of the heart's indomitable enthusiasm. Under the Banner of Peace let us proceed towards the One Supreme Culture in powerful union as the World League of Culture!

Nefarious German vandalism far superceded the notorious Haerostratus who enlisted his name in the history. More and more we are

witnessing innumerable ugly destructions and alas! they increase. Humanity does not become better and I recall the sorrowful words of my late friend Rabindranath Tagore in a letter just before his last illness.

"The problem of Peace today is the most serious concern with humanity and our efforts seem so insignificant and futile before the onrush of a new barbarism that is sweeping over the West with an accelerating momentum. The ugly manifestations of naked militarism on all sides forebode an evil future and I almost lose faith in civilization itself. And we cannot give up our efforts, for that would only hasten the end.

"Today I stand as much perplexed and distressed as you are with regard to the turn of events in the West; we can but hope that the world may emerge out cleaner through this bath of blood. But one must be too daring to risk a prophesy these days.

"Yours is a dedicated life and I hope you will be preserved long to continue your service to Culture and Humanity."

Indeed we cannot give up our efforts. The War Armageddon is over, but the Armageddon of Culture is raging.

Not in the skins of cavemen, but in smoking jackets, sit these "gentlemen" who shamefully exclaim "To hell with Culture"! unpunishable in their destructive arrogance and ignorance. There is many a Haerostratus. We set down the name of an insane mechanic as a most shameful stigma, but not to burden the pages of history. Criminal savagery turns first of all against the most exalted and perfect creations. Ignorance attempts to disfigure the greatest—therein is the hideous seal of darkness.

Verily, the most penetrating universal measures are needed in order to renew the traditions of Culture. Let us hope from the depths of our hearts, that the newly formed World League of Culture will truly enlighten universally all the embittered, bewildered, obscured hearts, with a new and benevolent life.

If humanity is to abandon all its highest principles and stake all its hope on sand bags, then it has come to a very sorry pass.

Every thing today justifies us and our friends in issuing a call to defend all national treasures. It is said that when the ostrich gets wind of danger, it thrusts its head beneath its wing or in the sand. Natural history is full of such examples and we might do well if we study the life of ants and bees who possess superb organization.

In every periodical we look today, we come across illustrations of barbarous destructions. Such documents will continue to live as a shameful witness of what has been done by the humanity of our times, although the whole of mankind is, of course, not necessarily engrossed in such destruction. But such acts are being perpetrated before the eyes of all and when we figure the percentage of those who raise their voices to protest, it is not overwhelming. In any street accident you will find four classes of people around you. Those who make a genuine effort to help; those who congregate from mere curiosity, others who draw off in fear and finally, those who take a pleasure in the misfortune of others. And with vandalism it is all the same. Whether active or passive, they are the same uncultured destroyers. Toleration towards evil differs little from evil itself, and it is high time for humanity to give attention to the

passive type of vandal. Before our eyes all kinds of destruction is going on, either from the bombs of totalitarian warfare or from human poisoning of one sort or another. It is a question which sort of poison is the more ruinous—that of poison gas, or that which aims at the destruction of culture. In the so-called peaceful communities anti-cultural processes are now taking place, on a large scale, while people remain silent or crowds are divided as in the case of street accidents. At such times alas! the number of those who exert themselves on behalf of culture is extremely small, while the crowd of those who are curious or malignant takes on huge proportions.

All these curious or evil-minded people try to excuse their conduct, but they are unwilling to reflect that, in so doing they range themselves alongside the vandals.

All who evade joining in the Defence of Culture enlist in the ranks of passive vandals. In passivity there is always a kind of activity, which can be very dreadful and repulsive with consequences that may bring about the disintegration of an entire nation.

The passive vandal ought not to imagine that his silence has no effect.

On the contrary, history exposes not only the active vandal but also those who stood by idly and looked on while torture and destruction were being committed.

How heartless, how cruel are all those who feign deafness and remain silent when they ought to cry out!

We have spoken of defending of everything which helps on the evolution of the human race.

Defence is one thing, but aggression is quite another. We have issued a call not to

bury ourselves under sand bags but to counteract destruction through the power of thought, of culture.

Traces of culture are being destroyed, obliterated and scattered abroad and, in allowing this, mankind has composed a page of history which will look very black in the future.

The doings of such brutal destroyers and tortures will be recorded together with the fact that a vast portion of humanity connived and assisted in such vandalism.

There are many ways of participating in such crimes. One need not launch a bomb oneself from the airplane; there are also those who manufacture bombs and invent arms and engines of destruction. One can stand opposed to cultural undertakings and destruction of constructive thoughts, bring on a condition of savagery.

From such premeditated schemes, the dispersal, dismemberment and annihilation of whole groups of accumulated treasures can arise. Every one who by deed or thought contributes to such destruction must be included with the vandals who play havoc with the human spirit.

Terrible deeds are going on in the world. Devastating wars are no longer known as wars. The most dire destruction goes by the name of 'change of policy' while the vandals strut round in new uniforms and trappings and look upon themselves as the arbiters of destiny.

Does it matter which way man rushes to fratricide and self-destruction? Perhaps we shall have a new march composed some day for those who proceed towards criminal vandalism.

Yet there is this enormous majority of curious and malicious onlookers, this odious

tribe who fail to understand that they themselves are furthering all sorts of vandalism.

It is horrible to witness that the heirs of Goethe and Schiller become cruel vandals.

On the first day of the war we appealed to all defenders of Cultural Treasures.

"The thunder of the European war again demands that active attention should be paid to the Defence of Cultural Treasures. A pact to this effect is under consideration by many of the European Governments and has already been signed by 21 Governments of the Americans. No doubt, since military operations have already begun, it is hardly to be expected that any agreement could take place during actual warfares. Yet the activities of our committees should at all times be fruitful. Remembering the position in which the protection of cultural treasures was in the beginning of 1914, we must say that at present this important question has been given definitely much more attention by Governments and public institutions. Doubtless the activities of our Committees have had beneficial influence upon public opinion and have contributed to such increase of attention. Besides Government decrees, public opinion is the first defender of national treasures which have a universal value. During the last great war we applied our utmost efforts to draw attention to the fact that it is criminal to destroy historical, scientific and artistic monuments. Then during recent conflagrations, as for instance in Spain and China, we happened to hear that our Pact was mentioned and applied in some cases. Also now all our Committees and groups of friends, to whom the preservation of world treasures is dear, should immediately draw the attention of the public to the importance and urgency of the protection of creations of human genius. Each one

of us has certain opportunities of spreading this panhuman idea. Every one who has connections with the press or who is a member of some cultural organization, should consider it his duty to say, wherever he can, a good and impressive word about the defence of that on which the evolution of humanity is based. On March 24 this year our Committee undertook a series of steps imploring European Governments to consider without delay the need of defending cultural treasures. We see now that such an appeal was most timely. Let every cultural worker remember now all his connections and possibilities in order to strengthen by all means public opinion which is first of all guardian of world treasures. Friends act urgently."

Now again we are appealing to all cultural workers :—

"Friends :—

The Armageddon of war is ended, and now humanity must realize and solve the problem of the Armageddon of Culture. Under benevolence let structure of true invincible Culture be strongly buttressed. Not a shaky civilization which at times forgets about humanness, but glorious culture—that inextinguishable torch upon the paths of ascent—shall be our common goal.

We have written already about a timely rebirth of the Banner of Peace—our Red Cross of Culture. Yes, it is time to speak again about cultural values. This activity is inseparably close to the work of Culture. The field of Culture is vast and on such a spacious pasture all, from small to great, can find application for beneficent endeavour. During recent years the world has seen so much vandalism, so much savage cruelty! The Red Cross of Culture must glow again.

Recall the great International names who subscribed to and endorsed the Banner of Peace. The archives of our conventions carry indelible and beautiful words which cannot be erased by any vandalism. If timid ones will doubt, and will question the possibility of raising again the Banner of Culture, let them know that it will not require overburdening, and that Culture is not dependent on wealth.

Fruitful seeds can be sown in one's own circle, in the garden of his best striving. Every one has access to the printed word and can use this instrument for common good. All dream of peace, of enduring peace, but it will not come through international policing; neither will it be affirmed by "don'ts" and threats. Peace must be moulded first in the human heart, and the heart can develop capacity for full trust only through Culture.

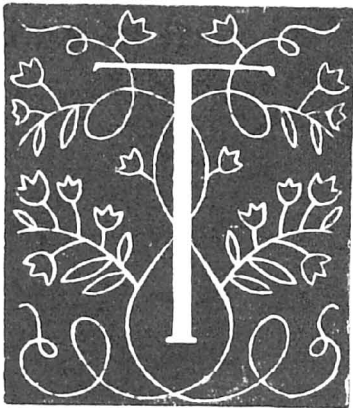
"Peace Through Culture" is our constant motto. Events have proven that Culture is necessary as a protective shield for humanity. If anyone imagines that "civilized" man cannot become savage, he is mistaken. A civilized savage is the ugliest spectacle. Therefore let us again rally around the Banner of Peace. Let us *work*, under the Red Cross of Culture, utilizing every possibility toward the healing of humanity's wounds.

In this endeavour gather small *nuclei* throughout the face of the earth. Each such good-creating call somewhere, somehow will ennoble, will elevate space for common good, is a panacea within reach of everyone. Let your words about Culture, about everything Beautiful, about that which makes the human heart live, ring out incessantly.

Armageddon of Culture is raging. Beware of Vandalism.

SATYAM, SIVAM, SUNDARAM,

PRE-ARYAN ART IN SOUTH INDIA *By* T. N. SRINIVASAN, M.A.



THE exact time at which the Aryan tribes, who were supposed to have originally inhabited the Central Asian Plateaux, migrated to the South and made the present India, their homeland, is still a paradox puzzling both the anthropologist and the historian. Eminent scholars had attempted time and again to trace back the date of this migration, especially from the evidences that the four *Vedas* are able to throw. Orientalists like *Buhler*, *Winternitz*, *Macdonall*, *Keith* and others fix hypothetically the age of *Rig Vedic* Civilisation to a period slightly earlier than the fourth Millennium B.C. while Lokamanya Tilak in his famous treatises like '*Arctic Home of the Vedas*', '*Orion*' and '*Vedic Chronology*' and *Vedanga Jyothisa* gives a much earlier date.

But the recently discovered remains of an old and well-established civilisation in the impressive remains at Mohenjo-Daro in Sind and at Harappa in the Western Punjab throw a new light on the dim past of this country and have thoroughly revolutionised the original conception of our ancient history. Their discovery is of far-reaching significance, as Sir John Marshall says "One thing that stands out clear and unmistakable both at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa is that the civilisation hitherto revealed at these two places is not an incipient civilisation but one already age-old and stereotyped on Indian

soil, with many millenia of human endeavours behind it". These people of the Indus valley had many contacts with the Sumerian civilisation of that age but who were these people and whence they came is yet an unsolved riddle. But in some cases, their culture seem to bear certain close relationship to those found even now in Southern India. With this argument, some eminent scholars have attempted to find out the essential similarities between these people and the Dravidian races and culture of South India. But one thing is almost certain, that both of them, the people of the Indus valley and those of Southern India may be indigenous inhabitants of this great continent, who even if they had migrated to India from some other place, they ought to have come over here several millenia before the date assigned to Mohenjo-Daro and preceded the Aryans by a considerable space in time. Probably it is conjectured that soon after the last Ice Age, which according to the geologists took place late in the *Pleistocene* age, one branch of the species which came to be known as *Homo-Sapiens*—that is man, would have moved much faster than their comrades to countries nearer the Equator, where the rigour of the closing epoch of the Ice Age would have been much feebler and settled down both in Indus valley and in the fertile tropical valleys of the Deccan. It is probable that the climatic differences noted in the deserts of Sind and the tropical forests of Deccan were responsible for these two clans of the same group developing different traits of character, each akin to the mode of living in the respective

territories, best suited to the natural environments and the climatic conditions.

Having settled down in two different localities, each group began to develop civilisation of two distinct types by inculcating great cultural synthesis in their mode of life. In course of time the relationship between the Sindhi people and the Dravidian people became uncertain, as each began to develop an individuality of its own, and it is these two tribes that the Aryans who came later on, generally called as '*Dasyus*' and at times also called as '*Asuras*' or '*Rakshasas*'. Whatever may be the ethnical identification of these primitive types, it is suffice for our purpose to note that the Dravidian inhabitants of South India belong to a stock of the primitive man, who had developed very many individualistic characteristics of a remarkable character; as Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy says: "Certainly before the second millennium B.C., the Dravidians, whether of Western origin or as seems quite probable, of direct neolithic descent on Indian soil had come to form the bulk of a population thinly scattered throughout India. These Dravidians should be the *Dasas* or *Dasyus* with whom the conquering Aryans waged their wars—their *Purs* or towns are mentioned in the *Vedas* and they are described as *anash*—noseless—a clear indication of their racial type." So much so, it is easy to reconcile oneself to identify the *Rakshasas* and the *Vanaras* described in epics as the primitive inhabitants of South India. Even the Aryan poets could not refrain themselves from giving proper and due recognition to those Dravidians, who were much cultured. For instance the so-called monkey chiefs like Sugriva, Vali, Hanuman, Angada and many others are described as most valiant and powerful in prowess and as equally much cultured and

possessing rare acumen. Their knowledge of both Aryan and non-Aryan cults are well and clearly described by the Aryan poet, Valmiki. Equally remarkable is the poet's estimate of Ravana—the villain of the theme of the *Ramayana*. In the *Sundarakanda* of the epic, the poet waxes eloquent in his description of the *Rakshasa* Chief and describes in detail how in spite of his black opulent body, even women belonging to semi-divine groups like *Gandharvas*, were lured to his abode out of sheer love for his greatness and Royal magnanimity. The poet also describes in detail the Royal bed-chamber of this great monarch, wherein he gives elaborate and at the same time accurate description of the various apartments, each set apart for specific purposes and also the diverse kinds of gold, silver and other metallic wares and utensils and also wooden pieces of articles that were in use there. Looking back at these descriptions by gifted seers, who had no personal motives in giving such descriptions, it is quite easy to form a dim but definite conclusions regarding the civilisations that existed such a long time back.

At this juncture, it is necessary to recapitulate the general conditons that would have prevailed in South India at that time. The natural physical phenomena should have been almost similar to what one sees to-day, barring that these would not have been such magnificent cities with all the modernised products of civilisation. Interspersed far and between, there should have been small groups of huts—most preferably on the banks of rivers, big lakes and tanks. The proximity of a water front would have naturally rendered the adjacent areas fertile—and hence near about the locality, there would have been fine tropical trees, which will be useful to the inhabitants of the locality in more than one way. Even



Naga Worship

From an Indian Colour Print

to-day the custom still exists that when we go to the villages, we usually prefer to wash our clothes in the local public tank or river, after taking a refreshing bath in it. Then we allow the wet clothes to dry in the open and in the meanwhile, we sit under the shade of the *tope*—as it is popularly called here—and spend the time in talking or frivolously disporting ourselves in sports. If the village happens to be near a mountainous tract, we at times sit quietly admiring the silent grandeur of the far-off mist-clad mountains and enjoy silently the thrilling display of bright sunlight on the vegetation covered greenish blue mountains. At such moments, we temporarily forget our mundane worries

and attempt, though in a feeble manner, to realise the miraculous working of the Supreme Being through the medium of what the naturalists chose to call 'Nature'. Whatever may be the mode of appreciation of the grandeur of Nature, we feel the handicraft of the Sublime amidst tranquility. Even so, and perhaps on a more intensifying manner, the ancient residents of our country should have felt, when they stood awe-struck before such magnificent natural phenomena, with perhaps one major difference—their admiration of Nature should have been more spontaneous and permanent than that of ours—as they were not so much preoccupied with diverse interests that mar our life at the present day. As such congregations became more frequent and more popular, the inhabitants of that locality would have chosen a common place well-shaded by trees, cooled by the breeze from the adjacent water front, both for recreation and for more serious purposes. While in the cool evenings, they would have sported there, they might have utilised the common place for other purposes also. In course of time these cool *topes* became places of considerable importance, where the domestic and local disputes were settled by the elders of the place, as the place was quite congenial and convenient to all.

