REPRESENTATIVE INDIANS

BY

LALITMOHAN CHATTERJEE, M.A.

FELLOW, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY AND MEMBER OF THE COURT, DACCA UNIVERSITY

AND

SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE, M.A., B.L.

FELLOW, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

PUBLISHED BY A. C. DHAR, B.A.
THE POPULAR AGENCY,
163, MUKTARAM BABU STREET,
CALCUTTA

1931

Re. 1-12

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Sir Syed Ahmed (1817-1898)	1
Brahmānanda Keshubchunder Sen (1838-1884)	13
Mr. Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata (1839-1904)	45
Dr. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-)	66
Sir Asutosh Mookerjee (1864-1924)	97
Mahatma Gandhi (1869-)	146
Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925)	185
Professor Sir Venkata Raman (1888-)	214

REPRESENTATIVE INDIANS

REPRESENTATIVE INDIANS

BY

LALITMOHAN CHATTERJEE, M.A.

FELLOW, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY AND MEMBER OF THE COURT, DACCA UNIVERSITY

AND

SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE, M.A., B.L.

FELLOW, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

PUBLISHED BY A. C. DHAR, B.A.
THE POPULAR AGENCY,
163, MUKTARAM BABU STREET,
CALCUTTA

1931

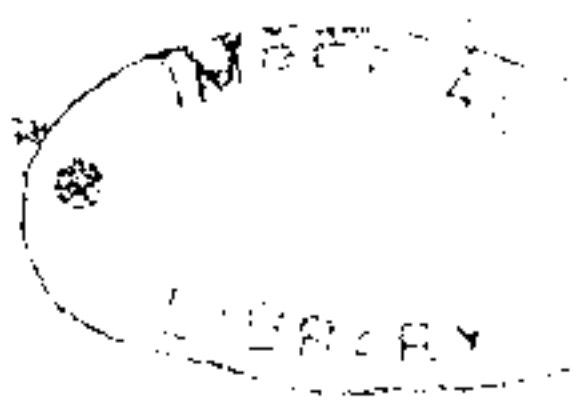
Re. 1-12

PRINTED BY K. ACHARYYA
RAMKUMAR MACHINE PRESS
163, Muktaram Babu St., Calcutta.

In Thy name I ope my eyes
Upon the holy morn to-day ;
In Thy name doth all my heart
Its hundred petals open lay ;
In Thy name the touch of dark
Is streak'd with lines of golden fire ;
In Thy name now bursts the light
Like music from the Morning's lyre ;
In Thy name the eastern gate
Its mighty portals doth unfold ;
In Thy name comes forth the sun
Brow-bound with newly-burnish'd gold ;
In Thy name the sea of life
With play of ripples wakes anew ;
In Thy name, lo, all the world
Deck'd in beauty comes to view.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

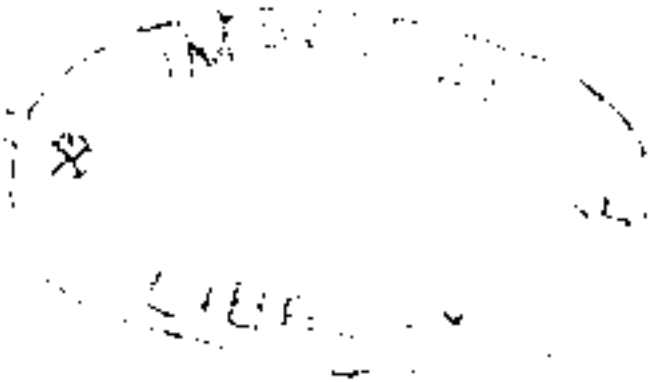
(Translated by L. M. C.)




Gandhi
5 4
30

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Sir Syed Ahmed (1817-1898)	1
Brahmānanda Keshubchunder Sen (1838-1884)	13
Mr. Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata (1839-1904)	45
Dr. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-)	66
Sir Asutosh Mookerjee (1864-1924)	97
Mahatma Gandhi (1869-)	146
Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925)	185
Professor Sir Venkata Raman (1888-)	214



SIR SYED AHMED

REPRESENTATIVE INDIANS

SIR SYED AHMED

Sir Syed Ahmed was perhaps the greatest Muslim reformer of recent times. He was also a trusted leader of his community. In the Aligarh College he has left a monument more enduring than brass. He has made it not merely the literary focus of Islam in India but a training ground for all that stands for good citizenship. Though essentially an oriental scholar he saw clearly and realised fully that English education was a necessary factor in the advancement of his community. For the promotion of this education he strove incessantly and, in the end, triumphantly succeeded in the face of prolonged and bitter opposition on the part of the representatives of the older and the uncompromising school of orthodoxy. An oriental scholar, he was yet the "apostle of English learning" for his community.

2

Syed Ahmed was born in Delhi on the 17th April, 1817. He came from a family which traced its origin to Hazrat Husain, the grandson of the Prophet. Driven by persecution from their ancestral home his forbears, after some wanderings, settled down in India at the time of the Emperor Shahjahan.

The family came into touch with the Court of the Great Moghul. Ahmed's grandfather held a position of honour at the Court of Alamgir II. His father Mir Taqi, too, enjoyed high esteem at the Imperial Court. Ahmed's mother, a daughter of the "best oriental scholar of his time", is said to have been a gifted lady herself. To her influence and care Ahmed owed much. Indeed the boy's early education was left entirely to her. Under her he studied languages, Muslim theology, law and history. But Ahmed received another and a better kind of education. His father moved in the best contemporary society of Delhi. Ahmed, thus, came into touch with men of character and culture. All this developed in him a keen passion for literary and scholarly pursuits which throughout marked his busy official life.

3

After his father's death Ahmed was thrown upon his own resources. He became a Sheristadar and in 1839 was appointed Naib Mir Munshi to the Commissioner of Agra. In 1841 he was made a Munsif. As a Munsif he is said to have quickly won a reputation for efficiency and integrity. From 1846 to 1854 he was Sadar Amin at Delhi.

But the atmosphere of culture in which he passed his early youth never really forsook him. He devoted his leisure hours to study and research. It was about this time that he published a work of antiquarian research, dealing with the ruins in Delhi and the remains of old architecture. It at once received recognition from scholars at home and abroad. In 1861 a French translation was published and on the strength of it Syed Ahmed was elected an Honorary Member of the Royal Asiatic Society. He also wrote some books on religious subjects. About 1856 he brought out a revised edition of Abul Fazl's famous work *Ain-i-Akbari.*

4

In 1857 the Sepoy Mutiny broke out in

research was rudely disturbed for Syed Ahmed. But he was one of the few who kept their heads cool during the excitement. When the Mutiny had been quelled many innocent men found themselves at the mercy of false and vindictive "informers". In these troublous times Syed Ahmed, who was trusted by Government, saved from the gallows many whom he knew to be innocent. On the other hand when he was himself recommended for the gift of a valuable *taluk*, forfeited from a rebel zemindar, he refused to enrich himself at the expense of a fellow-Indian.

The Mutiny marked a turning-point in Syed Ahmed's life. It brought home to him the need of a better understanding between the rulers and the ruled. It set him thinking of the larger questions of social and political reform. It made him ponder deeply on the backwardness of his community. In 1858 he wrote, and in 1861 published, a valuable pamphlet on *The Causes of the Sepoy Mutiny*. Into this he put his thoughts. The pamphlet was translated into English. Syed Ahmed urged that Indians should have a voice in the legislative councils, for their co-operation and knowledge of the country would prevent Government from taking false steps. Equipped with an intimate

would forewarn Government of dangers ahead and would explain to them the popular point of view. On the other hand, through the Indian members the general public would come to know the real intentions of Government when a measure was set on foot. In those days popular representation on the councils was next to nothing. This would not do, said Syed Ahmed, if mutual understanding between Englishmen and Indians was to be secured.

According to him one of the deeper causes of the Mutiny was a widespread suspicion in the mind of the people that it was the intention of Government to destroy Indian religions and to impose the Christian faith upon them. He mentioned various actions and measures of Government that seemed to give colour to the suspicion in the uninformed public mind. Had Government taken the people into their confidence the mischief might assuredly have been averted.

We must not forget that all this refers to what happened three quarters of a century ago. The views of Syed Ahmed show his deep insight and clear vision.

Speaking of his times Syed Ahmed said, "There is no real communication between the governors and the governed, no living together or near one another. Europeans should never

treat Indians with contempt. Contempt is an ineradicable wrong.....The wound rankles deep and cannot be healed ".

But in order to bring about a better understanding between the governors and the governed, what, according to him, was the duty of the governed and particularly of the Muslim community of which Syed Ahmed considered himself the spokesman ? Their clear duty was to provide that education which would broaden their minds. He was convinced that it was Western education that his community needed—a knowledge of Western arts and sciences.

It was from this broad standpoint that Syed Ahmed looked upon the education of his community. And so convinced was he of its need that henceforth he made it his life-work to provide for his compatriots the amplest facilities for an all-round Western education. He knew, however, that there was a mass of bigoted opinion against it. He knew that progress must be slow and tedious. Therefore, though a good deal of his time was taken up by his duties as Subordinate Judge and not a little

up, he never lost sight of his main object. In 1861 he opened an English school at Moradabad and in 1864 another at Ghazipore. He also established a Literary and Scientific Society for translating standard English works into Urdu. The object was to familiarise Indians with English thought and culture. The Society was intended mainly for Muslims but was open to Hindus as well. He also drew up a programme of education for his co-religionists which included both English and Islamic culture.

In 1863 he delivered in Calcutta an address in Persian to the Muslims on the benefits of Western education and the breadth of view and courage displayed in it are remarkable for one who himself had little or none of those benefits.

In 1869 he visited England accompanying his second son, Mahmud (afterwards that celebrated judge, Mr. Justice Mahmud), who proceeded there for education. This was to be a further preparatory step to his work as a reformer. He wanted to have direct knowledge of English life as well as of their "religious, educational and political institutions". He wanted to see if the English system of education could be introduced in India in a modified form. He stayed in England for about a year and a half, met his old English friends and visited

the universities. He was presented to the Queen and was made a C. S. I. "His enlightened opinions, suavity of manners, dignified bearing, and, above all, catholic sympathy attracted much attention."

Two things however struck him most in England—the residential educational system at Oxford and Cambridge and the tremendous power of the press. While in England he made up his mind to establish an Anglo-Oriental residential university for Muslims on his arrival home.

6

On returning to India in 1870, he started a monthly periodical, the *Tahzeebul Akhlaque* or the Social Reformer. This was his instrument for advocating reforms. It was like the rising of a new light in the Muslim community. Religious, social and political questions were discussed in it in a free and liberal spirit. If it appealed to all thoughtful Muslims, it also roused opposition from the conservative and the orthodox section. This drew all eyes to the magazine. Opposition made it a great power. Each issue was eagerly awaited and read. It shaped a new ideal and inspired a new zeal. Indeed it was not unlike the dawn of a Renaissance.