Thus began the earliest public place. A few of the more religiously-minded inhabitants of the place utilised this site for their daily prayers, especially to such divinities by which they personified—the water in the river, the Sun which gave them the energy and light and such other natural phenomena. The earliest concrete design for such worship appears to be a fine unblemished stone, which has been well-rounded off by weathering. This marked the beginning of the usage of '*Bali-peatam*'

which in later centuries proved an integral part of the temple ritual. The common place was called '*Ambalam*' to mean the open place where all can meet or the public place of the locality. The place served many purposes—for it was the primeval site of the future temple—that is, it served as the nucleus for religious thought—it also became the place where disputes and other domestic troubles were solved by the elders—that is, the seat of judiciary and lastly, it served as a playground or open theatre—that it marked the birth of indigenous fine arts. It is with this idea that in later years, Siva as *Dakshinamurthi*, the divine preceptor, is said to have seated under a banyan tree wherefrom he preached the doctrines of *Vedanta* to the great sages like Sanakathikas. The famous dancing *muhurtham* of Siva—Nataraja—is said to have performed his cosmic dance only in an *Ambalam* and hence among his various names, there are expressions like *Ambala Koothan*, *Ambalathu Arasar*, *Ambalavanan* and many others. The *Sthala Vriksha*—*Thillai Tree* of Chidambaram is even now known as *Ambala Vriksham* and in Malabar, the temples are still known as *Ambalam* only. Still later on, where other famous places became consecrated for worship, each such ancient place became associated with a special tree, which was worshipped as the *Sthala Vriksham*. As in Chidambaram, where *Thillai Tree* is famous, Conjeevaram has its mango tree (*Magnifera indica*), Madura, its Kadamba tree (*Nauclea Cadamba*), Tinnevely, its bamboo tree, Jambukeswaram its naga tree (*Engenia Jambulanum*), each of which being considered sacred to Siva and to which daily worship is being done even to-day. Equally famous became the trees sacred to Vishnu, like the Punnai tree (*Mallonus Philipinnis*) at Sri-rangam, the big banyan tree on the banks of

the sacred Swami Pushkharani at Tirupathi, and the Tamarind tree sacred to Nammalwar at Alwar Tirunagari in the Tinnevely district. In fact Tulsi (*Ocymium Sanctum*) was deified as a minor goddess and according to *Tulsi Puranam*, a marriage between this Goddess and Vishnu is celebrated especially among Madhwa community. It will suffice to mention that the very many members of the plant life, became sacred and were even raised to the level of minor divinities, and thus began the cult of tree worship by the Dravidians in ancient India.

In later years, especially when Buddhism spread out in India the aswatha (*Ficus religiosa*) became more important, as it was under the Bodhi tree (genetically a Banyan tree) of Budh Gaya that Gautama attained enlightenment. Special significance was attached to this particular tree and later on, when the Brahminical cult was revived, this tree became the sacred repository of the three Gods—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. So much so in *Gita*, Lord Krishna says "among trees I am Aswatha" (*Gita* Chap. X Verse 26) and the *Vaishnava Puranas* believe that the primeval Lord sleeps on a leaf of Aswatha



Surya

(A bronze image from Suryanar Koil, Tanjore District)

tree during each deluge. It may be concluded that the worship of trees is the first step in the vast field of iconographical and ritualistic worship in India and the first nucleus of this great cult ought to have been sown in South India by the ancient Dravidian tribes of this part of the country, long before the Aryan migration.

It ought not to be thought that worship of tree is primitive and aboriginal. Besides offering cool shade and protection from rain, certain trees exhale peculiar combination of transparent gases which the scientists believe to be beneficial for certain diseases of the lungs. The recent researches of eminent botanists like Sir J. C. Bose go to strengthen these beliefs and it is no wonder that our ancients were able to realise to a far greater degree, the potentialities of associating some trees in our daily life than we do and to make this successful they gave an air of religiousness to this ancient cult of tree worship.

Equally important as the tree worship, is the cult of worshipping the flowers. Though very many flowers are important, the most outstanding flower that commands universal veneration is the Lotus or *Kamala* (*Nelumbium speciosum*). To a naturalist, the sight of seeing fine blossomed lotuses in a tranquil tank at sun rise is a sight which will not be easily erased out of memory. Lotus had been the object of inspiration to very many poets and thinkers, and has its own mystic symbolic significance, which has been well-summed up by Havell. He says: "The shining lotus flowers floating on the still dark surface of the lake, their manifold petals opening as the Sun's rays touched them at break of the day, and closing again at sunset, the roots hidden in the mud beneath, seemed perfect symbols of creation, of divine purity and beauty, of the

cosmos evolved from the dark void of chaos and sustained in equilibrium by the cosmic ether, *Akasha*. Their colours, red, white and blue were emblems of Tirumurthi, the three aspects of the One: Red for Brahma, White for Siva and Blue for Vishnu, the preserver and upholder of the universe. The bell-shaped fruit was the mystic *Hiranyagarbha* the womb of the universe, holding the genus of the world's innumerable still unborn. Perfect knowledge or abstract thought, regarded as the main principle and imaged in Indian Art in the figure of the Divine Yogi, though it contains within it the genus of all things, remain inert without the will and power to create, which imply a cosmic energy and Shakti. An equilateral triangle is the geometric symbol of the three co-ordinated cosmic powers: Will (*Icha*), Knowledge (*Jnana* and Action (*Kriya*) or the three aspects of the One embodied in divine form. When standing on its base, the triangle symbolises the male principle, on its apex the female principle. The two triangles intersecting each other, make the six-petalled lotus, symbol of the mystic divine-embrace, which completed the first act of creation".

This gives in brief, the significance of the sacred flower, which was made the birthplace of Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, and that of Brahma, the creator.

Just as trees and flowers and other creations inspired a sort of divinity in them, the ancient Dravidians then began to look upon the other objects like the animals and birds with a certain amount of reverence. In later centuries, the birds were deified and worshipped by the Aryanised Dravidians also. This ancient cult ought to have begun at the same time as that of trees and perfected later on. This accounts for associating animals and birds with

Brahminical divinities—as the Brahminical Kite—Garuda is the vehicle of Vishnu, while the legendary Hamsa or swan is that of Saraswathi and Brahma, the Peacock is associated with the name of Skanda. Even river divinities like Ganges, has a crocodile as her vehicle. Similarly the Bull came to be the vehicle of Siva, the Elephant for Indra, and examples like this can be multiplied. In this juncture, it is noteworthy to remember the high degree of sanctity that the ancients gave to the cow. It became an object of deep veneration as they realised the multifarious uses to which they can employ the cow. It became almost a member of one's household and it is no wonder that cow is said to be the repository of all the thirty-three crores of gods and goddesses that Hindu mythology came to boast of in the Puranic days.

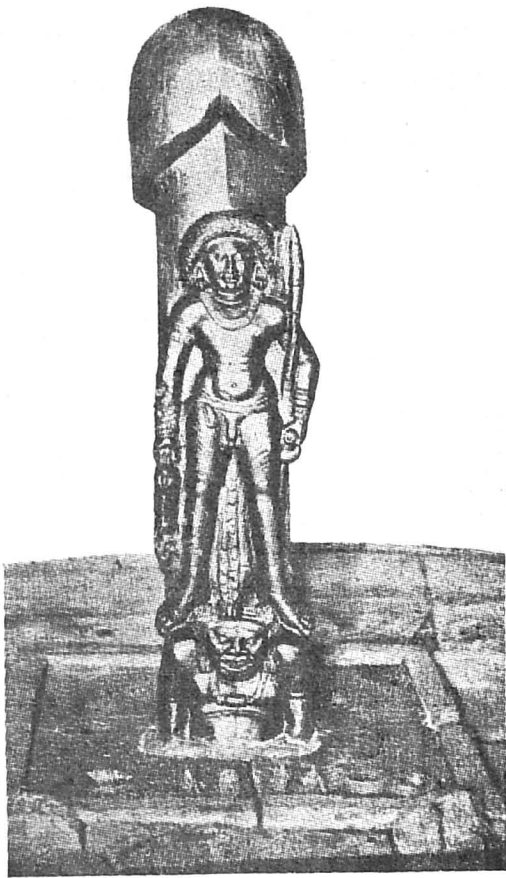
Even to-day the worship of birds and animals continue in some places in South India. Garuda the Brahminical Kite is looked with veneration. But in one place, special worship is every day offered to the ordinary kites. At *Tirukalikundram*, near Chingleput, there is a hill temple dedicated to Siva, where he is locally known as *Sri Vedagiriswarar*. Nearby on a rocky prominence, the temple priest feeds two kites with all the religious ceremonials everyday at noon time. It is significant in that the birds, naturally known for their ferociousness, come quietly, wait patiently till the preliminaries are over and then ceremoniously eat the *prasadam* that the priest offers to them and then leave the spot to an unknown place.

It was at this time that the worship of certain venomous animals like Cobra seems to have begun. Perhaps due to the fatality attached to this species of viper, the ancients propitiated them by developing a peculiar cult.

The Nagas, as they were called, were believed to be residents of the underworld and their worship is purely of Dravidian origin. Roughly cut images of huge snakes, were done on granite stones, to which the ancients offered worship. Later on, Nagas became associated with Asuras, Yakshas, and other nature spirits, which during the Brahminical revival received considerable importance, as Sesha became the bed of Vishnu. As time passed on, Naga Cult was mingled with other cults and hence we see how the Naga stones invariably established under the Sacred trees like the Banyan or the *Neem*, adjacent to the banks of rivers, tanks or lakes and their worship became more elaborate as they gained popularity.

As time passed on, one other group of the Dravidians began to worship the five etherial elements—called *Pancha-Budhams*. They were the ether, the earth, the water, the fire and the wind. At the beginning this cult was purely symbolic and later on, when agamic doctrines were superimposed on Dravidian Culture, they adopted icon-worship. To this may be attributed the origin of the five *Svayambu Saiva Kshetras* in South India. At Chidambaram, the lingam is to symbolise ether, while at Jambukeswaram near Trichinopoly, it represents water, at Tiruvannamalai, the fire and at Kalahasti, the wind and at Conjeevaram, Ekambareswarar represents the earth. The genesis of these famous shrines have to be traced back to the primeval cult of the worship of Nature.

It was at about the same time that the worship of such natural objects like the Sun, the Moon and others also may be said to have begun which as time passed on developed into iconographic worship. In fact, in the whole of India there were very few temples dedicated to Surya and other planets. But the one at



Dravidian Lingam at Gudimallam.

Suryanar Koil in the Kumbakonam Taluk of Tanjore District ranks foremost. Here by the side of the river, in a small quite unassuming countryside, there is an old Chola temple dedicated to the Navagrahas—the nine planets of the Hindu constellation. Each shrine has a stone and a metal image representing each of nine grahas, but the image of Surya is a very fine piece of bronze. Long ago, the worship of the Sun must have been very popular, but when popular divinities came in, the worship of natural objects had to recede to the background. Though this cult of Sun worship was adopted by all the Asiatic nations like the Assyrians, Macedonians, and in far of Egypt and Mexico, the ancient Dravidians had developed this cult to such a degree, that it continued to influence the later Aryans also.

For all these branches of worship, the primitive man could not have used any symbol at the beginning. However, as the cult developed more and gathered a considerable number of adherents, need would have been felt to have some permanent form to symbolise

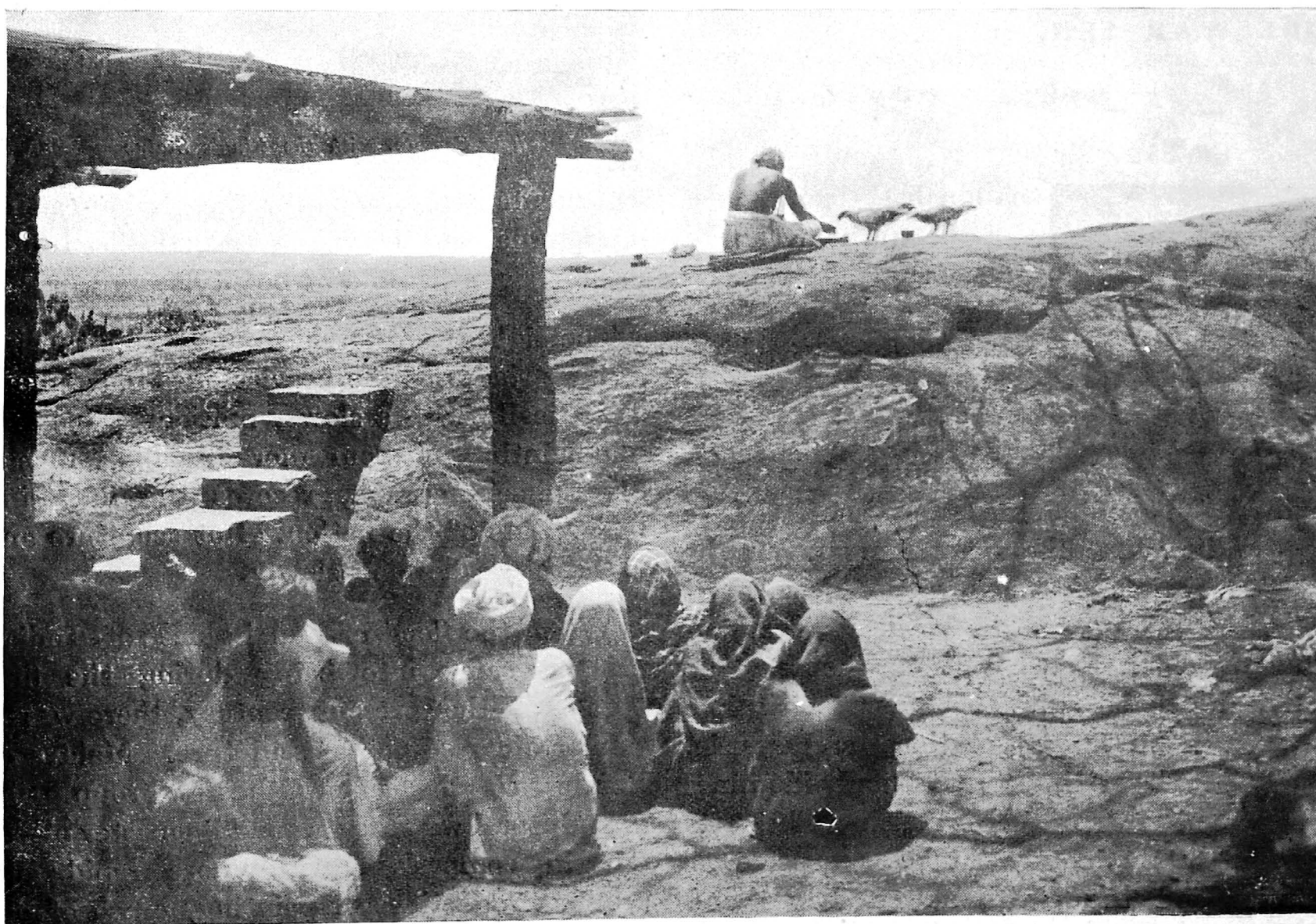
the divinity. For this purpose, the worshipper, could only have sought the various kinds of rocks, which will remain permanent for all time. Moreover, one symbol established at one place, could be copied by others and thus the cult could spread throughout the land. The Dravidian devotee could not have chosen anything more than the granite and the gneiss with which this part of the country abounds. The first shape that these symbols could have taken would have been nothing more than a uniform shaped cylindrical piece of stone. This formed the nucleus of the growth of the worship of Lingam. Moreover the primitive man and woman, would have sought a means by which the act of procreation on which depended much—the strength and valour of their tribe—could be effectively symbolised. This is responsible for the later development of the *Phallus* or *Sisna* worship. Though this cult is not approved in the *Vedas* of the Aryans, we find objects resembling the Linga in the excavations made at Mohenjodaro, which conclusively prove that this *phallu* worship is far more ancient than the later Aryan cults. Later on, this became identified with the *Saiva Agamas* and thus the present day *Lingam* came to be universally worshipped. Dravidian element must have also played a very important role in all that concerned the development and organisation of image-worship. It is this culture that made the elaborateness of the *pooja* as distinct from the Aryan form of *yagna*. The *Lingam* at *Gudipallam* represents a very happy combination of the original *phallus* worship and the Siva cult. It is said to date back, to the first century B.C. and the carving of a standing figure of Siva with all the traditional characteristics of this divinity, on one side of the *phallus* is a conclusive proof of this blending of the two cults.