The ground had now been prepared for the establishment of an Anglo-Oriental University. The first step was to appoint an education board that drew up a report. In the report it was pointed out that blind prejudice had so far stood in the way of Muslim progress. It showed by facts and figures the backwardness of the community. In the high schools and colleges Muslim students formed a very small minority. One cause that kept them away was that these institutions did not meet the special requirements of Muslims. It was necessary to secure the conservation of Muslim culture along with dissemination of Western arts and sciences.

In 1872-73 the scheme of an Anglo-Oriental University for Muslims was launched. Syed Ahmed knew that without the support of his community, moral and material, the scheme could not be realised. He threw himself into the task of raising subscriptions. At first a Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental school was established which subsequently developed into a residential college. In 1876 Syed Ahmed retired from Government service and devoted himself to the work of the institution. Sir John Strachey, the then Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, secured in Aligarh the site of the university.

Aligarh and laid the foundation stone. In 1881 post-graduate classes were added. Gradually the college which was at first affiliated to other universities grew into a self-contained institution. Its residential side rapidly developed. Games became popular. The Aligarh cricket team became famous. It is notable that the university opened its doors to Hindu students also. Syed Ahmed's ambition was achieved. His great ideal kindled the enthusiasm of many distinguished Muslim scholars who became his faithful allies and supporters. Inspired by Syed Ahmed's lofty example, they themselves in later years became the acknowledged leaders of their community and dedicated their lives to the cause of progress and learning.

7

There is some misconception in regard to Syed Ahmed's attitude in politics. In 1866 he had helped in establishing the British Indian Association, which was the "forerunner of the Indian National Congress". Its object was to keep the British Parliament in touch with Indian affairs. "He regretted the indifference with which

"Such associations as the London Association, he felt, should deem it their duty to express their frank and honest opinion as to the justice or otherwise of the acts of Government." In 1885 the Indian National Congress was established. Syed Ahmed watched its working for the first two or three years and fell out of sympathy with it.

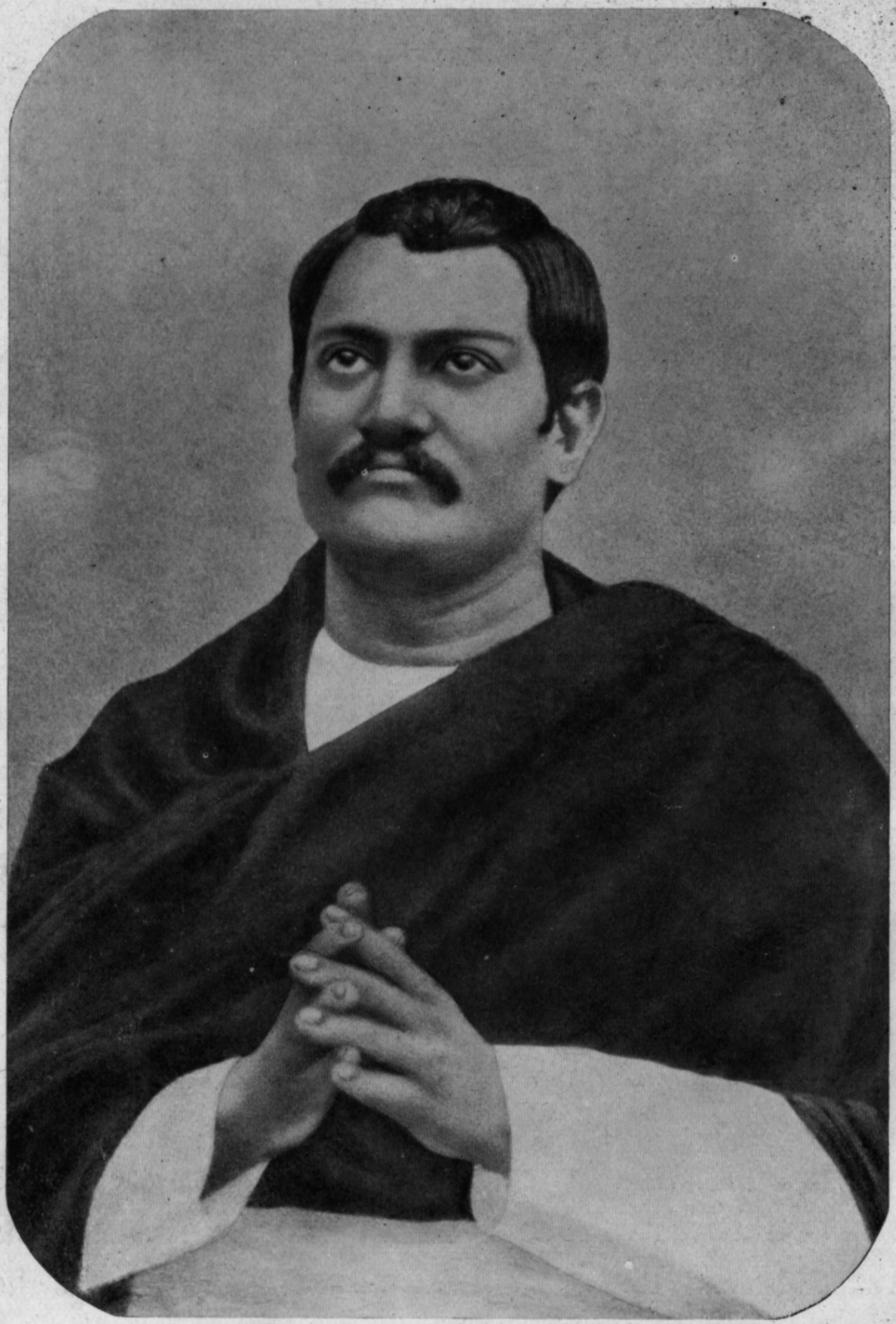
But his views on Indian Nationality even at that distant time were highly progressive as will appear from the following extract from a speech which he delivered at Gurdaspur in 1885:

"We Hindus and Muslims should try to become one heart and soul and act in unison. If united, we can support each other. If not, the impact of one against the other would tend to the destruction and downfall of both. In old historical books and traditions you have read and heard, and we see it even now, that all the people inhabiting one country are designated by the term one *nation*.....Hindu and Muhammadan brethren, do you people any country other than Hindusthan? Do you not tread upon the same ground and inhabit the same land? Are you not burned and buried on the same soil? Remember that the words Hindu and Muhammadan are only meant for religious distinction—otherwise all persons, whether Hindu

Muhammadan or Christian, who reside in this country, belong in this particular respect to one and the same nation. Then all these different sects can only be described as one nation ; they must, each and all, unite for the good of the country which is common to all."

8

Syed Ahmed was appointed a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1878 and was re-appointed to it in 1881 by Lord Ripon. He was made a member of the Education Commission in 1882. In 1887 he was appointed by Lord Dufferin a member of the Public Services Commission. He was made a K. C. S. I. in 1889. He died in 1898 full of years and honours and was buried in the mosque of the Aligarh University.



KESHUBCHUNDER SEN

BRAHMĀNANDA KESHUBCHUNDER SEN

Living in *grihasthāsram* in the midst of a large family, yet living a life dedicated to God; responding to the distracting calls of social life in the nineteenth century, yet every moment engaged in the "practice of the presence of God"; a simple Hindu in the manner of his outer life, yet, in spirit, a disciple of the prophets of all the ages; a student of philosophy, yet guided in his spiritual life by faith and divine inspiration alone—such was Brahmānanda Keshubchunder Sen.

In a country where those who aspired after a deep religious life had always fled from the world, he showed how it was possible to live "true to the kindred points of heaven and home". At a time when religion was often confined to external observances and gave rise to sectarian jealousies, he taught that religion was a spiritual condition of man, a prayerful attitude of receptivity. In a country in which the existence of many sects have led to discord and mutual differences he raised the banner of harmony and love and saw

He was one of the first to speak out before the world and claim that Asia had a message to give to Europe. He was one of the first to demand for India such treatment only from Britain as was based on mutual respect and helpfulness. He was one of the first to teach that national advancement in India was to be achieved by spiritual and not by physical strength. He was one of the first to raise his voice against the evil of intemperance.

Thus, in many ways, Keshub was a pioneer of the movement for national self-respect as well as an inspired religious leader and reformer.

2

Keshubchunder Sen was born in Calcutta on the 19th November, 1838. His ancestral village was Garifa. This village is pleasantly situated on the bank of the Ganges about twenty-four miles from Calcutta. The Rev. P. C. Mazumdar, Keshub's life-long associate and biographer, tells how Garifa "has been changed like Goldsmith's Auburn". The gardens, the lakes, the peaceful river-side scenes in the summer twilight have all vanished. Jute-mills and all the unromantic ac-

have encroached upon those scenes of happiness. Keshub's boyhood, however, was spent mostly in Calcutta. He lived in the midst of a joint family in the great house of the Sens at Colootola.

Keshubchunder Sen came from an ancient and illustrious Vaidya family that claimed descent from the Sen Kings of Bengal. His grand-father, Ramkamal Sen, was a man of talent and character. He was one of those who, in those early times, appreciated the advantages of Western education. This education, not wide-spread at the time, gave him a special advantage. He was able to create for himself a position of dignity and affluence. He began as an humble type-setter at the Asiatic Society's press. By his industry and intelligence he rose till he became Indian Secretary of the Society and then a member of its Council. He had now proved his worth. He was appointed Treasurer of the Calcutta Mint; and, subsequently, he was called to the high position of Diwan of the Bank of Bengal. Nor was all this his only claim to greatness. He helped in the founding of the Hindu College and the Sanskrit College. He also compiled an English-and-Bengali Dictionary, a marvellous achievement for those days.

Such was Keshub's grandfather. Little Keshub

have remarked, "It is Keshub who will uphold the reputation of my house". Yet the boy was only five years old when Ramkamal Sen died.

Keshub's father, Pearymohan Sen, died young when Keshub was about ten years old. So the training of the child fell to his widowed mother. Keshub's mother was a remarkable lady. With all the austere self-denial of Hindu widowhood she combined a strong commonsense and a clear intelligence. There was a spring of deep piety in her nature. She understood her son, both when he was a child and afterwards when he had become great. She never left the pale of Hindu orthodoxy but the unessential things in it sat lightly upon her. She understood the spiritual side of religion. Her affection, her intelligence, her spirituality were of the greatest help in the early training of Keshub. And Keshub, on his part, retained a deep affection for her to the last day of his life.

3

As a boy Keshub was tall, fair and handsome. He was intelligent and reserved. In 1845 he joined the Hindu College. He was a born

leader among his school-fellows. He devised new games, and always took the chief part. "Sometimes", says Mr. Mazumdar, "he would set on foot a post office, make us his *dāk* runners and himself sit grandly in the office with a pair of green spectacles on his nose as the Post-Master General!"