In the field of architecture, the Dravidians have contributed much to the early conceptions of this branch of art; when they found that

their icons were exposed to the furies of the sun and the rain, they desired to protect the images from denudation and disintegration. To accomplish this, they could not have thought of anything better than their own huts and dwelling places. The vestiges of this form of construction yet remains in the huts and are still now being used by the Todas of the Nilgiris—whose huts are made out of bamboo. This gave rise to barrel-vaulted *chaitya* hall and the horse-shoe shaped arch which was later on used in a large measure by the Buddhists, in their *chaityas* and *viharas*.

Equally important is the early maritime trade and everything that is connected with fishing—as this was closely associated with the Dravidian culture. Even at that early period evidences are available that a flourishing trade

was carried on between South India and Rome and Egypt on the one hand and further India and Indonesia on the other, the principal articles of export being pepper, cinnamon, pearls and beryl. This maritime trade also helped in the development of *chank* or *conch* industry. The use of *chank* bangles and of the *conch* as trumpet in temple rituals and war-fare which ultimately became the divine *pachajanya* of Vishnu, must have originated from the Dravidians long before the epic period. It may be concluded that the nucleus of the future temples and elaborate iconographical magnificence of this part of the country was formed in these far off dim days—and as time marched on triumphant rapid strides have taken place in the development of Fine Art in South India.



Feeding the Sacred Kites at Tirukalikundrum.

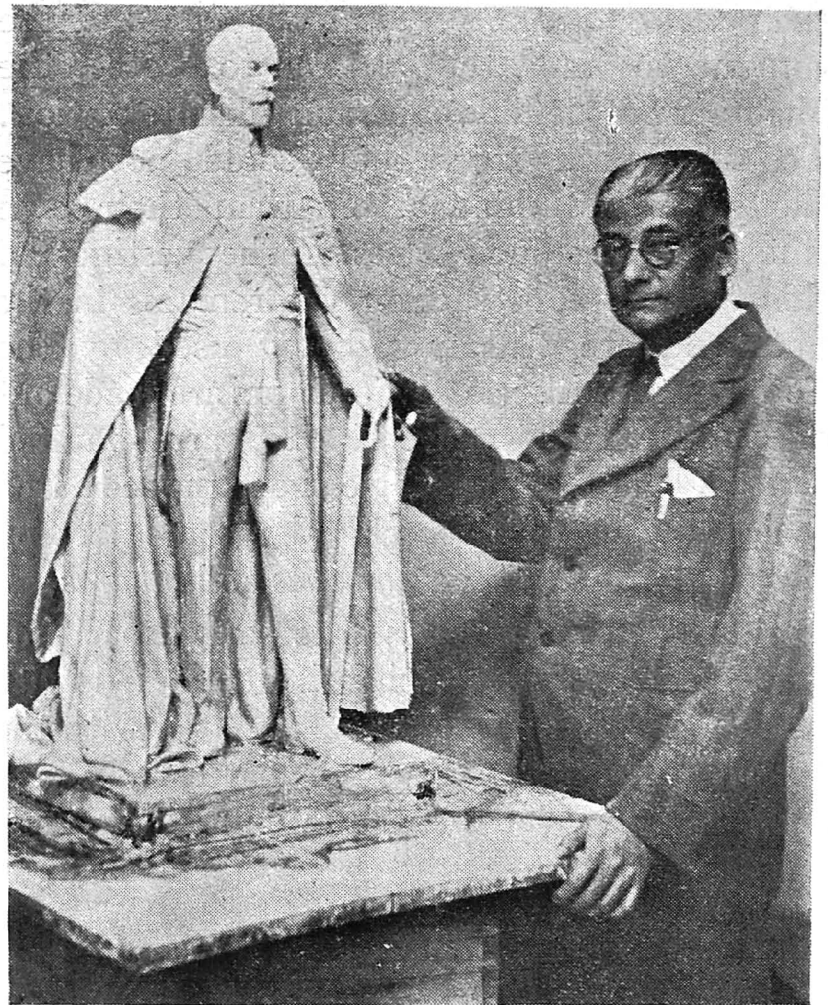
THE ART OF H. ROY CHOUDHURY A. R. C. A.

BIRESWAR SEN, M.A.

*(Superintending Craftsman, Government
School of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow.)*



nationalist resurgence of the spirit invariably ushers in its wake a rejuvenation of the dormant creative energies of the people which lay buried under the dust of neglect, apathy and indifference for ages. Like crocuses breaking like fire from under the mantle of winter's snow, little gleams and flickerings whisper of the stealthy advent of spring and of the richer fruition to come. The earliest indications of this new spirit are reflected in literature, orations and music. Gradually the light spreads and illumines other spheres of spiritual creation. The Arts flourish, Architecture takes on newer beauties and the crafts newer shapes and subtler harmonies. Music once devoted to

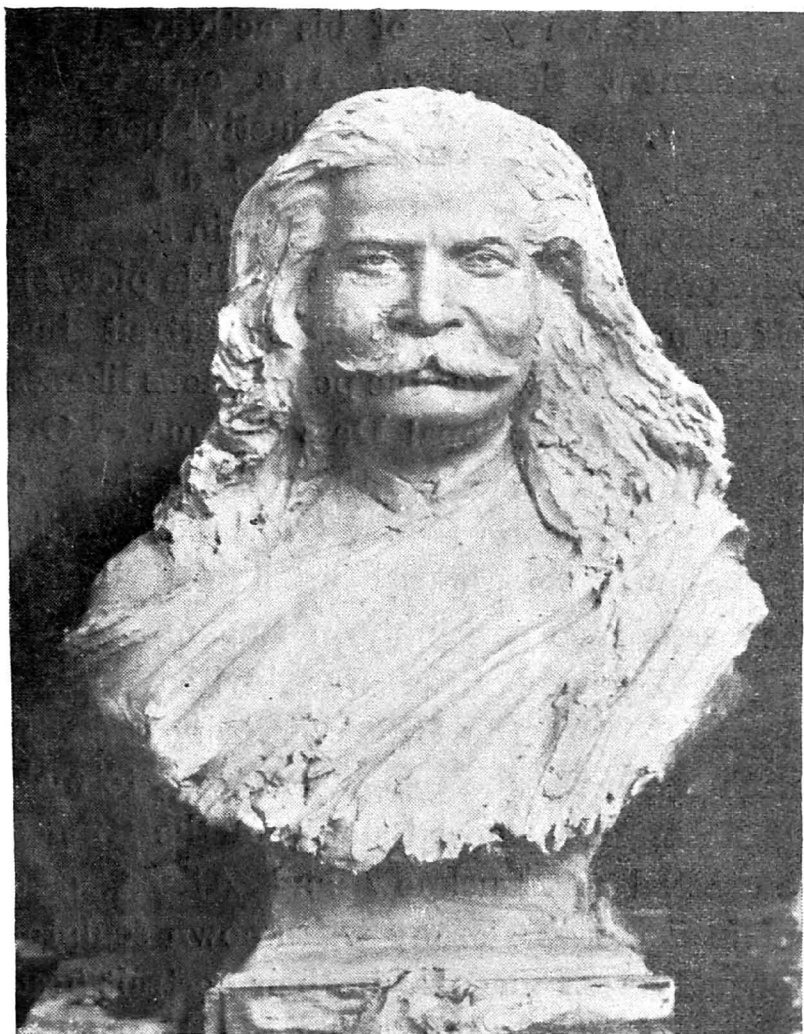


The Sculptor with the King's Statue

sentimentalists, sounds for the clarion-call of the Eternal and the whole nation rallies round the joyous oriflamme of beauty.

The lighter crafts ride quickly on the in-rushing tide, but the heavier ones move more majestically with a slower motion. Fine arts like painting, blossom more readily; music, like the seismograph, records the fluttering heart-beats of the nation. But sculpture and architecture develop slowly.

When the flood of renaissance of Indian painting came into being during the first decade of the present century, there was a similar efflorescence of sculpture. Mahtre of Bombay was the leader of the new group. But as sculptural work is slow and its master pieces few in comparison with more rapid and prolific productions of painting, much of the earlier sculptural work of the art-revival in



R. B. Gopal Dass Sharama of Drai

India passed unnoticed. Many of the earlier Indian sculptors were also trained abroad and their works exhibited in the British galleries, so that very few, except those interested, knew of their existence.

The chief among the sculptors trained abroad are Mr. Fanindranath Bose, Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy and Mr. Hironmoy Roy Choudhury, the first Asiatic to win the unique distinction of the Associateship of the Royal College of Art, London, in Sculpture. Early works of these two distinguished artists were published in the *Modern Review* more than 30 years ago. Mr. Bose died a premature death, but Mr. Roy Choudhury has produced many a small, big and monumental pieces of work, which deserve to be brought to the notice of the wider Indian public.

Roy Choudhury was born in 1884 at Dakshin Dihi, a small village in the district of Khulna in Bengal. He was educated in the Hindu School, Calcutta and after passing the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University from the same school, joined the painting section of the Government School of Art, Calcutta in 1904. He learned the rudiments of painting under Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, who was then the Vice-Principal of the institution, under the leadership of Mr. E. B. Havell but later on was invited by Mr. Leonard Jennings, Sculptor to the Government of India, to work under him and help him to carry-out some important commissions. Mr. Jennings, was deeply impressed by the modelling work of the young Roy Choudhury and kept him under his wings for more than a year.

In 1910, he proceeded to England and joined Sculpture School of the Royal College of Art, London, under the celebrated French Sculptor M. Edonard Lanteri. During his stay in London Roy Choudhury also practised in his spare times bronze casting under the famous Italian Signor Parlanti. When he finished his career in the Royal College of Art, the first World-War broke out and with many other enthusiastic young Indians, Mr. Roy Choudhury took up war-service as a volunteer in the Indian Army. He had already visited Paris to see the art galleries, more specially the Galerie Rodin, where the finest masterpieces of the great French sculptor are housed, in 1913. So on the strength of his acquaintance with Paris and the Parisians, he was attached with the Indian Army fighting in France. He obtained his Associateship Diploma of the Royal College of Art in 1914 and was the first Asiatic to win this coveted distinction.

He came back to India in 1915 and started his own Sculpture Studio at No. 1 Durponarain Tagore Street, home of his brother-in-law Raja Profullanath Tagore.

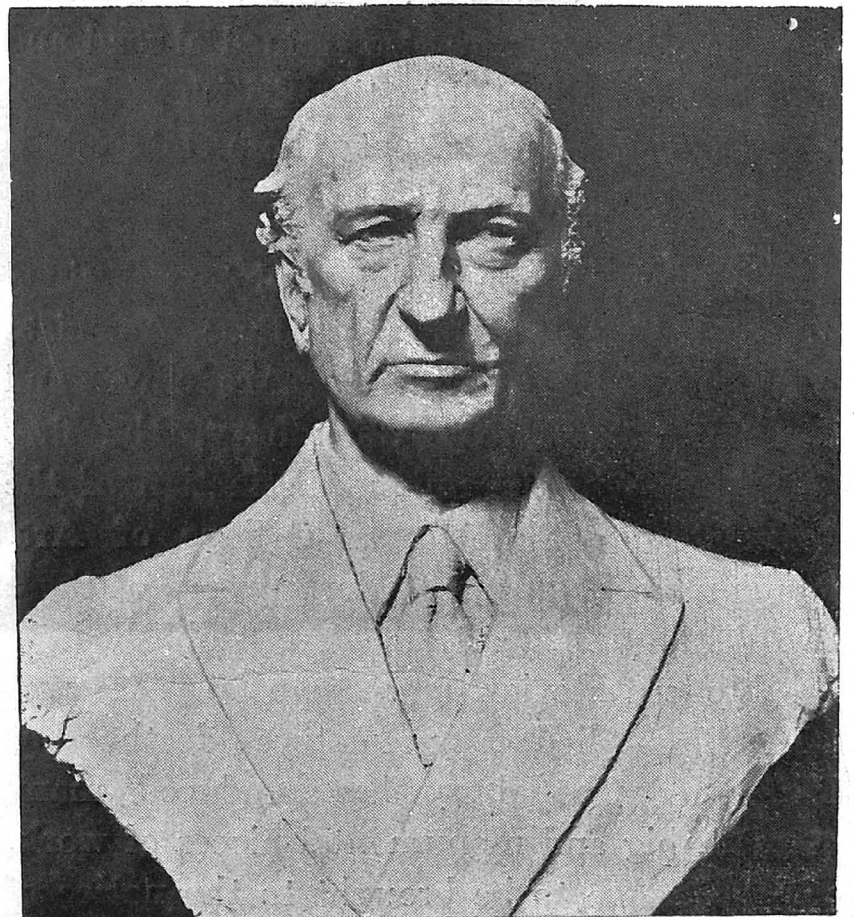
Of his earlier works, there are no traces in this country. He won the first prize in Sculpture Design in an open competition in England for his fine sculpture group "The Advent of Spring". This and other pieces executed by Roy Choudhury during his student days in England won the admiration of many great European sculptors, notably M. Adonard Lanteri, his Professor at The Royal College, Sir William Goscombe John, R. A., Sir George Frampton, R. A., Sir William Reid, Dick K. C. V. O., R.A. and others.

A sculptor in our country, alas! cannot work to please himself like Rodin, producing dreams in marble and crystallised visions of a poet's brain. He is bound to take up commissioned portraiture, mostly of people recently dead, from photographs, if he was to keep the wolf away from the door. Young Roy Choudhury was no exception to this rule, inspite of his brilliant talents. During the few years he stayed in Calcutta, he executed portrait busts of Raja and Rani P. N. Tagore, Miss Bina Tagore, Kaviraj Bijay Ratna Sen, Mr. Bhupendra Kumar Ghosh, the late Khilat Chandra Ghosh, Dr. Suresh Chandra Bhattacharya and many other notable men of his home-town.

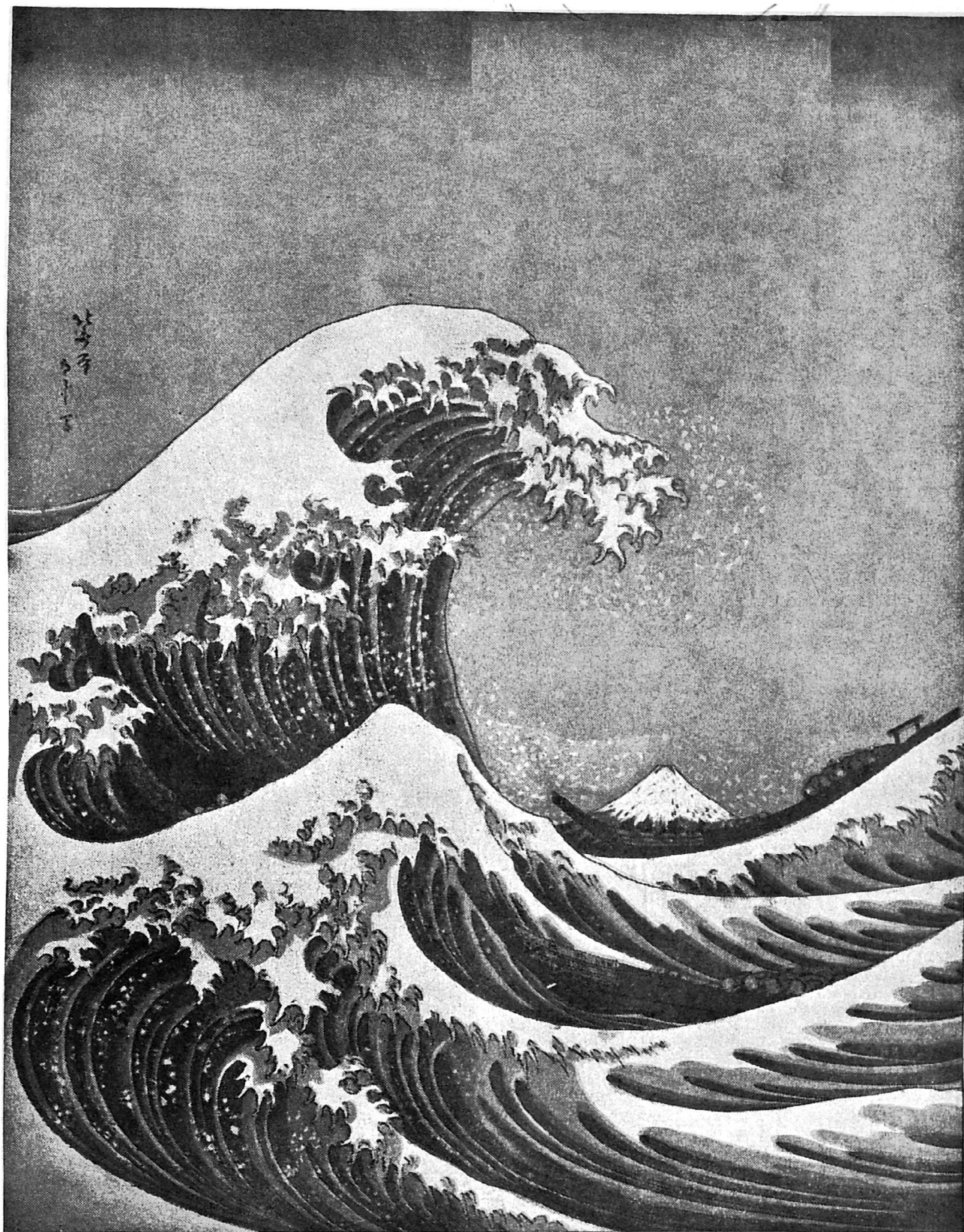
In 1925, he was appointed the Principal of the Maharaja's School of Arts and Crafts, Jaipur (Rajputana) and stayed there for a little over four years. In 1929 he joined the Government School of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow as the Superintending Craftsman, and worked in that capacity for twelve years, retiring in 1941.