He was scrupulous about personal cleanliness and it had with him "a vague touch of religion". He loved to bathe in the Ganges and he showed the Vaishnava influence of his family by decorating himself with sandal paint. Many of his companions were far from moral. But he grew up among them a pure-minded, truthful boy. His school-fellows stood in awe of him. His reserve was not due to any conceit. It was partly shyness—the bloom of boyhood—and partly it was a cover for much force of character.

The course of Keshub's school life, however, did not run smooth. At the Hindu College he did well and carried off prizes. At the age of fourteen he had reached the topmost class of the school department. But then came an interruption. A second college had been opened. It had to be patronised. Some students of the Hindu College went over to this new institution. Keshub was one of them. But the college had a brief

career. Keshub had to be brought back to his old college the very next year. The result of this was that he left without passing the final examination. Thus ended his school life. But he kept up his studies, reading mainly philosophy and religious literature.

4

In 1856 Keshub was married. It was a marriage arranged by his guardians. He went through the ceremony mechanically in obedience to them. He was now entering upon his youth—a most unusual and remarkable youth. For the temper of his youth was the temper of austerity and sternness. He gave up fish-eating. He gave up card-playing and all youthful frivolities. Darkness overcast his face and saddened his heart. He says: "I had neither peace by day nor by night. All the pleasures which youth enjoys I shunned as poison. To Amusement I said, 'Thou art Satan, thou art sin'. To Desire I said, 'Thou art hell, those who touch thee fall into the jaws of death'. To my Body I said, 'Thou art the road to perdition...I will rule thee or thou wilt lead me to death'...All those books and all those friends that were likely to

make me smile I avoided. Gradually I became silent and spoke very little...True I did not retire into any wilderness, but the world was a wilderness to me...My wife was coming to live with me...I thought thus: 'My soul is a noble thing, shall I subject it to a wife? Shall I subject it to the world?' I resolved never to be overfond of wife or of the world". We find here a young ascetic in whose heart, as on a holy altar, burned the fire of moral earnestness.

Besides books of philosophy and books of sermons his favourite books were Young's *Night Thoughts* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in both of which he found sombre and sublime poetry. At this time he started various organisations for the moral improvement of those about him. He stuck on house-walls written prayers and exhortations for passers-by to read. He was going through spiritual unrest. His soul was on a quest.

When he was passing through this state of mind a little door was opened to him through which he entered and found peace. It was the door of Prayer. "In that dawn of my spiritual life", says Keshub, "the voice that sounded in my heart was 'Pray!' 'Pray!'

I never knew very well why or for what I should pray; that was not the time to reason. It never occurred to me that I might be mistaken...I prayed...The dawn brightened into morning. All that was hidden in darkness before began to clear up...By the practice of prayer I gained endless, resistless strength... Lo, I had not the same body or the same mind...I shook my fists in the face of sin."

In 1857 Keshub started the Goodwill Fraternity, an association for the discussion of religious subjects and for devotional exercises. His religious ideas were broad. "I did not allow myself for one moment", says he, "to harbour sectarianism, but preached to my friends those two doctrines—God our Father, every man our brother." Thus Keshub gathered round him a band of young men. He gave readings on moral and religious subjects and often spoke extempore in English. Here was first exhibited his natural eloquence which developed afterwards into the fervid oratory that held Town Hall audiences spell-bound. Here were the beginnings of Keshub's religious leadership his first followers being the members of this fraternity. Here also Keshub met Devendranath Tagore, the head of the Calcutta Brāhma

Samāj, who came to a meeting of the association, for the fame of these meetings had spread and had begun to attract outsiders.

5

In 1857 Keshub joined the Calcutta Brāhma Samāj by signing the printed covenant sent to him for the purpose. "When I felt", says Keshub, "that I wanted a church, I found that the existing sects and churches would not answer my purpose. A small publication of the Calcutta Brāhma Samāj fell into my hands and as I read the chapter on *What is Brāhmoism ?*, I found that it corresponded exactly with the inner conviction of my heart, the voice of God in the soul." After Keshub many of his young friends also gradually entered the Brāhma Samāj.

The Brāhma Samāj was founded by the great Raja Rammohan Roy twenty-seven years before, that is, in January 1830 (11th Magh, 1751, Bengali Era). The Raja's object was to establish a monotheistic church, based partly on the teaching of the Vedanta and partly on a conception of universal religion and the brotherhood of mankind. This conception was traced by the Raja not to intuition or personal

experience, but to the authority of the scriptures. The distinctive and striking feature was that the founder of the Brāhma Samāj went for this purpose not merely to the Hindu scriptures but to the Hebrew, Christian and Muhammadan scriptures as well. When, after the death of the Raja in 1833, the leadership of the Brāhma Samāj fell to Devendranath Tagore, he brought into Brāhma worship the sweetness of personal experience for, *rishi*-like, he himself had spent the greater part of his life in silent meditation on the Himalayas. In the actual conduct of the Samāj, however, Devendranath was cautious and conservative or, rather, he yielded to the timidity and conservatism of the elder members of the Samāj. Thus the broader aspect of Rammohan Roy's church became somewhat obscured. Keshub and his young friends who joined the Samāj now were on the other hand all for liberalism and advance. Here was the beginning of a Young Brāhma Movement in the Samāj.

From 1857 to 1866 Keshub and his young friends remained within the Calcutta Brāhma Samāj. Keshub was greatly attracted by Maharshi Devendranath and the latter welcomed Keshub with open arms. A beautiful friendship grew

of Keshub was proved when he installed him in 1862, young as he was, and not a Brahmin, as the Minister of the Samāj, conferring on him the name of *Brahmānanda* or Rejoicer in God.

The companionship of the Maharshi fired the enthusiasm of young Keshub. They together planned a Divinity School, the *Brahma Vidyālaya*, which was established in 1859. Here Keshub delivered English lectures on the philosophy of Theism and Maharshi Devendranath spoke in Bengāli on the doctrines of the Brāhma Samāj. Thus the religious conceptions of the Samāj were systematised. Thus also was organised a body of enthusiastic young men who, under the leadership of Keshubchunder Sen, were eager for the advancement of the new truth.

In the same year (1859) Keshub entered the Bank of Bengal beginning as a clerk on a small pay. There was no immediate need of earning an income. But it was customary at that time in Bengal for a young man to adopt the family profession. The work was not congenial to him. But he made such an impression at the bank that in the course of the year his salary was doubled and bright prospects opened out for him. Mr. Mazumdar tells a story of the time which shows Keshub's independent and truthful

spirit. The secretary of the bank had issued an order that every clerk must solemnly promise not to disclose to outsiders any information of the bank's affairs. Keshub felt that it was impossible to work in the bank and never to talk about its affairs to any one. So he refused to agree and was hauled up before the secretary. But his pluck and his truthfulness turned away the secretary's wrath and he was exempted.

Keshub's heart, however, was not in the bank at all. He made up his mind to forsake all worldly prospects to serve the Church. He resigned his post in July, 1861.

Since 1860 Keshub had begun to issue small tracts, for he wanted to address a wider public. The first tract bore the characteristic title *Young Bengal, this is for You.* The second tract was named *Be Prayerful.* Thirteen tracts were published in all, forming the first instalment of a new literature.

About the same time was established the *Sangat Sabhā*—a small association for mutual assistance in spiritual culture. The soul of such an association is the moral earnestness of the members. They met and talked and prayed

discussions left a lasting mark on their lives and formed the foundations on which many pure and noble lives were built up.

Keshub also went out on preaching and lecturing tours to Krishnagar, to Bombay and to Madras. Everywhere he spoke with eloquence and burning enthusiasm. He had been, as he said afterwards, baptised in fire. In these preaching tours he came into conflict with some Christian missionaries and accepted their challenge to controversy. The most famous of the lectures and counter-lectures were the Rev. Lalbehari Dey's attempt to ridicule the tenets of the Brāhma Samāj and Keshub's triumphant answer in the *Brāhma Samāj Vindicated* in 1863. "It has been said", said Keshub, "that Parker and Newman and the Brāhma Samāj are guilty of stealing God's truths from the Bible and passing them off as their own ideas. Pilfering God's truths! ...If he (the Rev. Lalbehari Dey) is serious, I say—do not tarry but forthwith run after the thieves ...bring them before the High Court of Theology...They shall be sentenced to be incarcerated in the great jail of Salvation. They have sung with David his beautiful psalms, they have

for all this their sin is grievous." In Madras he came to be called "the thunderbolt of Bengal."

Keshub was the life and soul of the Calcutta Brāhma Samāj and had made its name famous throughout the land. He was the darling of the Maharshi's heart. But, within the Samāj itself Keshub chafed like a caged lion. Its older members, not without the Maharshi's support, were for installing none but Brahmin ministers. They were against the innovations which Keshub, in the spirit of the new faith, wanted to introduce. Keshub advocated the re-marriage of widows. He advocated marriage between different castes according to the ritual of the Brāhma Samāj. In 1862 the first inter-caste Brāhma marriage took place, mainly brought about by Keshub. The Maharshi, out of his love for Keshub, did not put a stop to his reforming zeal but himself kept aloof. The elderly members were opposed to all this. Thus something like a "youth movement" began in the Samāj led by Keshub himself.

6

At last Keshub and his young followers broke with the old Samāj and came out of it.

new Samāj, the "Brāhma Samāj of India". At first it had no place of public worship. Its *mandir* was not built and opened till August 1869.

And now Keshub entered upon the second period of his religious leadership and the Brāhma Samāj of India, upon a romantic chapter of its history. Keshub with his friends had left the shelter of the established Calcutta Brāhma Samāj. They had left it for an ideal. They were homeless adventurers. But the idea of a Universal Church and a world-wide Brotherhood of Man filled and elevated their minds. The largeness of the conception found expression in a motto which Keshub suggested and which was then put into Sanskrit verse by Gour Govinda Roy :

Behold this spacious Universe
God's high and holy Temple stands ;
The pure heart is the Pilgrim Shrine ;
One Scripture all Truth of all lands ;
Faith is the root of all the creeds ;
And Love the Culture that's for all ;
And the effacement of the self
Is what we Asceticism call.

A book was made of selections from all the scriptures of the world: the Hindu Shāstras, the Quorān, the Bible, the Zend Āvesta, the Lalita Vistāra and the Chinese Sacred Texts

It was the first time that such a book was compiled and readings from it still form a regular part of worship.

Some of the young men who came out of the Calcutta Brāhma Samāj with Keshub and some who joined him soon after, became the first missionaries of the new Universal Church. They came giving up place and prospects to undergo all sorts of privations for the sake of the truth and out of love for their young leader. It was like the dawn of a new age. Hope sang in their hearts. Gold or silver they had none. But they had the infinite resources of faith. Their aim was no less than to found a new humanity.