The last ten years of his activity at the Government School of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow, are the most productive period of Mr. Roy Choudhury's life and during this time he was constantly engaged in sculptural work producing twenty most notable pieces in half as many years. His first portrait bust done in Lucknow was the posthumous likeness of Rai Bahadur Gopal Dass Sharma of Orai in bronze. Next came the bronze bust of H. E. Sir Malcolm Hailey (Now Lord Hailey of Shahpur), now housed in the main hall of the Legislative Assembly in Lucknow.

An open competition was invited by the Government of the United Provinces on the death of H. M. the King George V, to make a full length memorial statue of the King to be erected at Lucknow and Allahabad at public expenses. Many well-known sculptors from all over India sent in their portrait heads before the judges and finally Mr. Roy Choudhury was selected to execute the heroic-sized



Lord Hailen



"TIDAL WAVES"

A Japanese Colour-Print

By Korin

full length statues. Later he was commissioned to make another full length statue of Raja Sir Rampal Singh, a Minister of the U. P. Government. This was executed in Italian marble and placed in the middle of a beautiful garden in the Kaisirbagh, Lucknow.

He then took up another big commission of another pair of heroic-sized statues in marble of the Raja and Rani Saheba of Ramnagar-Dhameri, which were put up under beautiful canopies at the Ramnagar-Dhameri State near Fyzabad. He executed at about this time two other magnificent portraits one of the late Sir R. N. Mookherjee, K. C. V. O., installed at the Calcutta Club, the other of the late Mr. A. P. Sen the famous poet-musician of Lucknow, erected at the Dayanidhan Park in the same city.

Immediately before the present War, he completed a full-sized seated portrait sculpture of the late Swami Balanandji of revered memory for the Sadhu's Monastery at Baidyanath Dham in Bihar.

Besides this, he has made innumerable sketches and relief portraits, of his friends and acquaintances the most outstanding of these being the portrait-bust of Professor Bhatkhande, the famous musician and the founder of the Marris College of Hindusthani Music in U. P. This marvellous work was done in

two hours time after the end of which the August sitter fell asleep and the work could not be continued. Professor Bhatkhande promised to give another sitting but death intervened and the statue could not be completed as the sculptor wished it to be.

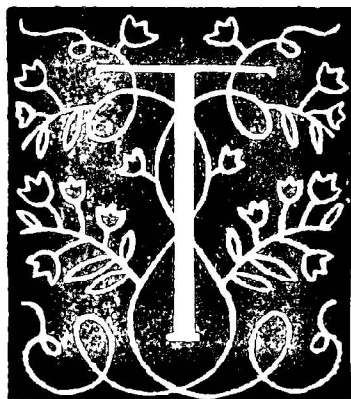
Of his relief modellings, those of the Raja and Rani, P. N. Tagore, Dr. M. N. Lahiri, Sir Tennant Sloane, Sir Hugh Bomford and Dr. Abanindronath Tagore are undoubtedly the best. He also did portrait busts of the author of the present article, of Mr. Asit K. Halder, of Dr. S. N. Das Gupta which can still be seen at the artists' studio.

Although fairly advanced in age, Mr. Roy Choudhury is still young in spirit and full of life. Those who have had the pleasure of knowing him personally, have in him a life-long friend, a revered preceptor and an amusing companion.

Of his pupils, only the mention of one name would perhaps be sufficient. He is another Roy Chowdhury with a slightly different spelling Mr. D. P. Roy Chowdhury, M.B.E., Principal of the Government School of Arts and Crafts, Madras. The greatness of the Master is reflected in the refulgent greatness of the pupil, who is one of the most eminent sculptors of all time in our ancient land. May the art of both thrive and prosper for many, many years to come.

Japanese and Indian Lacquer

“VISWAKARMA”



HERE is in India a popular misconception as to the nature of Japanese lacquer, which is by many wrongly supposed to be a variety of shellac, similar to the surface of articles turned on the Indian lathe, and familiar to all in the shape of Benares toys, Sind boxes and like. The Japanese lacquer is a true varnish, being the gummy sap of the *Rhus Vernicifera*, a species of sumach some what resembling the ash in its bark and foliage. For more than a thousand years the cultivation of this valuable tree has been fostered by Imperial edicts, either commanding the plantation of a given number, or authorising the payment of taxes in its produce. It grows all over the main Island, but flourished principally northwards from Tokio, from which districts come 70 to 80 per cent of the total yield, which averages about 120,000 to 140,000 gallons per annum. The trees, which require no care beyond keeping them free from being choked by weeds in their sapling stage, are tapped when about three years old, in order to improve their growth. They are not, however, tapped for market until they are ten years old. Those of fourteen or fifteen years growth are said to yield the best quality of sap, but patriarchs of a century or more, which are becoming very scarce, give the best material for transparent varnish, their sap being more glutinous and possessing more body. Their existence was due to the berries being a more profitable

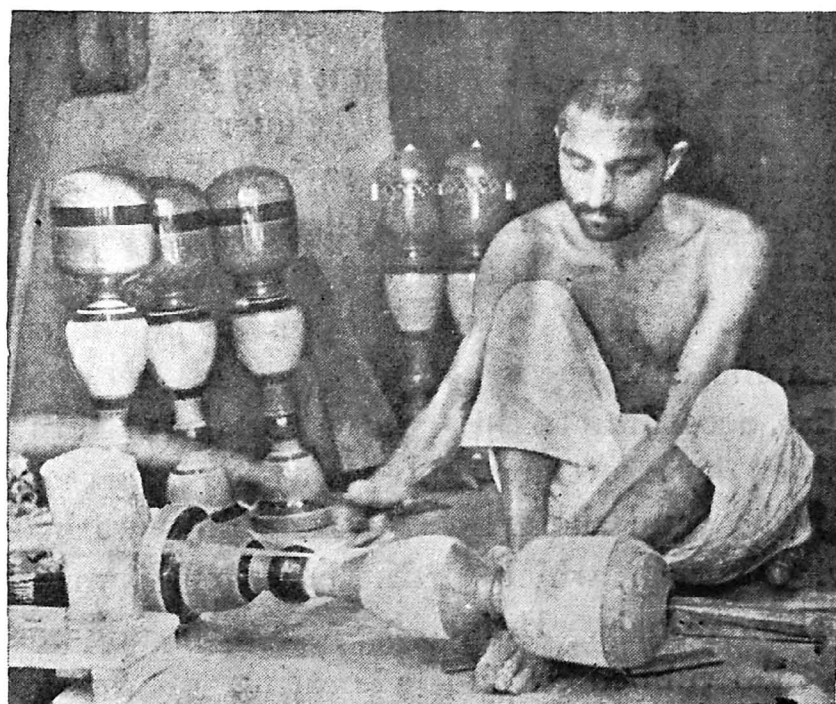
commodity, until the introduction of kerosene caused the demand for this vegetable wax to decline. Trees do not survive the tapping, but roots of young trees throw up shoots, which grow in a few years into profitable sapling. The sap is drawn in the summer rains, commencing in July, and the season lasts till September; the product, however, in the different months varies in quality and in name. The sap taken from the growing tree is termed *Ki-Noushi*. From the branches lopped off young trees, as well as from old trees which have been felled, *Ki-Seshime*, or branch lacquer, is expressed, and is distinguished from the former in its application as in its name. Thus in making gold lacquer, *Seshime* from young trees, which is a scarce product, is used in the proportion of seven parts to three of foreign matter. It appears, however, from the exhaustive researches of Consul Quin, who is our chief informant, and has left nothing to be discovered except the jealously guarded trade secrets of the lacquer manufacturers, that the ordinary *Seshime* employed is a composition which comprises grated sweet potatoes, sea-weed jelly, and soot. The best quality of crude lacquer is of creamy consistence and colour, and if exposed to the sun for a few days without the usual addition of water, becomes nearly black and translucent, and will not dry. An admixture of water restores the creamy, though somewhat darkened, and after evaporation the lacquer will dry and turn black. The great desideratum of the workers in lacquer is a clear, transparent varnish. That which is so called is really black, and must be ground and

polished before a brilliant surface can be secured. Another want is that of extending the very limited choice of colours which can now be employed, the action of the lacquer being destructive to all vegetable colour, which simply disappears.

How elaborate are the processes through which the best finished articles in black lacquer passes can be roughly estimated from the fact that thirty-three different operations are enumerated. Twenty applications of various preparations of lacquer are given, involving drying periods, varying from twelve to forty days, except in what may be termed the halfway stage, where at least three days drying is necessary. The whole time aggregates to about fifteen days. When the surface of the article to be lacquered has been duly smoothened, a groove is cut along each joint, and the surface receives a coat of *Seshime*. The next step is to fill in the grooves with finely cut hemp mixed with glue and paste, which requires at least forty hours to dry. Then follows a coat of paste formed of burnt clay from Mount Mari, branch lacquer, and sufficient water. When the dry surface has been only smoothed with a white whetstone, a mixture of wheat and branch lacquer is applied, and a hempen cloth is stretched over it with the utmost care, to avoid wrinkles or edges. Smoothness is further occurred by paring or planning the hardened surface differing compositions of lacquer and burnt clay follow in order. This is next ground smooth with a whetstone, and receives a darkening coat of branch lacquer followed by *Sabi* or the clay paste. After the repetition of the whetstone and two painting processes the surface is ground with magnolia charcoal. Successive coatings of thinly applied branch and of RO, a black lacquer, leave a

surface to be polished with charcoal made from *Lagerstroemia Indica*. Another coat of RO is then rubbed on with cotton wool and rubbed off again with soft paper. In the next stage a fine polish is produced by applying, with a cotton cloth and a little oil, powdered burnt clay from Mount Mari and calcined deer's horn ashes in equal proportions. This polishing alters with two coats of lacquer, the final polishing being given with the finger to the surface until the most brilliant effect is produced. The drying press is constructed of rough unplanned boards; the inside, thoroughly wetted, is then carefully closed to exclude the air, as lacquer possesses an unexplained property of drying only in a damp, close atmosphere, and will not harden in the open air, but will run and always remain sticky. The process of making red lacquer is somewhat shorter, the vermilion *Seshime* being applied after the rubbing with magnolia charcoal, and the surface is then polished with cotton cloth and the powder.

There are three styles of gold lacquering the first of which, called *Hira-Makiya* or flat



Indian at lacquer-work

gold lacquer, is applied to an article painted in either black or red. A picture drawn on this paper sized with glue and alum is applied to the surface. The reverse has been smoothed with a pebble or shell, and the outline lightly traced with lacquer roasted over charcoal, the brush employed being a very fine one of rat's hair. The paper is rubbed with a whole-bone spatula, the result of which is to produce a faint impression of the drawing. This is brought out more plainly by rubbing with cotton wool powdered with white whetstone or tin. One tracing will give twenty impressions. The pattern is then filled in with branch lacquer mixed with red oxide of iron, and gold dust is scattered with a horse-hair brush, until the lacquer will take no more. Twenty-four hours' drying is then required. A thin coating of transparent lacquer is laid over the gold, and after being dried for twenty-four hours the surface is more carefully smoothed with comelia charcoal and finally polished by the finger with oil and burnt clay. The fine work, such as veining leaves or painting the stamens of flowers is then done with lacquer sprinkled with gold dust. Drying and polishing complete the finish additional processes, which are only repetitions, being required for the finest work. It is needless to say that more ordinary kinds of flat gold lacquer are manufactured with considerable saving of time and trouble. For "raised gold lacquer" or *Taka Makiya* the first and second processes are the same as in flat lacquer, but finely powdered camellia charcoal is applied instead of gold dust, according to the requirements of pattern. When dry a soft rag removes any loose charcoal powder, and the article is carefully washed with a brush, which for the best work is made of human hair. Branch lacquer with camphor is then rubbed on and a coating of *Sabiko* applied. The surface, when dry, is ground

smooth by successive applications of the two charcoals already specified. Then come two or more coatings of a mixture made of black lacquer, RO and lacquer to which water that has been used with a whetstone, together with powdered turpentine has been added. Camphor and powdered charcoal are stirred into the pan of the mixture, which is boiled. The applications of this mixture are regulated by the height needed to bring out the details of the landscape represented, the pattern being worked out at this stage. The remaining processes including lacquering, drying and polishing prepare the way for the application on a coat of groundwork lacquer of the gold powder either brushed or shaken over the surface. The article is finished off in the same manner as the flat gold lacquer already described. There is a third style called "bringing out by polishing", in which after the application of the design to the plain lacquered article, a coat of black or transparent lacquer is given, which when dry is ground down by magnolia charcoal till the pattern stands out. The final polishing completes the work.

The time required for producing the more elaborate specimen of lacquered ware can be instanced by a tobacco box wrought for the Empress, in which three styles of gold lacquer, namely, the flat, the raised, and that termed "bringing out by polishing" were all employed. The box only measured ten inches in length by six in depth and eight in height, but over eight months were spent in its production. Nowadays in this, as in so many other artistic handicrafts, the change in the value of time militates against the artistic perfection formerly attainable.

The great artists of ancient times hold as high a place in the annals of Japan as great painters in the art history of Europe. From the twelfth century there is a

succession of illustrious names ; but there are extant articles which were manufactured in the seventh and eighth centuries, while the earliest mention of lacquer is in the fourth century, but gold lacquering is held to have been at its zenith of perfection about 1175 AD. The various styles, though only slightly differing, are distinguished by names derived either from their introducers or their appearances, and are reckoned to exceed two hundred and twenty-five.

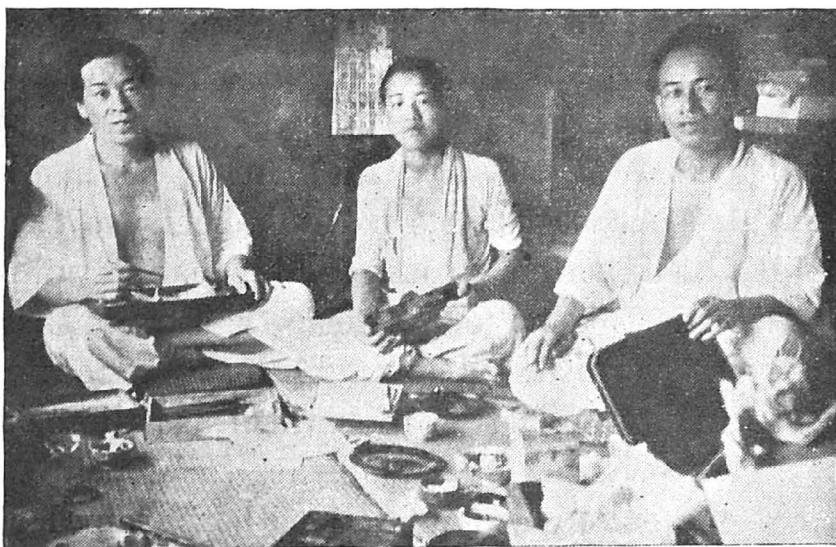
The famous *Vernis Martin*, of which many species still survive in France, made by Martin, a Parisian carriage painter, about 1700, was supposed to be wrought with Japanese varnish, brought to Europe by Japanese missionaries. Good carriage panel preparation, as practised in Europe, approaches closely, to the Japanese practice, but the best of it is not to be compared with the Japanese lacquer, of which there are authentic specimens several hundred years old in perfect preservation.

India is behind hand in most painting and varnishing processes. It is perhaps not generally recognised that in this respect the arts of the East generally are in the state of those of Europe before the time of *Van Eyck*. The ordinary powers of linseed oil are unknown, and paintings, whether pictorial or decorative, is in water-colour, protected by resin varnishes. But, while the Japanese possess a varnish of unique properties, the Indian artisan is limited to sundras of East Indian copal, mastic, rosin and shellac ; and except when working under English coach-builders, it has not entered into his mind that many successive coats of varnish may be laid, rubbed down and polished until a fine surface is attained. If some of the best Calcutta carriage work had only an English climate to withstand, it would probably last

as long as that of Long Acre ; but it is done under European superintendence, while if left to himself the native artificer is content to apply his *Rangan* with the palm of his hand, and to leave it with its natural sheen, so that from the Japanese or English mechanics point of view it is more of a smear than a polished body of varnish. The preliminary processes before the application of varnish are those in use everywhere. Wood surface to be painted in water colour are treated with a ground of brick dust or inferior white earth (there is no good whiting in the country) and glue, or tinfoil levigated with glue or covered with shredded hemp or cloth, while embossed work for gilding or treatment with tin and yellow varnish to simulate gold is loaded up with a brush in glue and white earth. The old ceiling work of the Punjab, the lacquered panels of Hyderabad, Deccan, and the bedlegs of Rajputana and Delhi are examples of this last method. There is never any rubbing down of the varnish though stones are used with water to smooth glue or gum laid grounds.

There is, however, one notable exception to the general rule of ignorance as to Japanese processes, which is so curious that it is mentioned here in the hope that further research may bring out other examples. Mr. Walter Lawrence, C. S. writes :—

“In Shahpura, a small Rajput State of the Sesodia family, there are some very beautiful lacquered shields by a family of artisans at the capital. Old workmanlike shields which have done duty in the desert of Marwar are bought up for three rupees a piece and brought over to Shahpura, where they are carefully soaked and worked up for the lacquer process. It is said that some 60 coats of varnish are applied to each shield, and that it takes a year



Japanese at lacquer-work

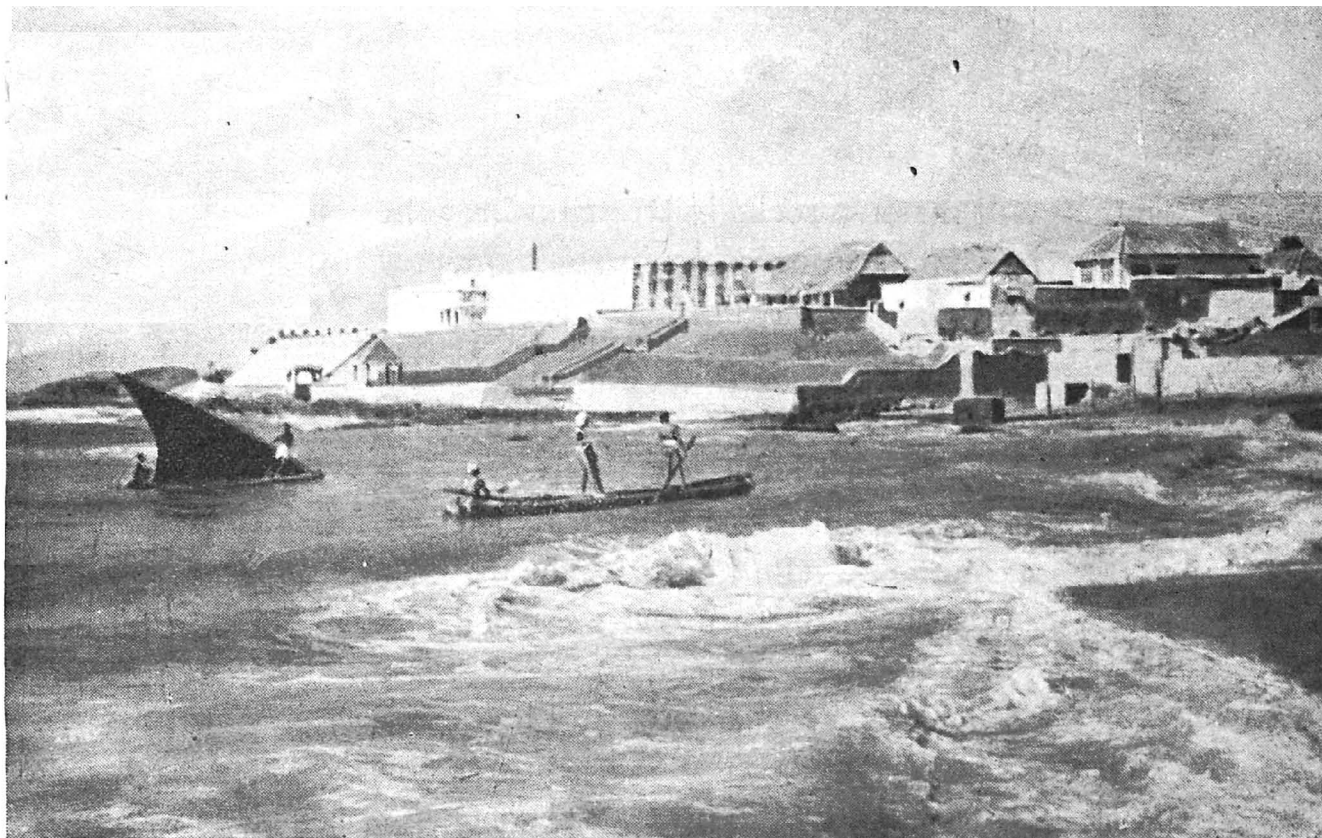
to finish one. The people of Shahpura know little of how the ancestor of the lacquer family came to their city, but they have a legend that he came from the East, and that he was not a countryman of Hindustan.

There are to be seen in Mr. Lawrence's possession two or three of these Rajput shields bearing unmistakable traces of Chinese or Japanese influence. The gold lacquer, the iridescent lacquer, slightly embossed foliage and creature; in short, all the known varieties are attempted. The designs are a curious jumble of Chinese and Indian notions, but the surface is not equal to that of Japan, as the workman probably used the ordinary varnish of the country. The rubbing down and re-varnishing over and over again is systematically practised no where else in India, and it would seem probable that the art was introduced originally by a wandering Chinese artist, perhaps one of the many British pilgrims who in former times came to India overland. It may be that in other parts of the country varnish is treated in this Japanese fashion. So far, however, as our present information goes, the Shahpura shields are

unique, both in their design and the manner of their execution, and we would be glad to hear similar work produced elsewhere.

The word lacquer as applied to Japanese varnish and Indian shellac is some what misleading to the untechnical mind. We are in the habit of describing the ordinary shellac coloured wood turnery of India and the Burmese ware a basket work basis, as lacquered. A lacquer would seem to mean a fluid varnish applied with a brush and set aside to harden, either in a stove, as in Birmingham, or in a damp press as in Japan. Indian lacquer so called, is merely the surface obtained by pressing a stick of hard-shellac, coloured *Ad Lib*, to a rapidly revolving wooden object. The friction develops heat sufficient to make it adhere irregularly; the end of a dry palm leaf stem out chiselwise and applied in the same way, melts it still more and spreads it equally, while a drop of oil applied with further friction with a bit of rough muslin polishes the surface, which is as hard and good after ten minutes' work as it can ever be. It lasts, too, fairly well; but being only shellac and colour after all, it is not to be compared with Japanese lacquer, in some specimens of which it is credibly reported that water can be boiled without injury to the vessel, and which never seems to scale or peel off. It might be worth consideration whether some confusion would not be avoided by the adoption of the phrase, "lac-turney", to distinguish the common Indian ware from the lacquered or varnished surfaces. Sind boxes are turned and covered with shellac, while the decorated trays and panels of Hyderabad, Deccan, are lacquered in the true sense. At present Indian catalogues describe most glossy surfaces as lacquered.

View of the cape
from the seas.



CAPE COMORIN—LAND'S END OF INDIA

K. P. PADMANABHAN TAMPY



THE epic setting of Cape Comorin or *Kanya Kumari* is superb, grand and serene. The confluence of the three mighty oceans, the perpetual roaring of the many waves of the three in perfect unison, the blazing sun above in the bright blue sky reflecting its brilliant rays on the ghats, the flight of steps leading down to the several sacred *teerthams*, the palace, the summer residence and season resorts, the Residency, the Cape Hotel, a convent and a church nearby, the *Sathrams* and above everything else, the glittering golden dome of the temple of Kumari Kanya, the guardian goddess of India's southern end, the single Brahmin street strangling and congested which crouches near the walls of the shrine, the market place, and then, miles and miles of

sands of various shapes and hues with sand-dunes and rock-hills on the shore, big and small, jutting into the seas—these distinctive features of the place keep one lost in the beauty of creation and ecstasy of enchanted vision. That is Cape Comorin, the *Land's End of India*.

Cape Comorin is 53 miles to the south of Trivandrum. It is Travancore's most famous beauty-spot. The continent of India ends here in a "swan song of broken rocks and mingling oceans."

Lord Kitchener, when Commander-in-Chief in India, paid a visit to the Cape and was greatly struck by its singular strategic importance. The great soldier could not resist the temptation of throwing himself into the waters for a swim on seeing the thrilling sight of the three seas in confluence. With great difficulty and after a narrow escape he reached one of the outlying rocks. This rock since then has been called after his name. The

rugged and massive rocks buttressing into the sea at the Cape are imposing in their majesty and magnitude.

The shore is lonely and yet rapturous with the unending music of the waves over the rocks. Sunrise and sunset at Cape Comorin are the most fascinating sights. Where the great arm of the sea curves inland and the surging tide races across like a thousand white-crested sea-horses, there stretches a magnificent expanse of beach full of glittering sands and gleaming shells. The glory of the Cape in the morning hours is indescribable. The stately cocoanut and palmyra trees sway to and fro. From above comes a gleam of the sun's rays piercing through the thick leaves of the palms like a message from violent supernatural powers. Rugged and strangely folded stratified rocks stand on guard around the temple, greyish brown in shadow but shimmering in shades of red, yellow and brown when the morning sun warms them. And above hangs the deep blue sky into which the spires of the temple seem to cut sharply. Dense vegetation seems fresh and smart with tiny dew-drops dropping from the leaves. The crystal-clear waters of the three seas wash the foot of the temple.

To gaze into the immensity of the horizon on a summer evening at Cape Comorin is to witness an indescribable picture of beauty, majesty and charm. What wonderful colours for the artist's brush this bewitching scene conjures up! The glorious arch overhead of a deeper blue than the sky ever was, is lavishly embellished with patches of sheeny clouds tinged with the deepest and softest hues of infinite variety. The clouds themselves are of all shapes changing every moment both in form and colour through the varied effects of light and shade. The bright sun shows his broad and crimson disc through an aperture in the

light clouds. The setting sun leaves behind a whirl of pink opal where the clouds jostle each other in the west. In the east the sky is topaz, lemon and turquoise while the sea assumes myriad impossible tints. The sands themselves sparkle in the fading red of the setting sun and there is a glorious shimmer on the surface of the rolling sea. In the sea a thousand evanescent rainbow colours flash reflecting the myriad tones of the brilliant evening sky.

The sea in the ample embrace of small creeks and huge rocks is always beautiful and attractive. Small villages and hamlets which nestle amidst dense cocoanut plantations enrich the scenery and make it gayer and more alive. When evening shadows cast their mystic spell of secrecy, and soft murmurings and whispers emanate out of the water, the picturesqueness of the Cape is best appreciated.

Witness the charms of Cape Comorin at night when heat is no longer reflected off the mounting sand, when the cool ozone-bearing night-breeze hisses across the feathery palm leaves into the interior, and the tides splash against the rocks throwing up silver spray. The scene then seems like the throne of the invisible sentinelled by a galaxy of stars. The silver moon hangs in the air shedding her soothing rays on the ripples, waves and sands. The deep blue vault of the clear sky studded with innumerable stars is mirrored perfectly on the waters of the ocean. White sands sparkling in the light of the moon stretch beneath the arc of the pellucid sky like a subtly-textured carpet woven by fairies at the command of some mighty wizard. The nights appear faintly illumined by the phosphorescent glow of the sea. The land enjoys an excess of loveliness and the sea which

assumes an unearthly glow is very calm and beauty reigns supreme everywhere. What else is so joyful as a moonlit night spent on the immaculately clean sea front at Cape Comorin!

From ages past *Kanya Kumari* (Cape Comorin) has been an eagerly sought place of pilgrimage to the people of Hindusthan. Foreign travellers, such as Erotosthenes, Ptolemy and Pliny, seem to have visited this spot ages ago. The *Periplus* of Arrian, written in the first century A. D. has the following passage :—

“Next to this is another place called Komar, where there is a Cape of the same name and a haven. Those who wish to consecrate the closing part of their lives to religion come hither, bathe and engage themselves of celibacy. This is also done by women, since it is related that the Goddess once upon a time resided at the place and bathed.”

There is a mention of the Cape Temple in the great Hindu epic the *Mahabharata*. *Manimekalai*, a well-known Tamil Work of the second century, narrates a tradition to the effect that Sati, the wife of a Brahmin of Benares, walked all the way to Cape Comorin, bathed in the sea there, worshipped at the feet of the virgin Goddess *Kanya Kumari*, and was purged of her sin of unchastity. In *Durga Gayatri* occurs the following reference to this Goddess, “*Karthyana Vithmahe, Kanya Kumari Dheemahie.*” The story of the origin of the sacred spot is interesting.

Legend has it that in olden days there were two brothers named Banasura and Mukasura who by dint of meditation and austerities won from Brahma the blessing of immortal life. These Asuras, who were cruel and callous, caused severe sufferings to the Devas. The

Devas in utter consternation waited in deputation on Siva and requested him to save them from the wicked Asuras. While Siva was contemplating as to how the Asuras were to be put down, Parvati hinted to her Lord that Brahma had decreed that they would remain invulnerable so long as they were not confronted by a virgin girl, and that she had been ordained to appear on the earth for that purpose. Forthwith, the Goddess Parvati transformed herself into a *Kanyaka*, a virgin maiden. Open hostilities were set in full swing between the two Asuras and the goddess in human form. Finally, the Asuras were killed by the *Kanyaka* after a bloody fight which lasted for eighteen days. This happy intelligence was duly communicated to Siva but Parvati could not be received by him as his spouse in her manifestation as a virgin. She was advised to hasten to *Dakshinamukham Samudram*, the present Cape Comorin, and to do penance there for expiating the sins of war. Parvati's victory over the Asuras is still celebrated in the form of the annual festival *Ambu Charita* (Bow Fight) which falls on the second month of the Malabar year. This festival attracts thousands of pilgrims to Cape Comorin every year.

Kanya Kumari is so named after the virgin goddess who presides over the temple on the shore. It is of great archaeological importance. A lofty striped stone-wall surrounds the shrine. The temple is built in stone. Sunlight seldom penetrates into it. The Cape Temple is after Dravidian style of architecture which is conventional and florid; ‘motif’ which are the distinguishing features of the Hoysalayan style are also witnessed in the exquisite carvings in the Cape Temple.