From time to time Keshub spoke to large audiences. He came to be known as an inspired teacher of "original religion". In March, 1866, he spoke at the Calcutta Medical College Theatre on *Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia*. The hall was crowded from floor to ceiling. This lecture gave rise to much controversy and he had further to elucidate his ideas by a second lecture on *Great Men* delivered at the Town Hall of Calcutta. Speaking as early as 1866 Keshub said, "Neither the big talk of enlightened hypocrisy

nor the cold, calculating policy of prudence can remedy the evils which afflict our country. I assure you, brethren, nothing short of self-sacrifice will regenerate India. We must live and die for truth. With singleness of purpose and with unwavering fidelity, we must obey the call of duty, and under no circumstances should we compromise our conscience. ...Enough has been the degradation of India; her sufferings are brimful. Already, through divine grace, a transition has commenced and the dawn of reformation is visible on all sides. But such transition is only the precursor of a mighty revolution through which India is destined to pass and which will come with its tremendous trials in the fulness of time. Then will India rise reformed and regenerated." Indeed these words seem prophetic in the light of subsequent events.

But the desire to spread the new ideas through the length and breadth of India and even to the Western world was growing in the hearts of Keshub and his followers. In 1866-67 they carried out a great preaching tour, a missionary "expedition" as it was called, through the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab. They travelled third class and in humble

garb and thus they visited Bhagalpur, Patna, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi and, on their way back, Monghyr. Speeches were delivered in English and in Bengali, discussions were arranged, divine worship was held, and *sankirtans* were organised. Everywhere their visit was hailed with delight and enthusiasm. Many men joined the Samāj. New places of worship were set up. There was a general awakening. At Bhagalpur Mr. Pratapchunder Mazumdar, who had gone before the party, was speaking of the new missionaries and of their way of living. The audience hung upon his words. As he was speaking, Keshub and the other missionaries arrived at the place. "Behold", said Mr. Mazumdar, "there they are of whom I was speaking—they who think not for the morrow and whose ways are strange." The audience was electrified and was prepared to listen to the fiery words of Keshub. This shows the spirit in which the preaching tour was conducted.

7

In the spring of 1870 Keshub visited England. The object of the visit was to carry the message

England where he stayed for six months he met with cordial welcome and was introduced, among others, to Dean Stanley, Professor Max Müller, Gladstone and John Stuart Mill. He was received in private audience by Queen Victoria. He spoke from various pulpits and visited no less than fourteen of the chief towns of England and Scotland. "If you desire", said he, "to see the Living God carrying on the work of national redemption in a living manner you should go to India." Then he told them what the Brāhma Samāj had been trying to do under divine guidance. He was not afraid to speak of the evils that had come to India with English civilisation. Towards Englishmen his feelings, like Mahatma Gandhi's, were those of love. He called England "his Father's Western House". He spoke of the government of India as a sacred trust imposed on England by God and he asked England to conduct the administration in that spirit. The relations between England and India should be those of mutual respect. If England had given her science to India, India also had spiritual treasures to give to England.

The honour and reception he received in England did not turn his head and he came back confirmed in his simple

Hindu ways. Speaking at Bombay on his return he said in a vein of humour: "A vegetarian in the midst of carnivorous England! I am sure if the people of India were to see the horrors of the meat market in London, they would never send their little children to England. I was invited to many dinner parties, and what did I invariably see there? Why, the dining room appeared to me more like a zoological garden; there were all sorts of fowls of the air, beasts of the wilderness, and fishes of the sea and creeping things laid on the table. They were about to start into a new life, as it were. These are the things which our English friends eat. I am glad I have run away from England."

8

On his return to India he set his mind to social service on general lines. With this object he established in November, 1870, the Indian Reform Association. Its work was divided into five sections: the wide dissemination of instructive reading matter, the organised distribution of charity, the improvement of the

and the promotion of temperance. The work of the Association progressed wonderfully. The *Sulava Samāchār*, a cheap Bengali paper containing news and instructive reading matter, was brought out. It had no office and no list of subscribers. It was hawked in the streets and sold for a pice a copy. Three to four thousand copies were sold weekly. The section in charge of charity collected funds and distributed money and medicine in disease-stricken areas. A school for Indian women was opened in 1871, and a society for their benefit was established. An industrial school and working men's classes were set on foot. A temperance movement was organised and a Band of Hope was started. Opinion was powerfully roused against the liquor policy of Government. One of the most important measures of reform that Keshub achieved for his own community was the passing of the Brāhma Marriage Act of 1872 which set Brāhma marriages on a legal footing.

It should be noted that Keshub regarded social reform as part of his religious work. His object was that it should help in the formation of a brotherhood of pure and spiritually-minded men and women. The reforms were not taken up as "feeble intellectual fashions which the passing influence of European civilization

generated in immature minds". Keshub was not a sudden or violent reformer. Nor did he make his reforms rigid and final. They were to be fluid and progressive and to "grow with the spirit of the times". The special character of his reforms was national and Hindu as in his private life he followed the simple customs of his own country.

In the meantime Keshub carried on steadily his work. Year after year he delivered his Town Hall lectures, the subjects being *Inspiration* (1873), *Behold the Light of Heaven in India* (1875), *Our Faith and our Experiences* (1876), *Philosophy and Madness in Religion* (1877). These annual lectures had become very famous and were eagerly awaited. Keshub was one of the first to introduce the practice of giving purely extempore lectures in India. "The flood of his oratory", says Mr. Mazumdar (himself an orator of repute), "fell like a torrent from some Himalayan height, instantaneous, vast, clear, overpowering." There was no preparation. He let himself be carried away by the emotion of the moment. "I never learnt elocution", said Keshub. "I am all impulse. When I am once excited you will hear burning words. I will then speak with power and I will

strongholds of error. Because it is not my force, my power, which then makes me speak, but the Lord's. If the Lord chooses to speak through my tongue, then I am all fire, and I can speak not only eloquently but I can speak words of pure wisdom and truth." The fame of these public speeches spread far and wide. "When Keshub speaks", said Robert Knight of the *Statesman*, "the world listens."

His Bengali sermons from the pulpit of the Brahma Mandir and his prayers were models of the purest and most graceful Bengali. He was a born master of his own vernacular. His words flowed like a clear and tinkling brook on the waters of which the great heavens are reflected. Even Bankimchandra Chatterjee sometimes came to listen to his sermons, attracted by the purity of his diction. His delivery was free from all kinds of affectation. He never gesticulated. There was no effort or straining either in the limpid thought or in the rich deep voice.

9

Yet the secret of the impression that he made did not lie in his language. Keshub spoke, as all great religious teachers speak, straight out of the

deepest spiritual experience. He did not argue. He appealed to something deeper than reason. His words came charged with a force and meaning which mere reason cannot give. His sermons were not philosophical discourses. They were more like the spontaneous and inspired utterances of the poet. "Are we all seated?" he said at the opening of one of his Bengali sermons; "I do not think so. Some are wandering about, some are trying to sit down, some are restless, some, after sitting down for a little while, are getting up again. Have you succeeded in seating yourself or have you not? This is a deep question. The whole secret of worshipping God is in this one word. That word is the sitting down of the soul. If you can sit down in the secret place of the heart, then you can truly worship. When the mind is infatuated with the pleasures of the world, when it sins, or, for any other reason, is distracted, then it cannot worship. Men in that condition have continually to try to get hold of their souls 'by the shoulders' and force them down. O worshipper, sit down in the immediate presence of God; sit facing God. If you turn a hair's breadth to this side or to that, you may be sure either doubt or pride has come between. In the sphere in which your soul lives there is only one little spot for

you. To sit down there is to worship. There is a condition of the soul in which seeing God becomes easy, natural." "Seeing God", he explained, was not deducing God's existence by logic; it was not like sensing a material object. It was a strange, deep perception that came intuitively through faith, a faculty implanted in all men. It was a spiritual experience. Similarly to "hear" God's command was not listening to a sound but instinctively receiving inner guidance by waiting prayerfully and trustfully on God. If the heart is utterly selfless and utterly dependent on God, these divine promptings in the heart can be caught. Then the faithful devotee must obey them—though the whole world might stand against him.

Thus it will be seen that Keshubchunder Sen preached a simple religion. The spiritual world was ever present to his mind and, indeed, was more real to him than the material world. At a time when religion had become a matter of external observances and sectarian hatred, he taught his countrymen that true religion was a condition of man's *soul*. He did not go against the existing religions, but tried to lead his countrymen to the deeper and more unsectarian side of the creeds, and showed that every religion taught in the world

had made a special contribution which had enriched and expanded man's religious consciousness.

His interpretation of human brotherhood was as fascinating as it was convincing. He said—if you are truly religious, you cannot help loving your fellowman as a brother, though there may be great external differences and, indeed, though he may be unjust or hostile to you. For, one common factor there will always be in the relation between him and you,—that of being the children of the same Father. This will make him lovable in spite of everything. Human brotherhood is really a brotherhood of *souls*. In this lies the cure of all social and other disunion.

Keshub, as we have seen before, believed in the national regeneration of India. Indeed he may be regarded as one of the prophets of the present national movement in India. He led his countrymen to the true source from which national regeneration was to spring, namely, self-sacrifice and moral and spiritual strength—a truth which has been so strikingly brought out in our time by Mahatma Gandhi. Here is the note, at once national, modern and universal, in Keshub's teaching.

In 1872 Keshub had established the Bhārat

lived for some time with their families in spiritual fellowship. In this way and in a number of other ways he trained the missionaries to understand his ideals and to act up to them.

But a split in the Bhāratbarshiya Brāhma Samāj had become inevitable. There was a fringe of the community that had fallen out of sympathy with his deeper ideals. The occasion for a split soon came. Keshub had agreed to the marriage of his eldest daughter with the young Maharaja of Cooch Behar. The marriage took place on the 6th March, 1878. It was not of his seeking. Nor did anyone who knew Keshub attribute to him the shadow of a mercenary motive. And, though some irregularities occurred for which Keshub was not responsible and which it was too late to prevent, Keshub felt in his heart that it would not be right for him, at that stage, to break the marriage off. But a section of the Samāj separated and established the Sādhāran Brāhma Samāj.

10

Keshubchunder Sen now entered upon the third and last period (1878-1884) of his religious leadership. During this period he felt

more and more that the unsectarian universal religion, the spirit of which had breathed through all his teaching in the previous period (1866-1878), was a distinct new message for the world; that it was needed for India and for humanity and had therefore been revealed in the fulness of time by God. The new message, or the *Navabidhān* or New Dispensation, as Keshub called it, revealed that all the scriptures of all the religions formed One Great Scripture; that all the prophets and religious teachers had contributed, each in his own way, to the evolution of One Great Religion and man cannot, therefore, leave out any of them; that the different methods of spiritual culture were not meant to exclude one another, but were to be harmonised into a fuller and deeper culture.

In speech and in writing, through rituals and symbolic observances, Keshub tried to bring home to his countrymen and to the world at large the meaning of this universal religion of harmony. Many hymns were composed in which this new conception of religion was embodied. The missionaries, now called the Apostles of the New Dispensation, who were inspired with the ideal, were sent out to preach the message to all.

Before Keshub's time, the spirit of *toleration*

the members of different sects. Keshub preached, not toleration, but *inclusion* and *harmony*. Thus the new conception of Human Brotherhood was based on mutual respect—nay, even on mutual need. The need was not merely temporal or material, not for neighbourliness or political expediency. It was deeper than that. It was a spiritual need, a need for the welfare of the soul. Keshub knew that the acceptance of this truth must be gradual and slow, but its sphere of acceptance was widening in the hearts of good and thinking men and it was bound to be the religion of the future. "By Unity", said Keshub in his lecture on *Asia's Message to Europe* "I do not mean Uniformity. Uniformity is the death of nature; it is the death of the soul. Where life is, there must be variety...The unity I contend for is the unity of music. For in music though there are hundreds of diverse shapes (of instruments) producing various sounds, yet there is sweet harmony among them. Each sect represents an idea and has a distinctive mission to fulfil which belongs to no other... Therefore none can be ignored, none can be crushed, but all must be represented and included."

With such a conception of religion it was only natural that Keshub should assimilate into

his wide and deep spiritual culture the special ideas of different religions. The idea of the Motherhood of God is one of the deeper conceptions of Hinduism. This idea coloured and sweetened his devotions and, in October, 1879, a great missionary "expedition" was organised to march through Northern Bengal and Bihar preaching this doctrine and its profound significance. This was one of the ties which drew to Keshub the great Ramkrishna Paramhansa and the acquaintance matured into an intimate spiritual friendship. Keshub's appreciation of Christian ideas and his interpretation of them are to be found in several lectures delivered during this period.

At the beginning of 1882 Keshub had an attack of diabetes which developed rapidly, as he gave himself no rest. In the spring of 1883 he was sent to Simla for a change of air. There he dictated to his son the two books, the *Nava Samhitā* or the Law of Life in the Navabidhān and *Yoga*. In September he left Simla which had done him no good. He felt that the end of his earthly life was coming and he decided to fulfil a long cherished wish, that of building a small place of worship attached to his dwelling house, Lily Cottage. His disease in the meantime gave rise

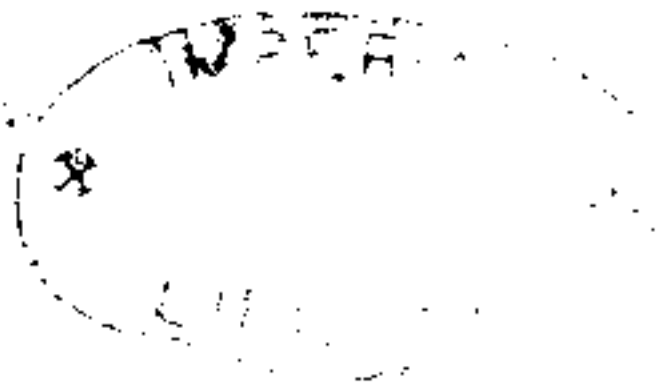
to painful complications. When the pain became unbearable he became absorbed in *yoga*. His friends pushed on with the building of the *Devā-laya* or the Sanctuary and its consecration was fixed for the 1st January, 1884. Keshub had suffered a relapse. The condition of his health was critical. But he insisted on being brought down to the unfinished *Devālaya*. Seated on the *vedi* with folded, upraised hands he prayed, "I have come, O Mother, to thy sanctuary. They forbade me, but I have managed to bring myself here...This place is Thine...This place where I worship my Mother is my Brindaban, my Kashi, my Mecca, my Jerusalem. Bless, O Mother, that thy devotees may worship thee here...Dear brethren, will you not worship my Divine Mother with the flower of *bhakti*?...Accept, dear brethren, this infinitely loving Mother and ever rejoice in Her. I am happy amidst the agonies of my disease in the presence of my Mother and may this my happiness be yours also. I will not speak any more because I fear they will rebuke me if I do."

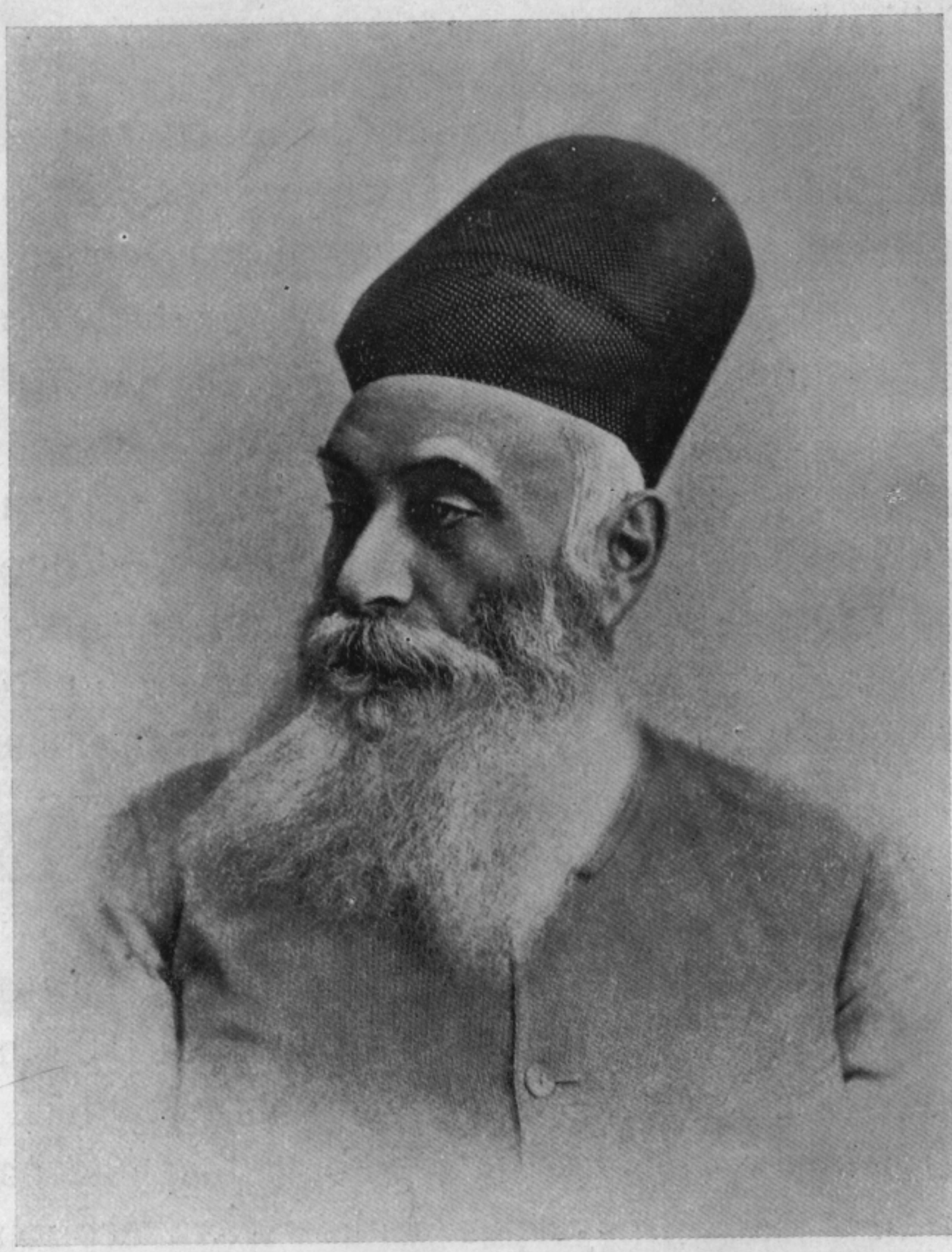
"This was Keshub's last recorded prayer." On the 8th January, 1884, at about 10 o'clock in the morning, Brahmānanda Keshubchunder Sen passed away. "As the faithful watchers still

that placid countenance and the great household burst out into an uproar of grief, behold! the lustre of an unearthly smile stole over the majestic features···It was the approaching light of the full-orbed moon behind mountain solitudes, it was the identical expression of profound happiness which illumined his whole countenance when his communion with God was deepest."

His ashes are deposited in front of the *Devā-laya* which he had consecrated a week before. Over the ashes has been raised an obelisk of white marble with the following quotation from one of his lectures for an inscription :

"Long since has the little bird 'I' soared away from this sanctuary I know not where, never to return again."





J. N. TATA

JAMSETJEE NUSSERWANJI TATA

The greatness of Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata lies in the fact that he rose to the position of a great merchant prince in India and a captain of industry from small beginnings by creating conditions favourable to the success of his enterprise. He was not benefited by the experience of his predecessors, for they all followed the beaten path. The economic system—or lack of system—in India was against him. The very elements that are considered essential to the building up of a great industrial concern, such as modern machinery, facilities for transport, supply of skilled and organised labour, and state support, had either to be created or developed. Moreover he was, as Mr. Stanley Reed says, "a business patriot", one of the "makers of modern India...who laboured to prepare India for the full nationhood which is so passionately desired". He saw that the basis of a new and prosperous India was "economic stability". He saw that such stability was possible only by the development of "foundation industries like the manufacture of iron and steel, the production of hydro-electric power on a large scale

and the creation of an institute which would produce trained scientists to man her existing and nascent industries". To raise India to the position of a great industrial country was his cherished ambition.

2

Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata was born in 1839 at Navasari, a town not far from Surat. He came from a Parsee family of the priestly caste. But his father had taken to trade. In his boyhood he received religious instruction and some secular education in the three R's. His real school education did not begin till he was sent to Bombay. In 1856 he joined the Elphinstone College where he remained till 1858. In 1859 he entered his father's business office at Bombay. Here he set himself to mastering the methods of trade and the "mechanism of exchange". His father possessed a modest fortune and was carrying on trade with China. A group of enterprising Parsees settled at Hongkong—then not a British possession—and practically held the monopoly of the opium trade. Having received some training at his father's business office, young Tata was sent to Honkong to learn the details

His industry and application, added to his natural shrewdness and sagacity, soon made him a clever business man, at once enterprising and cautious.

3

Jamsetjee returned to India in 1863. It was a great time for the cotton trade in Bombay. Civil war had broken out between the Northern and Southern states in America. America was the great supplier of cotton to Lancashire. This supply was now stopped by the war. The Lancashire cotton-manufacturing business almost came to a standstill. Here was a great opportunity for Indian cotton to take the place of American cotton. This opportunity was seized by Bombay and wealth flowed in. A bank was opened in London. In 1864 Jamsetjee sailed for England to represent his firm in connection with the bank. The Indian cotton trade, in the hands of the Parsees, had risen to sudden greatness, as at the touch of a magician's wand. At that time Mr. Premchand Roychand was the leading merchant in Bombay. But the Tatas were not slow to avail themselves of the opportunities that came in their way. Speculation ran high and huge fortunes were made.