The entrance is under a grand gateway through a passage richly ornamented, The

stone pillars and statues, the richly decorated heavy columns with protruding brackets, and the elaborately carved ceilings which are noticed in the temple, compel close examination. The granite pillars in the shrine produce different melodious sounds of varying tone when struck. There is a wealth of detail in the carvings which cannot but evoke wonder. With remarkable economy of line human emotions are expressed in these exquisite carvings. The artists and artisans who created these marvels had an eye for feature and form and knew the technique to express them powerfully.

The stone wall encircling the shrine is imposing and looks like a huge fort wall. The division between the stones is hardly perceptible. This massive wall, plastered in white with broad vertical stripes of red, has stood the ravages of centuries of inclement weather. The seaward entrance to the temple is closed; it has been so for a long time past. The eastern Temple Gate is opened only twice a year during certain festivals. Tradition has it that in days of yore, the temple door facing the sea was ever kept open and all through the night the flash of the tiara of diamonds that adorned the head of the goddess acted as "the light house" of the Cape. Some foreign traders who knew this coveted the precious stones; they anchored off the Cape, got ashore and marauded the temple. But the merry buccaneers were powerless to rob the goddess. In shame they retreated and incurred heavy losses. From that day the eastern gate remains closed.

The image of *Kanya Kumari* is of granite. The image is bedecked with jewels and is lavishly decorated. The virgin goddess symbolises life "as chaste as ice, as pure as snow".

"She symbolises alike the eternal quest of the human soul and the essential unity of India, both physical and psychological."

The Cape Temple set up to the heroism of *Kanya Kumari* a virgin of twelve, towers high as an outpost against the demons of ancient Lanka and the ravages of the seas. The temple is always full of people some kneeling, some prostrate, some squatting, some lost in ecstasy, some wrapt in attention, some standing with closed eyes and joint palms, but all repeating the great precepts of their faith, chanting hymns and prayers, trying to bring into their hearts the wisdom of the scriptures.

It is a unique and soul-stirring spectacle to observe the *highest* Brahmin and the *lowliest* Harijan, standing shoulder to shoulder at the Cape Temple and offering their full-volumed homage to the Goddess in the form of hymns. This has been made possible, thanks, to the wisdom and courage of His Highness Sree Bala Rama Varma Maharaja, who by a bold and powerful stroke of the pen abolished every form of untouchability in the State and emancipated thousands of Harijans by permitting Hindus of all castes to worship in all the temples controlled by the State.

The temple shines in all its glory in the night at the hour of the *Sandhya Deepam* and *Pooja*. The *Deeparadhana* hour is regarded as the most sacred time for worship. It is then that the temple is in all its splendour. The image is lavishly decorated with jewels, sandalpaste, flowers and silk cloth. The temple is lighted brilliantly. Flutes play, drums beat, conches sound, bells ring, devotees chant *mantrams* and piety and devotion reign supreme. The flash of the rubies, emeralds and diamonds with which the goddess is adorned dazzles one's eyes and

spreads a celestial radiance all around. Many voices, grave and gay, all ecstatic with piety and devotion, chant the sacred hymns; the stone walls chant them back. The whole place is full of the sweet smell of the incense burning in the temple. The temple starts into a new glory, for it is all hung about with tiny, bright lamps and even the facades of the shrines are lit up. Sjt. Mahadev Desai, in his *Epic of Travancore*, says :

“I love rather to think of Uma, whose feet are washed by the Indian Ocean with his two hands the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea, winning by her penance the Lord who has his abode in Kailas, northernmost point of India.”

To the orthodox Hindu, Cape Comorin is a holy place radiant with divine grace. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi :

“The place is eminently fit for contemplation. Like the Goddess the waters around are virgin.”

People believe that a plunge into the cool, sacred baths known as *teerthams* washes away one's sins. The sacred *Teerthams* lie on the three sides of the temple. The principal bathing ghat is at the edge of the sea. A small grey stone resting place has been constructed here, where the rocks jut out beyond the temple and the waves continually splash. This structure faces the rising sun and is of considerable antiquity. Some of the beautiful carved figures on the stone pillars of this *Mandapam* have been worn away due to ravages of the sea. The *Pathinarukal Mandapam* (16 stone-pillared *Mandapam*) is close by. Seated in this *Mandapam* Brahmins perform their religious rites preceding a dip into the *teerthams*. A flight of granite steps leads to the bathing

ghat itself—a shallow rock pool shut in from the full force of the seas by a great mass of rock.

The *Mathru Teertham* is the most sacred of all the bathing ghats, and the majority of devotees bathe in this holy of holies—a calm pool, with water but waist deep, closed in by rocks all round. At the *teertham* proper the blue waters of the sea dash in with all fury and force. To afford protection to the bathers from drowning, steps have been built and a cordon of strong chains provided for the unwary pilgrims to catch hold of and keep them back from being dragged into the ocean. Orthodox pilgrims plunge into the *Teerthams* in couples, father and son, mother and daughter, husband and wife.

On the *Adi Amavasai* day many thousands of pious pilgrims from all over India gather at Cape Comorin to bathe in the sacred *teerthams* and offer religious rites in honour of their ancestral dead. The *Dasara* in the month of October is another season which attracts numberless devotees to this shrine.

Swami Vivekananda during his wanderings in quest of Truth arrived at Cape Comorin and was thrilled at the sight of the magnificent epic setting of the place. He reached the Cape fatigued, with no money to pay the ferry but he would not be held back at the Land's End of India. He plunged headlong into the boiling waters and swam across the *teerthams*, to one of the outlying rocks and there, wrapt in contemplation, paid his homage to the goddess. The rock upon which he squatted has since then borne his name.

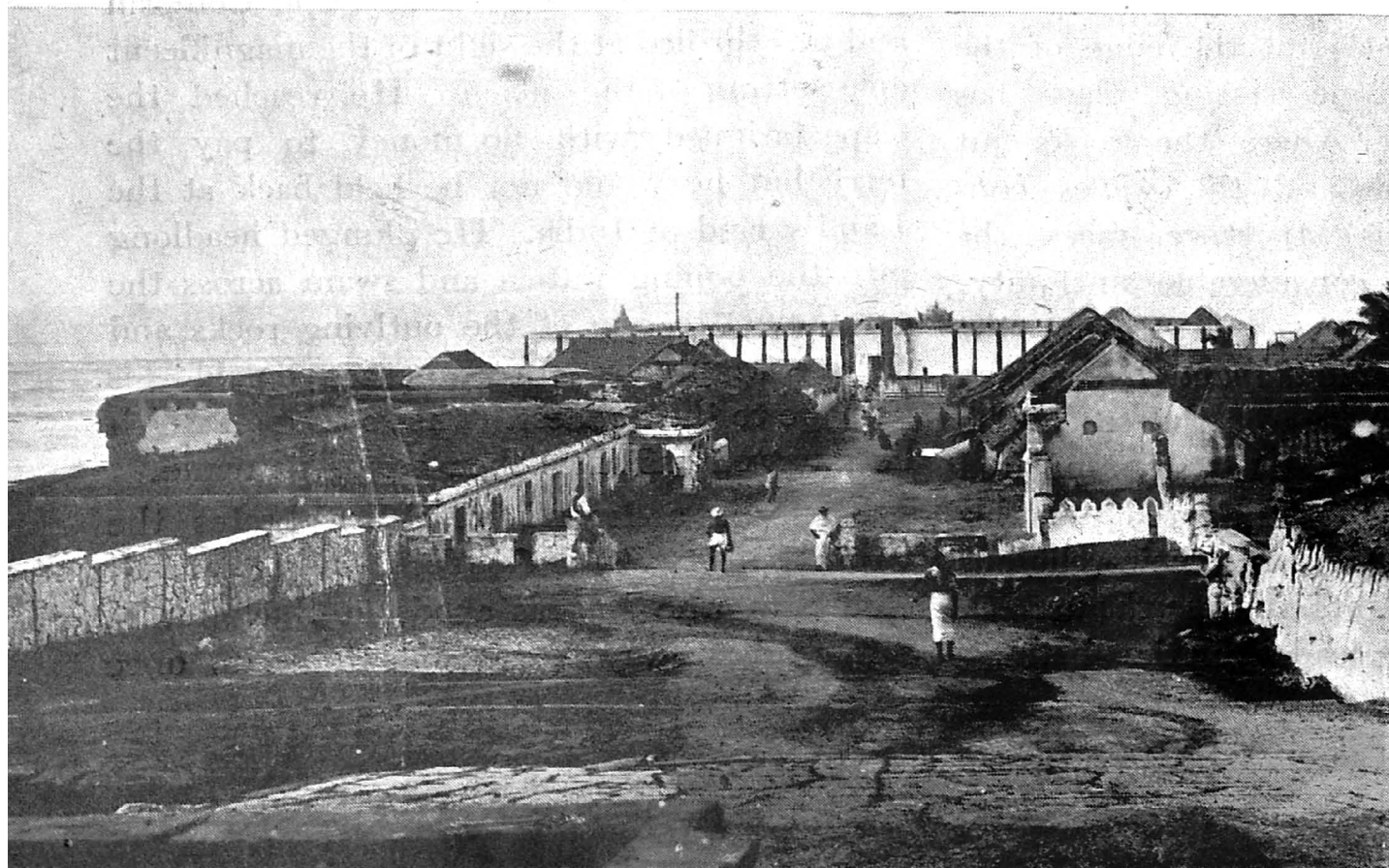
There is a legend which celebrates the virginal purity of the Goddess Kanya Kumari. God Siva who has his abode at Suchindram a few miles away from Cape Comorin, once

took a fancy for Kanya Kumari and wanted to have her as his spouse. The goddess agreed at first. The hour and date of the marriage were fixed and all on earth and heaven gathered at the Cape. The wedding did not actually take place, for at the last moment the goddess changed her mind! Siva tried his utmost to win her back but failed. The rice and other cereals gathered for the wedding were scattered over the entire shore by the infuriated God and his retinue. The sands of Cape Comorin are wonderfully diverse in shape and colour, some actually resembling cereals. Scientific knowledge tells us that this strange phenomenon is due to the presence of various mineral sands, such as garnet and monozite. Superstitious folk believe that some of the beads and shells obtained in plenty at Cape Comorin act as charms which possess the power of scaring away evil spirits and bringing good luck. Parents tie around the waists of their children some of these beautiful beads and shells washed ashore by the Cape seas. The white pebbles with blue lines and black dots are in great demand, for women who desire easy child-birth use them as talismans.

Interesting specimens of beautiful shells and sands obtained here are sure to delight the collector of curios and the enterprising geologist.

When the gales have died down, when the wind drives the last wisps of cloud across the deep blue sky, while the endless line of snow-white surf is still boiling along the entire coast in the greyness of the steeper parts and on the broad stretches of multi-coloured sands, when the sea-birds gleam across the greenish blue steel grey of the sea and the sparkling sands on the coast, when the bells chime and musical instruments play in the temple, when the dialect of the devotees mingles harmoniously with the music of the waves and the delicate tints of the landscape—then begins the lovely season at *Kanya Kumari*. Only those who have experienced it know how beautiful the Cape is.

“Ah! What pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the Sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All the dreams come back to me.”



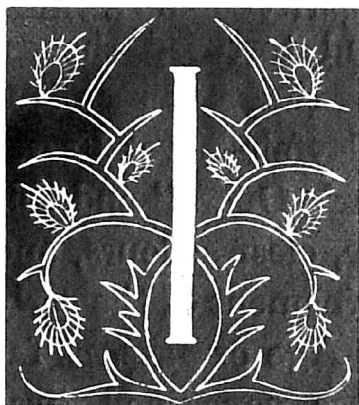
*The Aghraharam,
the Temple and the wide
expanse of the sea.*

30 YEARS

OF

INTERIOR ART DECORATION

GRACE LOVAT FRASER



INTERIOR decoration, considered as a distinct and separate profession, is a comparatively modern innovation. Before the appearance of the first specialists in this field—some-

where about the beginning of this century—interior decoration was part of the business of the architect or of the builder, sometimes of the furniture designer. It also very often engaged the attention of the actual householder, especially in the case of a dilettante of the Arts such as Horace Walpole. So that this brief review of thirty years of interior decoration covers nearly the whole of the time during which interior art decoration has been a separate profession.

Interior decoration, like the art of the theatre, is a composite art; that is to say that its exponent uses and co-ordinates the work of a number of other people. The stage director uses the work of the actor, of the scene and costume designers and of the electrician; the interior decorator uses the work of furniture, textile and wall-paper designers to create his own specialized designs. In addition to this he also has to work within the set bounds of an already existing design created by the architect. Though this might seem to imply

that interior decoration should not be considered as original design, nothing could be further from the truth. The furniture, textiles, decorative objects and, above all, the colours chosen are as truly as the elements with which an artist in interior decoration composes an original design, as are the palette full of colours, the brushes and canvas those used by the painter of an original picture. Interior design is pre-eminently a social art and is closely bound up with the life, manners and customs of its own country and period. The Briton's way of life is centred in his home and this influences the work of most British decorators. Except in the case of large rooms, planned exclusively for formal purposes, the interiors created by him have a certain casual quality and also greater regard for the more intimate and endearing aspects of family life than is usually to be seen in the work of other European decorators. (The exception to this is, of course the interior decoration of the Scandinavian countries which has a distinct "homely" quality of its own, but quite different to the British one).

The interior decoration of the last thirty years in this country falls naturally into three main groups, with the two world wars which have taken place during this time as their boundaries. Before 1914 the profession of interior-decoration-specialist was by no means

as established one as it is to-day. This was pre-eminently the period of the big Furnishing House, all of whom maintained their own design studios for interior decoration and who were responsible for the bulk of the work done at this time. Their work was, for the most part, sound and good but lacked the individual flavour which was later to be brought to this art by the specialist decorator, working either quite independently or as a member of a small firm devoted exclusively to the design and execution of decorative and furnishing schemes. The pioneers in this field were for the most part painters and designers of applied art who continued at the same time their original professions; the scope for the independent decorator was not yet great enough to justify sole reliance upon it as a means of livelihood. The style of design, with a few exceptions, wavered between a rather grandiose re-construction of period styles and a continuation of the ornate fussiness of the late Victorian and early Edwardian design of the turn of the century, with a slight hang-over of the so-called "Art Nouveau" of the early nineteen hundreds. Almost the only big and well-established firm which showed not only an interest in, but skill and imagination for contemporary design was that of Heal & Sons Ltd. This firm was fortunate in having at its head Ambrose Heal, not only himself a first-rate designer of furniture, but also having a particular aptitude for attracting to him good designers in the other branches of decoration.

The end of the first world war brought with it an inevitable reaction away from conventionality and restraint. The influence of the Russian Ballet which had already made itself felt in 1912-14, now became extremely important. Textiles, wall-papers and

decoration in general launched out in a series of brilliant colours *a la bakst*, heavy crimsons, blues, purples and oranges, such as had not been seen in this field for many a long year. At first many of these schemes designed under this influence were interesting, if a little unnerving as a background to every day life, but the style soon deteriorated into what less responsible shopkeepers and manufacturers were pleased to term. "Jazz Style", a style notable for blatant vulgarity and a kind of jungle of intricate and tortured shapes. Then came in 1920 the tremendous popularity of the Nigel Playfair-Lovat Fraser production of the "Beggar's Opera" and this produced a liking for clear, clean colours, and the romantic shapes and ornament of the early eighteenth century. The Age of Jazz, as far as interior decoration was concerned, was mercifully dead.

The middle twenties brought the first really revolutionary change in interior decoration; the theories of le Corbusier were beginning to attract a great deal of attention in this country and the great International Paris Exhibition, "*Les Arts Decoratifs*" gave the new ideas which were stirring a tremendous impulse. By this time the specialist decorator had come into his own and for the first time might be said to occupy the position of importance which he does today. All the decorators working during the twenties and the early thirties were intensely preoccupied with simplification, and with an attempt to clear rooms of all the clutter which had been accumulating. Their feeling and influence were iconoclastic and Puritan and they did great and valuable service in sweeping away a host of meretricious and vulgar work from the interiors of the period. Because, however, they were so concerned with uprooting bad ornament they

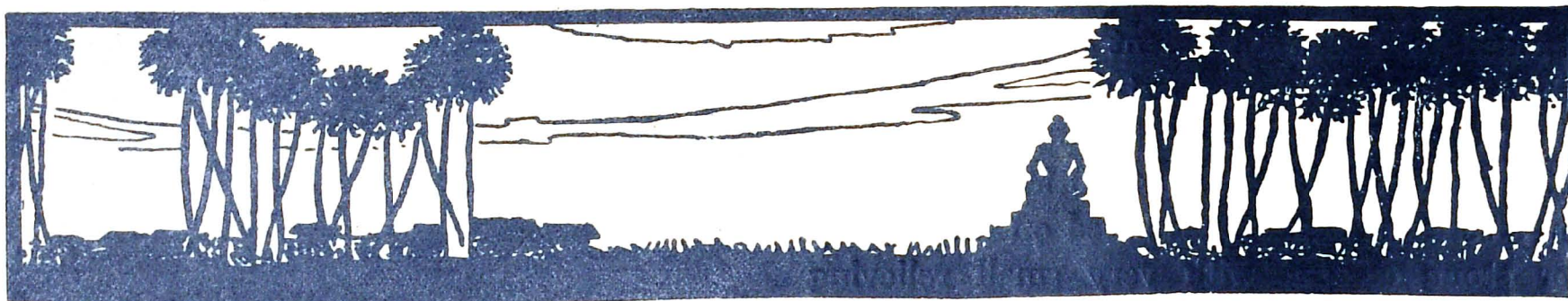
tended to dislike ornament of any kind and their colourings (in a natural reaction from the vulgar colourings of the Jazz Age) were cool and neutral and almost entirely developed in a series of monotonies based on white, grey or stone colour, with very small relieving touches of other faint colours. If the preceding period was the Jazz Age this one might aptly be called the "Off-White" one. As I have said the work they did was valuable but like all Puritans they were inclined to go too far in their attempts to impose their opinions. The love of ornament is inherent in the average human being and though pale cool colours are excellent in a sunny climate they soon become dreary and depressing in ours. The public without being articulately aware of these things, still instinctively yearned for ornament and a bit of colour, and the austere bare and colourless rooms never achieved any very great general popularity.

It was left for the decorators of the years immediately preceding the late war to sense that the surgical operation performed by the Off-White school had been successful and that it was now possible to allow the patient a few luxuries in the way of colour and some elegance of ornamentation. The break, away from austerity, was becoming very marked in 1938 and 1939—naturally the war ended all interior decoration for the time being. But this desire for colour and for ornaments is making itself felt once more and one may be thankful that this revulsion from austerity

had already begun before the war. Because the ground has been prepared, we may hope to be spared the vulgarities of the last post-war epoch.

The decorator of today will soon have a host of new and exciting materials at his command—all the range of decorative plastic laminates, the crystal-clear light-transmitting plastics, all the light metal alloys, more especially aluminium with its enchanting anodized colours and, above all, the entirely new range of textiles made from plastic and glass filaments which war uses have brought to perfection and which the next few years will see increasingly applied to interior decoration. We are entering not, a plastic Age, as is so often said, but an age of new and wonderful materials of many kinds, which are not substitutes for the existing ones but welcome additions to, and enrichments of, the decorator's stock-in-trade.

In a review as brief as this, it has not been possible to describe the work of any individual designer but it would be invidious to close without mentioning the names of a few of those who have done fine work during the period in question. It is impossible to mention all those I would like to, but the following names are those of just a few: Allan Walton, Roger Fry, John Duncan Miller, Ronald Fleming, the late Eric Ravilious, Doris Robertson, Vanessa, Bell, Duncan Grant, Arundell Clarke, T. Hayes Marshall.



LATE Dr. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

We are overwhelmed with untold grief to learn from an announcement that appeared recently in the local press that Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy had passed away at Boston on the 10th September 1947 and we could not suppress our deepest sense of sorrow at the loss of this greatest Savant of Indian Art.

Dr. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy was born in Colombo on August 22, 1877 and though he lived to a fairly advanced age of seventy, his loss to the world of Art is irreparable and the void created by his disappearance can hardly be suitably filled up for years to come. Though he was qualified to become a distinguished mineralogist, Dr. Coomaraswamy was deeply moved by the haphazard method in which the Western Scholars, who styled themselves as "Orientalists", treated the treasures of Art in the Orient and presented to the world, weird and fantastic and at times even irrelevant pictures of them. The young Doctor of Science relinquished his lucrative job and devoted himself to a serious and systematic study of Hindu Culture. He has written as many as sixty books and monographs—each a monumental and authoritative treatise on Eastern Art and Culture whereby he was able to dispel the erroneous illusions created by the foreigners and impress on the world the ancient grandeur and magnanimity of Indian Art. His erudition was responsible for his being called upon to take the most responsible post of Research Fellow in Indian, Persian and Mohammadan Art in the world famous Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where he was doing remarkable work for the past three decades.

As the *New York Herald Tribune* wrote of him, "he was a scholar, curator and priest of Oriental Art" and his

life mission of correctly interpreting the Hindu Culture and civilisation has been very well carried out by him and India can never forget the silent but magnificent service that this great Savant has done for her to bring back her ancient prestige in the proper form and light which was distorted beyond recognition.

Little did we think that when we published a sketch about this great personality in our August issue, that we would soon be badly shaken by the news of the passing away of this greatest authority on Indian Art, who had done immeasurable service to the Art traditions of our Country by his numerous writing. Though he was not interested in politics, he wanted the country's ancient industries to be preserved and wanted the spread of that kind of national education which would help our countrymen to lead a principled and orderly life, as was followed by our great ancestors.

We may be permitted to add, that Dr. Coomaraswamy has regularly contributed to *SILPI* and perhaps his last article on "The Indian Temple" specially written for the special October issue of *SILPI*, was received by us only a few weeks back from him, with a very courteous and encouraging letter that he will continue to patronise *SILPI* as even before. This article will appear in our next issue and we are only sorry that we have been denied the proud privilege of presenting to our readers more articles from the pen of this most learned scholar. We take this opportunity to extend to his wife, Mrs. Dona Louisa Coomaraswamy our deepest and most sincere expressions of profound regret at the loss she has sustained, with the prayer that she will continue the good work for which her husband has devoted his entire life.

—“EDITORS”



HOMEWARD

F. H. BAULEDER



EXHIBITIONS

—OUR DELHI CRITIC

SEASON'S FIRST ART EXHIBITION

The All-India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu opened an Exhibition of the Paintings of Goverdhan Lal Joshi on Saturday, July 17th, at the Exhibition Hall of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society. This is the first Exhibition of the series of twenty that the Society proposes to hold during the season till May next year, the aim being to give the maximum chance to young artists to show their work under the most favourable conditions available at present. Goverdhan Lal Joshi who studied painting under Sjt. Nandalal Bose at Santineketan for some time and has since been working as Art Teacher on the staff of Vidya-Bhawan Society, Udaipur, has deeply studied the life of present day Rajputana villages and Bhil life. Indeed he is a pioneer in this. And the result is a large number of landscapes, village-life scenes, and studies of Bhil dances.

Altogether there are 115 Paintings on show all in water-colours. Mr. Joshi has very beautifully caught the rhythm of the Bhil dances with all their unconscious grace and vitality in several of his paintings particularly in "Daughters of the Jungle", "Folk Dance of the Bhils" and "Dances under the Shady Trees" both of these along with "Playing Holy" are very good colour compositions. After going round the whole Exhibition you get a complete cross section of the daily life and work of the Rajputana villagers.

Taken, all in all, one gets the impression that the Exhibition has much more thematic interest than technical excellence but Mr. Joshi is very young and he shows ample promise. He has the matchful eye, the sensitive heart and the powerful brush and after a few years we can safely look forward to seeing Joshi taking his place among the foremost artists of India.

INDEPENDENCE DAY ART EXHIBITION

Under the Auspices of the above Society, New Delhi

To celebrate the 15th August Independence Day, The All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society has organised an impromptu Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture by some of the well-known young artists of India, at its Exhibition Hall in New Delhi.

Altogether there were 104 paintings and sculptures on show. Some of them were selected for exhibition in London next winter and have been retained for the present Exhibition while others have been readily contributed by the artists and private collectors.

The best new work in the entire Exhibition is undoubtedly "Sundari" a portrait in oils of Punjabi woman by B. Sanyal. Mr. Sanyal has travelled far in his mastery of colours and feelings for form and the painting is marked by superb control and use of flat colours Yellow, Black and Red in a rhythmic pattern. There is nothing florid, effeminate or sentimental—a weakness with many, too often euphemistically called lyricism. It is a pity that it has been hung in a corner where the reflection of light detracts from the full appreciation of its beauty.

Gopal Ghose of the Calcutta group of Artists has contributed seven of his paintings in water colours and also brush drawings. All are characterised by boldness and freedom of drawing and rich patterns of colours, particularly "Angry Sea" and Dhumka Landscape". His "Solitude", however, seems faulty in composition. The landscape and skyscape give the impression of a too tightly held balance—exact half and half. It would have made a beautiful design if either of the two parts could be reduced considerably. His brush drawings rival some of the Chinese masterpieces in their eloquent economy of touch.

Sailoz Muckerjea has contributed four of his latest works, out of which only one "The Game" is a very cleverly executed painting. The use of light grey background with a rustic mural decoration of a horse and rider and the foreground grouping of four women intent on their game and draped in Grey, Blue, Yellow and Red make very simple and pleasing pattern but the drawing leaves much to be desired. The limbs look more like wooden sticks than flesh and blood limbs. However, Muckerjea is a bold experimenter with a mercurial temperament. His work is surprisingly good sometimes while the disappointments are as frequent.

Harikrishan Lall, a member of Sanyal Studio, has for the first time in Delhi, exhibited two oil paintings "Water Melon Fields" and "Husking the Harvest". "Water Melon Fields" is a very cleverly done picture handled in an original way and is one of the best in the Exhibition. It is a pity that the framing spoils much of the effect. A light grey frame would have been much more suitable.

Another member of Sanyal Studio, Prannath Mago, has exhibited "The Drummers". In this the artist portrays an interesting scene executed in flat tempera but the treatment and the spirit are entirely Indian.

Dhanaraj Bhagat has contributed four pieces of sculpture in wood, terracotta and clay modelling together with five oil paintings. He is an excellent painter but chiefly as a sculptor that he will make his mark. His favourite medium is wood in which he is a pioneer in Northern India. His wood-carving "Depressed", carved from a single block of Indian

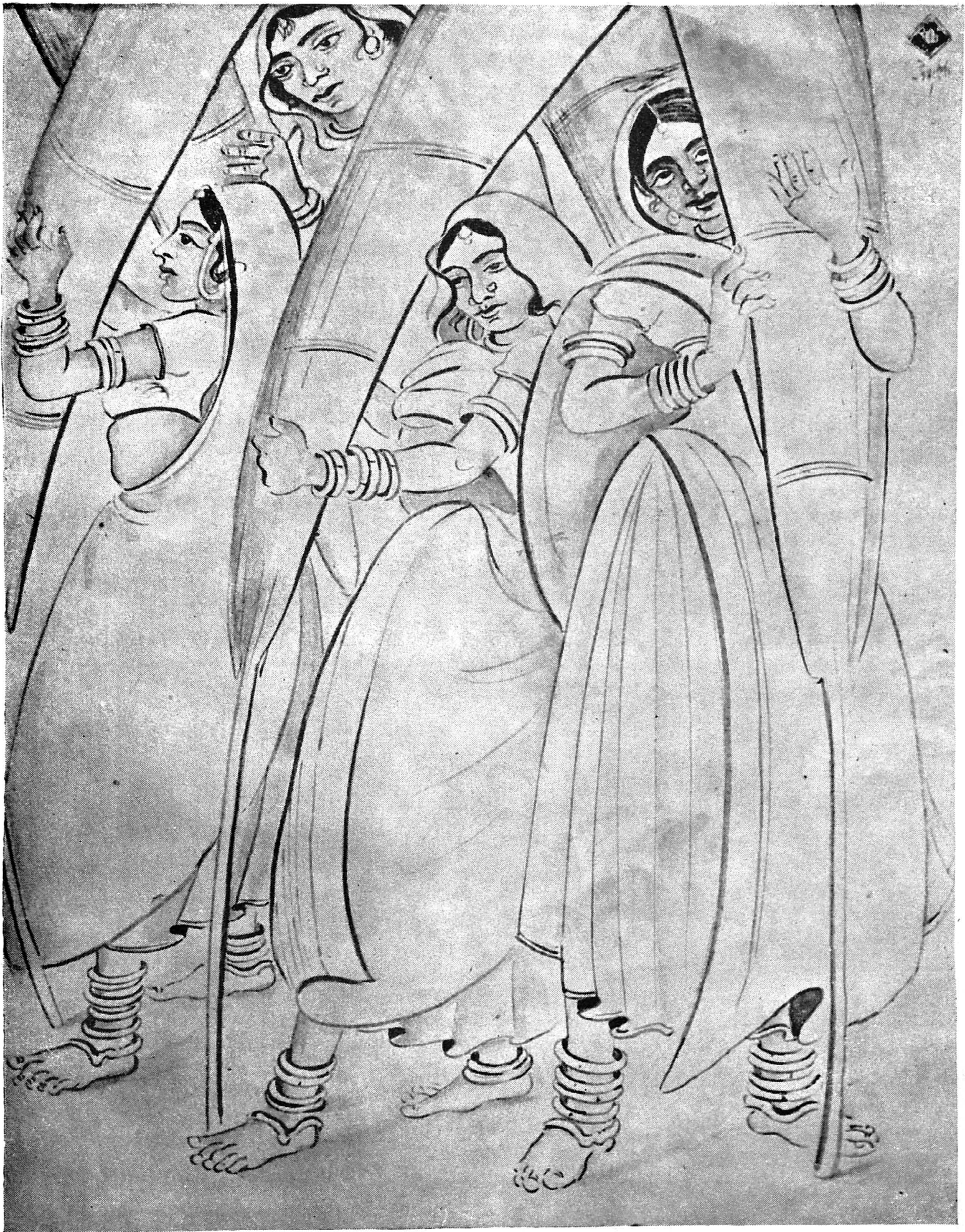
teak-wood, shows that he has grasped a feeling for pure form—not so evident in his earlier work—and has a full understanding of the difficulties and potentialities of wood as a medium. The natural wood grains are beautifully utilised to form the drapery of the girl.

Other outstanding artists represented are Jamini Roy with his "Black Girl" in tempera; Kanwal Krishna with his "Winter Shades" and "Melting Snows" in transparent water colours; David Paynter with his "Nepalese Girls" in oils; Manishi Dey with his compositions in tempera; Paritosh Sen with his "Husking" in tempera; Deveyani Krishna with her "Black Horse" in water colours; B. N. Mukherjee with his "Youth and Age"; Anil Roy Choudhury with "Grace" the study of the back of a girl in wash technique. Apart from Chaudhury's "Grace" most of these have been exhibited once or more before.

Nicholas Roerich is represented by two of his Himalayan Landscapes by no means his best.

There are several more. Together they illustrate the development of modern Indian paintings and show in some measure the inquisitive searching and still unsettled spirit of quest which is the keynote of contemporary Indian Art.

It will be excellent if the Art Society keeps the number of exhibits in any future Exhibition not more than 100 or so and not put them in a tasteless jumble as was done in some previous Exhibitions. If a painting deserves to be exhibited at all surely it deserves to be given a proper space and proper setting and also it would be only fair to the visiting public.



Daughters of the Jungle.

By Goverdhan Lal Joshi.



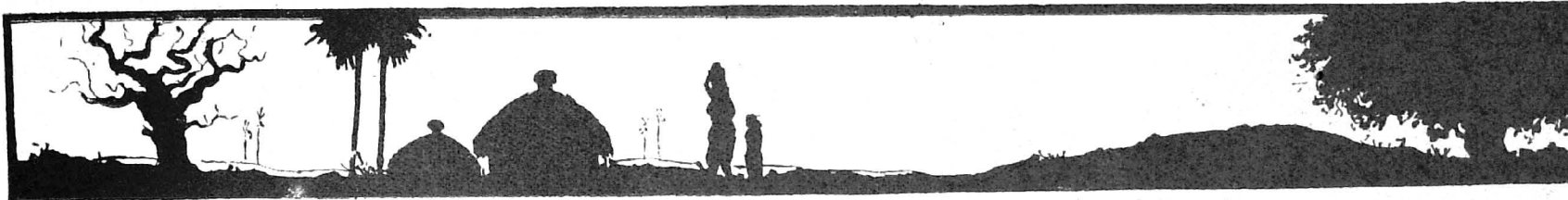
Grace.