Then there was a turn of the wheel. In 1865 the American War ended. American cotton became available once more. In Bombay prices of cotton shares fell. Many business houses went into liquidation. Some of the banks were abolished. Jamsetjee Tata, like other Bombay merchants, was hard hit. But the crisis had taught him one valuable lesson, namely, the need of caution in business,—a lesson which he never forgot. This was Jamsetjee's first experience of the vicissitudes of business.

Luck, however, soon returned to the Tatas. A British expedition was going to be sent from India against the King of Abyssinia. The military officer in charge decided to take with him a year's provisions. "Having had previous experience of commissariat contracts the Tatas, with a syndicate of other contractors, were entrusted with the supply of provisions, and other equipments for the troops." The profits were enormous and the House of Tata was set upon its legs again.

4

In 1869 Tata took a bold step and entered upon a new period of his business career.

From general trading and export and import of raw materials he turned to manufacturing business on modern scientific lines. This was work more worthy of the great gifts of Jamsetjee Tata. It was here that his character and abilities shone out conspicuously.

His share of profits from the Abyssinian campaign formed a substantial—though not a very large—capital. He had studied the manufacture of cotton goods in Manchester during his English visit. In 1869 he bought an abandoned oil mill from a private company, converted it into a cotton mill—which he named the Alexandra Mill—and kept it up for two years. Then he sold it at a profit. It gave him his first experience in industrial business and it increased his capital. He now decided to revisit England and chose a pleasant route by way of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Turkey and Russia.

On his return from England, his mind was broadened by travel and he was confirmed in his determination to build a mill on scientific lines. He now travelled through the cotton-growing districts of India. Cotton mills had already been established in Bombay. At that time there were no less than fifteen mills in the city. But their machinery was not modern, and their labourers were

untrained and unorganised. The mill-owners had neither imagination nor initiative. They followed the beaten track. They did not look ahead nor did they think of possibilities of expansion. They had not the breadth of view to study the problem of India as a whole.

Tata saw that the opening of the Suez Canal had put India within easier reach of the West. He grasped the full extent of the advantage that India grew her own cotton. He watched the expansion of railway lines which meant increasing facilities of transport. He saw that Bombay was too far from the cotton-growing districts. He at last selected Nagpur in the Central Provinces for his proposed mill. Nagpur was situated in a cotton-growing district and was within easy reach of the Warora coal mines. It was the chief market and distributing centre for miles around. The selection of the site was a stroke of genius. The next proof of insight which Jamsetjee Tata gave was the appointment of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Bejonji Dadabhai as his manager, who proved to be one of the best mill managers India has produced. But the success which he made of the mill was no less due to Tata's indefatigable personal supervision, his courage, his faith in the future, his dogged

A joint-stock company, called the Central India Spinning, Weaving and Manufacturing Company Limited, was formed and Tata became its Managing Director. In 1877 the Empress Mills were opened. The mill proved an unprecedented and glorious success. Referring to its success Tata said modestly: "With honest and straightforward business principles, close and careful attention to details and ability to take advantage of favourable opportunities and circumstances, there is always a scope for success".

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows, and in miseries."
>
> *Julius Cæsar.*

The tide had come for Jamsetjee Tata, and he took it at the flood and rode on the crest of the wave to prosperity. He risked all to achieve his ideal. He kept his eyes open during his travels, brought new ideas to his business, assimilated them and gave them a trial. He knew that at first there were bound to be failures. He did not lose heart. He knew that experiments had their value. He spared no expense to

did not neglect the commercial side of the business. He explored new markets; he searched for the shortest and cheapest routes for transportation of goods to these markets. He secured the contentment of the mill-hands. Prizes were given for the highest attendance and greatest efficiency. Endowments were created and a healthy rivalry was encouraged. An annual bonus was paid to the operatives and the day on which it was paid was made a general holiday. For the subordinate staff, reading rooms and recreation grounds were provided. A certain number of educated young men were taken for training every year as apprentices in the different departments. All this was new in India.

5

Yet this did not satisfy Jamsetjee Tata. His thoughts were continually expanding. His interests could not be confined to the mills, successful and highly profitable though they had become. He thought of the general conditions of industrial development in India. It is this which marks him out from those whose only object is to amass wealth for themselves. This is why he has been called a "business patriot."

The mills in India had so far been turning out coarse counts and coarse woven stuff. With cotton of longer staple finer counts could be produced and finer cloth manufactured. With this object in view he started another mill, or rather bought an old mill called the Dharamsi Mill, gave it the new name of Swadeshi Mill and refurnished it. It was a risky business but by perseverance and determination Tata warded off failure and made it a success. He visited the places where long-stapled cotton was grown in India. He studied the defects of the Indian methods of cultivation and wrote a brochure, explaining how a better method—somewhat like that obtaining in Egypt—would greatly improve production.

The Swadeshi Mill proved a difficult problem. In the first place, most of the machinery had become useless and had to be replaced. Then for the first two years it was not an easy task to secure labourers for the mill. The old mill had a bad reputation. There was little surplus labour in the locality. In the North-Western Provinces surplus labour was available but it was found difficult to induce the men to leave their province. Tata wrote to the Lieutenant Governor at Allahabad and to the Mill Owners' Association pointing out the "need of a scheme for the steady immigration of

operatives to the towns ". He made his own suggestions. He re-staffed and reorganised the mill, carried out improvements with miraculous speed, made the workers feel that the management cared for their welfare and staked everything on the success of the enterprise. He achieved his special purpose in this mill, namely that of spinning finer counts and weaving finer stuff. He began to compete with imported cloth which was finer than what was so far turned out from other Indian mills. In this matter he was a pioneer in the Indian cotton industry. "In just over a quarter of a century", says Mr. Harris, "he rose to the pinnacle of success in the cotton world".

6

One remarkable trait of Jamsetjee Tata as a man of business deserves to be carefully noted. He was considerate to his staff, his apprentices and even his operatives. Very near to his heart was the thought of India's welfare through the development of her industries. Yet he never brought sentiment to the practical conduct of business. There he was guided by his business acumen. He never looked at any industry which

would not bring the company sufficient profit. His mills were conducted on principles which made them pay better than any other mill in India. What he spent in experiments or in installing modern machinery or in other equipment was spent solely with this object in view. It never failed to bring a good return. He did not allow his patriotism to spoil his business. His mills were remarkably successful as business concerns. They made his own fortune and the fortunes of the other members of the company. At the same time they were object lessons to shew the right lines for the industrial development of India which he considered to be a vital factor of national progress.

Jamsetjee Tata was not a *sanyāsi.* He served India by his success and prosperity. The moral element in this service lay in the hard work, the honesty, the imagination and the unshrinking faith in the future—all of which went to bring about his splendid success. He served India as her first Captain of Industry.

7

Yet he did not move in a narrow groove. Within ten years of his building up the cotton industry he settled down in Bombay

and became "one of her most public-spirited citizens". At the same time he turned his mind to the acquisition of land and house-property. He became one of the largest land-owners of Bombay. Every purchase he made afterwards rose enormously in value. He built "Esplanade House", the family mansion of the Tatas, at a central place in Bombay and furnished it in splendid style. He built several bungalows and flats. He made a park and a zoological garden at his birth-place, Navasari. He obtained a spacious site close to the sea in Bombay and built upon it a hotel in modern style which he called the "Taj Mahal Hotel". It was not only a business investment but it was also an attempt to remove a great want in the city which he had made his own. The Taj Mahal Hotel is one of the ornaments of Bombay and a conspicuous landmark. Everything there is in the latest style—electric laundry, electric kitchens, Turkish bath, post office, a resident physician and a chemist's shop. Thus he created a status for his family and became a leading citizen of Bombay.

8

It has been said by some that Jamsetjee Tata

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta said, that "he never could be induced to appear or speak on a public platform". But he watched sympathetically and helped in his own way the national movement in India. In those days the method of work of political leaders was "constitutional agitation" for administrative and economic reforms. Tata was a generous contributor to the funds of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. He was one of the foundation members of the Bombay Presidency Association. He opposed all reactionary measures of Government.

Jamsetjee Tata's politics were the politics of a business man and a cosmopolitan traveller. He had met some of the leading men in the many countries he had visited. He had talked with them openly and freely across the dinner table and in the course of business transactions. This had broadened his mind as nothing else could have done. He was a practical man who had risen in business by his honesty and industry. This made him a hater of all cant in politics. He was a busy man of affairs who had not had time to make any special study of political questions. But he brought to the understanding of them a clear, practical head, a strong commonsense and a wide experience and knowledge of the world.

Like Sir Dadabhai Naoroji he held definite views regarding the poverty of India and its causes. He believed that the natural way of relieving the general poverty of his countrymen was to help forward the industrial development of India. The only successful method that he knew was the Western method—the use of the latest machinery and organisation.

He strongly condemned the excise policy of the Government of India and gave unstinted assistance to the efforts of temperance workers such as Mr. Booth Tucker of the Salvation Army and Mr. W. S. Caine.

"Though he may not have studied economics in the abstract", says Sir Dinshaw Wacha, "he could argue on any economic subject by the light of his practical experience and that with such logic and commonsense as to carry conviction home."

9

If Tata's career had stopped here he would still have been one of the most prominent men in India. He had made a great position for himself in Bombay. He was the darling of fortune. He touched nothing that he did not make a success.

But with all this he would have missed true greatness. Breadth of conception, imagination, the power to visualise an unknown future, unquestioning faith in himself as the man who is to realise that vision, the capacity to "take infinite pains" to overcome difficulties—these are some of the features of greatness. These characteristics mark his work in the high enterprise upon which Tata entered during the last years of his life when his health was breaking down. He did not live to carry them out to completion. But the conception was his, the difficult and indispensable preliminary work was his, the fine faith and inspiration which he left to his successors were his. Tata did not act upon any sudden impulse. The three epoch-making projects which he set on foot had slowly taken shape in his mind. He had discussed them, during his travels abroad, with the greatest men who could throw light on them. He had consulted experts. He travelled widely in India to study the conditions of their success. He spent large amounts of money in making preliminary experiments. He sought the help and advice of Government. His one object was to make a successful start.