By Anil Roy Choudhury.



The Black Girl.

By Sailoz Mookerjee.



BOOK REVIEWS

THE CITY OF LONDON. *An outline of its History: British Information Service, and United Kingdom Publicity Office, New Delhi: Copiously illustrated, 1947, pages 129.*

This is indeed a worthy biography of a worthy city containing chapters on Historical development, Civic Government, Guilds and Livery Companies, Bridges, Spires, Exchanges, Markets, Banking, Insurance, the City in Arms, The Thames and finally its connection with the modern world. The brochure is chiefly meant for the cultured man of the world with a special bias for general history and business but there is no reason for the aesthete to be disappointed when he finds no special chapter dedicated to the art and architecture of London. Indeed it appears at every step while going through the brochure that the compiler (or the compilers) has in spite of himself been drawn to the beautiful London again and again.

It is more than a guide book or a propaganda pamphlet. The amazing wealth of information, the literary presentation, sober evaluation of its position in England and as a city of the world make it a book worthy of perusal by even those who never hope to visit the city nor have any business dealings with it.

The reproductions are, to say the least, excellent.

A brochure of such a nature should, however, have an extensive Index. S. M. L.

COTTAGE INDUSTRY IN INDIAN ECONOMY
K. Mitra and P. P. Lakshmanan, *Economic Research Department, A.I.C.C., Allahabad, 1947—Price Rs. Two Only.*

This brochure which purports to show that the way to progress and happiness lies through self-sufficiency is based on Gandhiji's programme of decentralised production and self-sufficiency. The authors feel that India must have a plan of economic development of a sort different from the capitalistic plan which cannot reduce the pressure on agriculture by more than 20 per cent. Though no plan of economic development can entirely rule out the use of machine and large-scale production, a *pari passu* development of cottage industries along with large-scale mechanised ones is inevitable because cottage

industries ensure larger employment at relatively less cost than mechanised large-scale industries. The success of the most advanced industrial countries of the pre-war world—Japan and Germany—was chiefly due to the judicious combining of cottage and large-scale industries. India would do well to take a leaf from the history of those countries and imbibe their ideology in the industrial sphere.

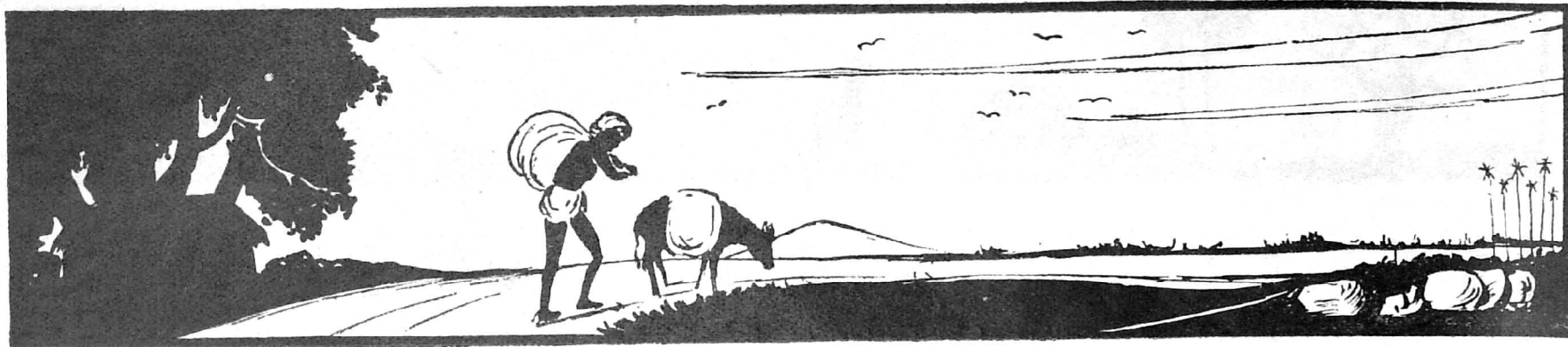
Handicaps there are for the cottage worker for instance illiteracy, conservatism, and financial pressure. These could be removed by a well-laid policy of the Government which has the interests of the poor artisans at heart. The starting of some basic large-scale industries for the supply of raw materials and equipment for small-industries as a measure of post-war economy will go a long way to bridge the gulf between large-scale and small industries. The progress of co-operation among artisans in a larger measure than here-to-fore will remove many handicaps relating to finance and marketing.

The brochure has an interesting chapter on the work of the A.I.V.I.A. and also one on *Khadi* and *Khadi* Scheme. *Khadi*, as the authors feel, has a definite value to the country not only on economic and social grounds but on cultural grounds. They commend the ushering of the *Khadi* Scheme in Madras as formulated by Sri T. Prakasam, the then Premier of Madras. They also see the pressing need to develop the handloom industry. They feel that the uninterrupted availability of cheap and plentiful yarn is a primary condition of the success of the industry. For that purpose they recommend the "Linked System" or "Central Preparatory System" by which the yarn is warped and sized by the mills and supplied to the weavers.

A survey of all provinces in respect of cottage industries is a good addition to the brochure. The survey though necessarily very brief is nevertheless rather interesting.

A perusal of the brochure will indicate that though it may not give much that is new and thought-provoking, it, however, keeps one informed of what the trends of thought in the subject have been during recent years.

Tekumalla,



NOTES ON PLATES

“RAJPUT PRINCE” Tricolour Frontispiece

UNKNOWN ARTIST

It is an old painting belonging to Jaipur School of later eighteenth century. Originally the critics of Indian Art used to classify these old paintings into two schools, viz., Rajput and Mogul. As time went on the critics too gained some experience and their eyes were wide opened to find among each of these schools several characteristic elements peculiar to each locality and hence sub-schools have been created, viz., *Pahari, Kangra Valley, Rajasthan, Patna*, etc.

All old Indian paintings till the end of the 19th century were painted in tempera medium with Indian pigments mostly ochres and minerals on hand-made paper. A comprehensive and exhaustive article on the technique and process of tempera painting will soon be published in these columns.

The painting which is slightly bigger in size than the reproduction, is a good specimen of Jaipur *Kalam*. Jaipur had produced very many versatile artists who had surpassed many artists of the then Mogul Court for originality in theme, freshness of pigments and fine finish. The picture under review probably portrays one of the Rajput Princes. From the dress and gait one could easily say it is Rajah Mansingh. Whomsoever it may portray the picture is a superb specimen of later Rajput *Kalam*.

“THE WAVES” Colour print

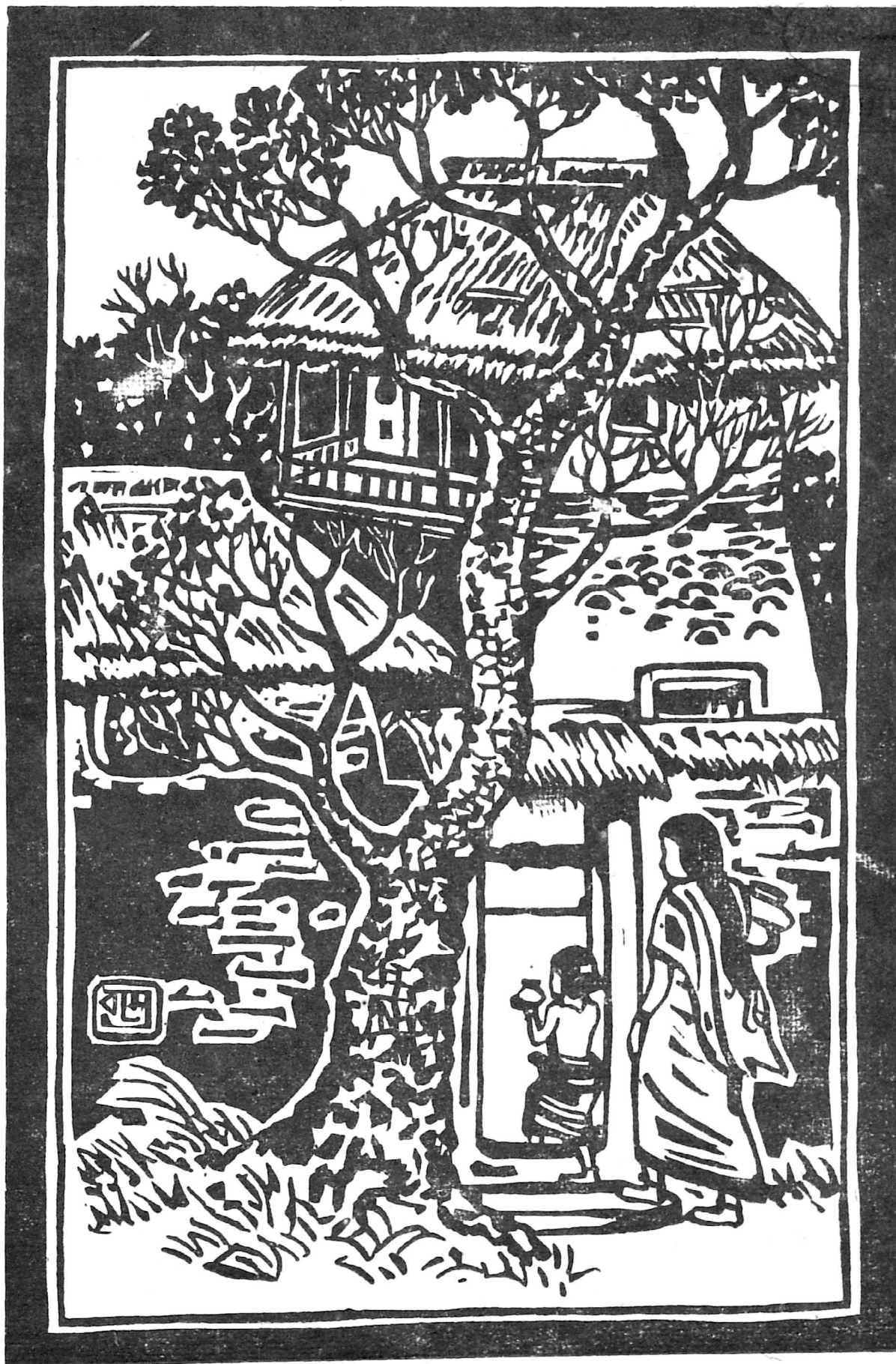
By KATUSIK HOKUSAI

“The Waves” is a Japanese colour print by the world-famous artist, Hokusai, who belongs to the period preceding the Meizi Era (1868-1912). The original title of the picture as known in Japan is Mt. *HUZI* from Kanagawa which is in the collection of Mihava.

The early decades of the 19th century saw the full maturity of the technique of colour prints. The engraver had become capable of transferring on to the wooden blocks even the subtlest lines and curves of the original painting. The painter, too, had made himself master of the best method of producing an effect of highly complex hues by accumulating impressions of two or more rudimentary colours. Although there were a fairly large number of wood-cut painters in this period, it must be admitted that there were few gaints among them. Indeed there were not more than two such masters, viz., Katusika-Hokusai (1760-1849) and *Utagawa-Hirasige (1798-1858), who stood, pre-eminently above their contemporaries.

Coming to the technical qualities and details of the print under review it may be admitted that it is very difficult to reproduce them by any mechanical process which renders almost impossible a faithful reproduction, shown all the charm that an original colour print could. We have already published in *SILPI* issue an article on the process of wood-cut prints of Japan in which the various processes were explained in detail of this graphic art. We may add here that no amount of such explanations would enable the readers to evaluate the correct tones of colours shown in these prints: Though the blocks are all of flat surface, yet the selection of wood grains and the application of colour on them for taking out each print is an art by itself. It is noticed that on the same block more than one colour is applied with a flat brush, a speciality of the Japanese, and while transferring these colours on the print by a peculiar method of rubbing against the paper requires again skill and appreciable judgment of tones.

Hokusai and Korin, almost belonging to the same period were the two great artists of Japan who depicted the life and fury of tidal waves of the Pacific Ocean.



"RETURN FROM BATH"

R. N. CHAKRAVERTY

In depicting these scenes, these two artists have taken two different media: the former in colour prints and the latter in lacquer painting on the screens. Hokusai surpasses his contemporary due to the medium he chose, for, in lacquer painting the delicate tones and the freshness of the pigments cannot be maintained.

Hokusai's colour prints are specially noted for the force of lines and their final disintegration into the pigments rendering a soft and dreamy effect. The white touches in the print gives an impression that a fresh white pigment has been used on the print as it is done in the water colour painting; though the effect was produced by leaving the freshness of paper untouched in the process of printing.

We are reproducing in *SILPI*,* from time to time, these masterpieces of this graphic art as it is becoming very common in our art schools to teach our young artists lino and woodcutting for direct contact printing in place of black and white drawings for illustrating purposes. Some of our artists have been able to do some creditable work in this line. Yet there is much to be learnt from the works of these Chinese and Japanese artists. With this in view we are publishing these prints and exhaustive notes on their technique and artistic values.

“HOMEWARD” Tricolour Picture

By F. H. RAULEDER

We had pleasure of offering to our readers in our August 1947 issue, a fine wood-cut done by Mr. F. H. Rauleder, representing a typical Malabar backwater scene—which depicted in strong contrast the common sight that one sees invariably in Malabar. We are now presenting a fine, soft but richly significant painting by this same gifted artist.

The subject matter chosen by the artist is again quite a common one; but he has magnificently represented this scene by a dextrous manipulation of the colour scheme. It represents the ordinary village couple making the final preparations to leave the fields in which they are working all day long for their homes. The pair would have left their hut early in the day and hence would have brought with them their food for the day in a basket and also the charm of their life—their little baby. While the man and the woman would be working in the field all day through, they would have put their child in an improvised hammock, hung securely to a tough bough of a shady

tree; lying inside the cloth cradle, the child, by dallying with the feeble sunlight that pencils down through the interspaces in the leaves of the tree, would have been lulled to sleep by the merry chirping of the birds. After their work for the day is over, we see the mother suckling the little child most fondly and tenderly, while a happy smile beams on her lips, wherein she has absolutely forgotten her hard work and misery; for after all every mother finds untold happiness in the beaming face of her little baby. Nearby, is the empty basket in which they have brought their food and its covering cloth. Her husband is well-depicted to represent the wearied body as leaning on the crowbar with which he has toiled all day. He is perhaps approaching the tree to remove the hammock tied to it, as he is very anxious to reach home, before darkness sets in. To effectively bring out the approaching twilight, the artist has depicted the sky, and the distant trees in brilliant hues to suggest the autumn evening.

Though Mr. Rauleder does not belong to any particular school of Indian Painting, on account of his long stay in our country, he has imbibed the very many valuable characteristics of our modern schools of painting. His portrayal of scenes from our daily life is very effective and perfectly natural, with no excessive treatment in them.

The tanned skin of the villagers, the simple but singularly common red saree and dhoti worn by them, their customary ornaments, the usual food basket and other details are so very typical of our rustic life, which the artist has successfully depicted in a harmonious blending of colours, giving the requisite amount of depth to the picture.

“Teeyennes”.

“RETURN FROM BATH” Wood-cut

By R. N. CHAKRAVERTHY

Among the modern artists of Bengal Mr. Chakraverty is the earliest who took to plastic arts and published a portfolio of his woodcuts depicting various scenes of Bengalee life in and around Santiniketan. ‘Return from bath’ is a plate taken from the portfolio published by the artist fifteen years ago. Mr. Chakraverty has a very powerful hand for drawing and his studies of rural life of Bengal are singularly unique for all its characteristics of rural atmosphere. The wood-cut is a very good composition as decorative as it is well-balanced.

* In the October (1946) issue of *Silpi* Hirosgis's colour print was published in tri-colour with an explanatory note

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