10

His first scheme was to found an Institute of Science for Indians without distinction of race or creed. For this purpose he offered to set aside property that would bring in a net income of Rs. 1,25,000 a year the capitalised value of which was at that time thirty lakhs of rupees. His own community was not at first pleased at this. But Tata pointed out that the admission of scholars from outside would not prejudice the prospects of his own community. It was a magnificent philanthropic gift. Tata once said that he believed more in this form of philanthropy than in that "patch-work philanthropy which clothes the ragged, feeds the poor and heals the sick and halt". "What is of advantage to a nation or community", said he, "is not so much to prop up its weakest and most helpless members as to lift up the best and most gifted so as to make them of the greatest service to the country. I prefer this constructive philanthropy which seeks to educate and develop the faculties of the best of our young men."

While he was considering the question of a suitable site, an offer came from the Maharaja

of Mysore of 300 acres of land in Bangalore, together with five lakhs of rupees towards the cost of building and an annual subsidy of one lakh of rupees. In 1899 Lord Curzon invited Tata to Simla to discuss the scheme. At first it was decided to call the proposed institute the Indian University of Research where preference would be given to the study of scientific and technical subjects. Finally it was thought desirable that the whole project should be carefully scrutinised by some eminent scientist. In 1900 Professor William Ramsay came out to India, examined the scheme and wrote a report. He suggested that the proposed institute should provide careers for graduates of science, not only in the colleges, but also in connection with the development of Indian industries. He approved of Bangalore as a suitable site. He recommended that at the outset, among others, a chair of Engineering Technology and a chair of Industrial Bacteriology should be established. The Professors should be allowed "to act in a consultative capacity for the benefit of industry". The name suggested was the "Indian Institute of Science". It was not however till 1903, about a year before Tata died, that Government promised a supplementary grant. In 1906 Dr. Morris Travers arrived as the first Director of the Institute. In 1911

the Maharaja of Mysore laid the foundation stone of the Institute buildings.

11

The Iron and Steel Works was the second of the three magnificent schemes which Tata initiated but did not live to complete. He "began research to ascertain if it could be possible to establish an industry for the manufacture of iron and steel in India on a large and profitable scale". He got Government interested in the scheme. He carried out at his own cost the experimental investigations. It was he who found that in Bengal, as it was then constituted, great quantities of the finest iron ore existed and that close by were coal mines producing coal suitable for use in the manufacture of iron. It was due to his efforts that the unreasonable restrictions in mining and prospecting were revised by Government. He saw the Secretary of State for India and induced him to help him in his task. He visited America and saw some of the great steel magnates and it is said that he made a great impression on them. Sakchi was the place ultimately selected. Mining concessions were obtained from Government. Re-

duced railway fares for conveying machinery and plant and raw materials were secured. Government undertook to purchase 20,000 tons of rails per annum and the great factory came to be set up—a monument of expert scientific knowledge and organisation.

12

Though Tata's hands were full and his health was failing, he was not afraid to enter upon a third epoch-making enterprise. The project was to increase the industrial resources of Bombay by harnessing water-power. About 1897 when he was consulting an engineer about the possibilities of the Doodsagar Falls, not far from Bombay, the latter suggested a better hydro-electric project. From the hill-station of Lonavala on the Western Ghats he had surveyed the valleys below. Not far from Bombay the rain-fall on the Western Ghats was one of the heaviest in the world. It was possible by building dams to convert the valleys into a vast storage area for the rain water. The scheme, as it ultimately developed, was "to bring the waters of the Western Ghats from their catchment area to the edge of the Khandala plateau, thence to Khapoli"

which was to give a head of water supposed to be the largest in the world. By means of turbines the water power was to generate electrical energy. This was to be conveyed to Bombay by overhead transmission lines whence it was to be distributed to industrial and commercial centres in the city. The electrical power thus made available might be utilised for lighting up a great city, for setting in motion mill machinery, and for various other purposes. It was a power, cleaner, cheaper and more efficient than steam. Moreover it would bring in an enormous quantity of water for drinking and irrigation purposes. Unfortunately Tata did not live to see the launching of the scheme. But the spade work had been done and "the prestige of his name and the tactful way in which he enlisted the sympathy of the India Office, did much to lighten the labours of those who followed him. The task of developing the scheme and establishing the company devolved upon his successors".

13

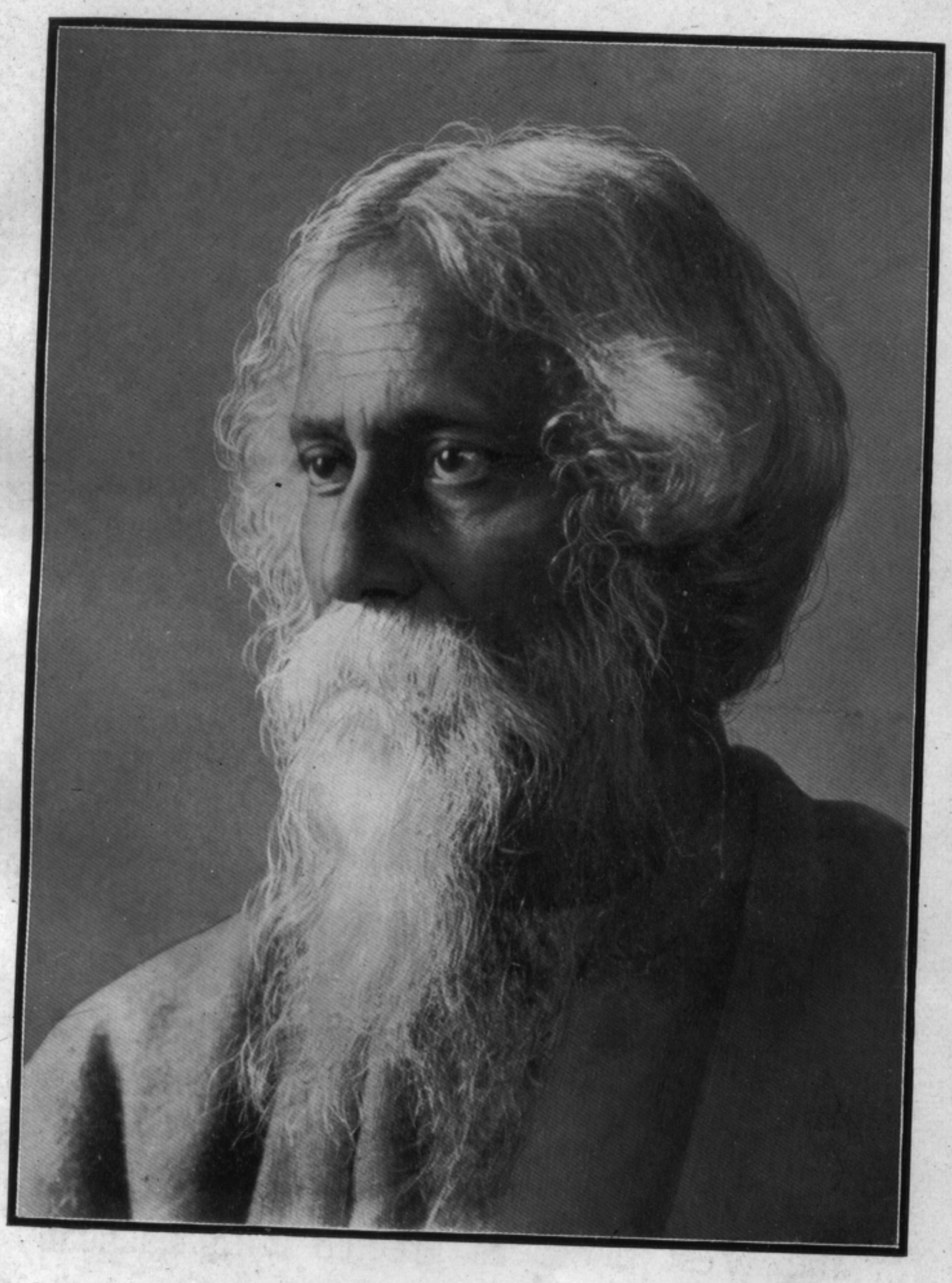
In his own family Tata's position was that of a patriarch. He was looked upon by everybody with deep respect and great affection "though his habitual reserve caused them to keep

their feeling in restraint". "To his subordinates and servants he was both a just master and a generous friend." He did not go much into society. He loved to enjoy his wealth but his habits were simple and a good deal of his time was given to quiet reading.

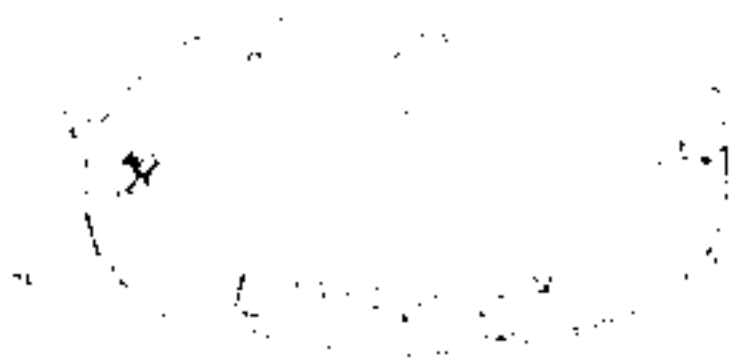
Towards the end of his life his health broke down. He suffered from dyspepsia and heart-trouble. He was taken for a change of air to Egypt, and thence to Italy, Austria and Germany. On the 19th May, 1904, he passed away quietly at Nanheim. The body was conveyed to England and buried in the cemetery at Brookwood "with all the picturesque rites of the Zoroastrian religion". Over the grave a mausoleum in the Persian style has been erected giving to the place a "touch of the East".

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

An Indian poet in the line of succession from Chandidās and Vidyāpati and from the *Bāuls*, and yet one whose lyre has been swept by winds that blow from the ever green gardens of Sanskrit literature and from the exotic flowers of European romantic poetry; a Nature poet before whose enamoured eyes the Indian seasons danced their round while he noted in his verse the whispers of their flowers, the joyous brightness of their mornings, the darkening mystery of their evenings, the eager and breathless waiting for the clouds, the tinkling anklets of the rain on the rejoicing leaves; a mystic in whom religious feeling ran through the channels of love for nature and for man; the first and most successful Indian writer of real short stories giving exquisite glimpses of the life and character of his countrymen; a patriot who gave voice to the newly awakened national consciousness of the people of India; an ambassador of India who carried her message to the people of the West and was greeted enthusiastically as a world-poet and a seer—such is Rabindranath Tagore.



RABINDRANATH TAGORE



In the earlier part of his career he was the handsomest young man in the country, the glass of fashion and the mould of form, a lyric, romantic poet, a singer gifted with an enchanting voice. Now he is equally handsome and appears like a prophet, with flowing robes, and with white locks round which shines the halo of world-reputation.

He stands for world-culture and believes that to be the truest bond between the East and the West. He stands for an education that is as much imbibed from nature as it is imparted by the teacher. He is the first Indian poet who believes in the greatness of the poetic vocation.

2

Rabindranath Tagore was born on the 6th May, 1861, in the great family mansion of the Tagores at Jorasanko, Calcutta. There is nothing poetic in the surroundings of the house, but an imaginative child can find food for his dreams everywhere. The house itself, with its rambling expanse, its countless rooms, its nooks and corners, its bits of gardens and glimpses of the sky,

In his charming autobiography the poet has enabled us to have a few peeps into the fairy-land of his boyhood. "Just beneath the windows", says he, "there was a tank with masonry steps. To the east of this, close to the wall, was a great banyan tree, to the south a row of cocoanut palms... I spent the whole day looking at the tank through the open blinds...I saw the neighbours coming one by one for their bath. I knew when each one was due. I knew also the particular way of each man's bathing. When all went away the shade of the great banyan tree took possession of my mind. Round the trunk many shafts had descended creating a dark complexity. There, in the witchery of that gloom, in that dim corner of the universe, it seemed as if all natural laws had been suspended, as if a bit of fairyland had by chance remained imprisoned, overlooked by God."

Let us take another peep. Sometimes he would steal up to the terrace of the house when the mid-day meal was over and there was a pause in the household work. "The women's apartments were sunk in repose. After the bath the wet *saris* had been hung out to dry. In one corner of the yard the crows were gathered over the remains of the meal which had been

terrace he saw far off the line of cocoanut palms, then a tank and then, mingling with the distant tree-tops, could be seen the roofs of houses at different levels, gleaming in the sunshine. A bit of white roof lifted above the rest seemed to him like a raised finger warning him of the unknown life lived in the rooms below. Overhead was the strong light of the noon. The sharp thin voice of a kite came from the heights and from the neighbouring lane came the lazy droning tone of the vendor's cry, "*Choo-oo-ries* to sell!"

The boys of the house were left in charge of servants. The poet calls this period of his life "the rule of the slave kings". "In order to simplify their duties", says the poet, "they stopped our going about altogether. But, hard restriction as that might be, their neglect of us was in itself a great freedom and that freedom our minds enjoyed."

He gives a humorous description of his earliest poetic efforts. He was not more than seven or eight years old at the time. He had seen "poetry" in printed books only, "without blot, without any sign of effort or of human weakness". He dared not dream that such a thing could be produced by any effort on his

part. But when he found that by fitting together a number of words with his own hand he had made verse, the mystery that surrounded the glory of poetic creation was dispelled. And, the awe once gone, there was no holding him back.

In the autobiography we see the home-influences which fostered his poetic spirit. It was a remarkable home. There was wealth and there were the ease, the freedom from care, the refinement and the leisure which wealth makes possible. There was many-sided culture. But it was the natural flowering of gifted souls, not required as a means of earning bread. It gave the Tagore family a rare distinction and placed it apart from others of the same class. Many of the members of the family, both ladies and gentlemen, were poets, and some of them cultivated their faculty. Literary gift was a common possession. Monthly magazines were started and kept up for longer or shorter periods and presented a convenient arena for many a youthful literary free-lance, or served as a seed-plot for budding poetic genius. Poetry, fiction, rhapsodies, comic sketches, philosophy, phrenology, rigmarole, charades, art, criticism, translations from foreign literature—came thick and fast

from teeming brains. Many of the Tagores were gifted with pure and beautiful voices. Music, vocal and instrumental, was cultivated almost all the hours of the day. Noted Indian musicians were invited to give exhibitions of their art and the airs were noted down to be forthwith wedded to noble words and to become a joy for ever. While on the one hand the science and the technique of music were studied, on the other hand the moral and spiritual aspect of the great Indian airs, their fitness for expressing varieties of emotion and the nature of their appeal were grasped and expressed with the most wonderful charm. And it was from music that Rabindranath grew into poetry.

In trying to understand the environment in the midst of which the poet grew up we must not forget the influence of the head of the family, the venerable Maharshi Devendranath Tagore. He was the patriarch, surrounded by an atmosphere of awe and mystery, seldom seen in public, often living away from Calcutta in the Himalayas. The Maharshi took Rabindranath with him once to the hills. There the boy-poet wandered at will amid the solemn silence and wild grandeur of nature and returned home to find his father rapt in holy contemplation. He saw him in

the early dawn going out with slow steps to spread his carpet outside and sit in prayer.

3

Coming out of his imprisonment in the Jorasanko house the boy-poet's first contact with the outside world must have been very exciting—at first the country a few miles above Calcutta on the river-side, then Bolpur, then a month in Amritsar, then the Himalayas and even England for fourteen months in 1877. He drank in the newness and beauty of all that he saw and heard about him. Yet, strange as it might seem, it was Nature more than Man that interested him.

His school education was desultory. "He put into effect", says E. J. Thompson, "his magnificent powers of passive resistance.···He was sent to the Bengal Academy, and then to St. Xavier's, but his resolute refusal to be educated stood proof against authority and blandishment and he was allowed to study at home."

Like Tennyson, Rabindranath was an artist before he was a poet. He had, as we have seen, begun to write poetry at a very early age, before he had arrived at any adequate view of life. In

those early days he was drunk with the melody of words, he toyed with fine phrases which conjured up fleeting visions of loveliness. His poems were wisps of melody. They did not mean much or, if they did, no one would think of their meaning :

O my Rose, my love,
Raise thy face, O raise thy face,
And light up all the grove !
Why shrinkest so abashed,
Why shrinkest so abashed—
Hiding 'mid the leaves thy face
Why shrinkest so abashed ?

and so on.

4

But let us leave aside his early writings. In 1883 came out *Vālmikir Prativā* which is really an experiment with musical airs. Some of these are Indian airs; some are Irish, which the poet learnt in England from hearing Moore's *Irish Melodies* sung. The theme of the poem is Vālmiki, the first great poet of India. One wonders whether there is a veiled reference to the emergence of Rabindranath himself. There is nothing much in the plot. The poet knows

very little of human life. But the airs are so haunting, the melody is so perfectly wedded to the words, there is such a glamour, that it is absolutely unforgettable, especially for those who heard the poet himself in the part of Vālmiki when it was first acted. About the same time he brought out *Vānusinher Padāvali*. The name Padāvali recalls the Rādhā-Krishna love-lyrics of early Bengali literature and Vānusinha is almost a translation of the name Rabindranath. The poems are amazingly clever imitations of the old Padāvali lyrics. Most of these the poet has now suppressed. But those that remain are among his most popular poems because they go so trippingly on the tongue. Truly he "lisped in numbers for the numbers came".

And out of these songs he emerged as a lyric poet. To this early period belong *Sandhyā Sangit*, Evening Songs (1884), *Chhavi o Gān*, Pictures and Songs (1884) and *Kadi o Komal*, Sharps and Flats (1886). In these poems the poet is still in the land of the senses. He does not yet know the deeper meaning of life. The melodious poems in these books are the many-coloured dreams of youth. The poet's genius, like the princess of his own beautiful poem *Suptotthitā*, is in a charmed sleep, dreaming lovely

dreams. Presently is to come Life as a prince to put his garland round her neck. Then she will wake up and wonder. One poem in *Prabhāt Sangit* is rather significant, *Nirjharer Swapna-bhanga*, the Awakening of the Waterfall. The poet's desire to go out into the open among men is like the urge of the waterfall. The poem is symbolical.

A few dramas also belong to this period and a few miscellaneous essays written mainly for the boys' magazine, *Bālak*.

The poet had now found recognition. Bankim-chandra Chatterjee had praised him. He was regarded as the most promising of the younger literary men of Bengal.

5

He now entered upon what was perhaps the richest and most productive period of his literary life, 1887-1897.

In poetry it was the period of *Mānasi*, *Sonār Tari*, *Chitrā*, *Chaitāli*. As we read the poems we find that the poet has his singing robes about him. We find also that the prince (Life) had come and put round his poetry the garland of awakening. He had found his vocation as a lyric poet. The Greeks classified

poetry into drama, epic and lyric. In the drama, the poet does not appear. He cuts out so much of human life and places it before us. In epic poetry the poet may appear but only as a narrator. The epic poet tells us what happened long ago: the dramatist makes it happen before our eyes. In lyric poetry the poet is all in all. He takes up something, some little incident of life, some aspect of Nature's beauty, some play of fancy. He wraps it up in his own emotion and wings it with music. Rabindranath is not an epic poet. He is not a dramatist in the strict sense of the word. But he is one of the greatest lyric poets of the world.

He began to write *Mānasi* in 1887 at Ghazipore amidst the rose gardens. It is not possible here to notice all the good poems even in these four volumes of this period. Some of the main subjects of lyric poetry are woman's beauty, love, nature and patriotism. Rabindranath's lyrics deal with all of them. The grandest poem in these books is *Urvasi* in *Chitrā*. Urvasi is the dancing nymph of the court of Heaven. But in the poem the conception is touched with a cosmic vastness. She represents the harmony that makes the rhythm of the universe. In another aspect she is the beauty of woman which is such a

pitiless force when it does not go with kindliness of heart. Neither heavenly beauty nor bliss can truly appeal to man unless it satisfies his heart and this is the subject of another poem of *Chitrā*, *Swarga Haite Vidāy*, Departure from Heaven. The young man of the poem after many years of pleasure in Heaven is still heart-hungry and is glad to go back to the sorrows and affections of life on earth. *Badhū*, the Daughter-in-law, in *Mānasi*, is a charming picture of a young wife who is embarrassed for having overslept herself.

Similarly love is pictured in many moods. In *Nārir Ukti* and *Purusher Ukti* (in *Mānasi*) we have pictures of disillusioned love. In *Gupta Prem* in the same book we have the pathetic picture of a love shrinking because her outer shrine (the body) is not fair to view. *Hriday Yamunā* (in *Sonār Tari*) is an allegorical picture of an all-sufficing love.

The most remarkable pieces in these volumes are the nature poems such as *Barshār Dine*, *Sonār Tari*, *Samudrer Prati*, *Sandhyā*, and *Padmā*. Evidently it is the rainy season which most appeals to the poet. Evidently too he is the poet of the seasons rather than of Nature as a whole. In this he differs from Wordsworth

In *Barshār Dine* Nature is treated as a background for human emotion as in the Padāvali poems. But in *Samudrer Prati*, Nature and the poet's mind have become as it were one. This interpenetrative affinity with physical nature is distinctive of Rabindranath. In the famous poem *Sonār Tari*, we see a boat that comes from nowhere and carries off the harvest of the lonely reaper but leaves *him* behind. Over the whole picture brood the light of romance and the sense of a strange beauty and mystery.

No room, no room ! No more can it hold ;
My golden grain fills it fold on fold
O'erhead still to and fro
The clouds do come and go :
All vacant are the banks ; I am cold ;
Gone is all I had with the boat of gold !

Tapoban and *Prāchin Bhārat* in *Chaitāli* are poems, sonnet-like in form, dealing with the past greatness of India. Serene thought breathes through them as through Wordsworth's famous patriotic sonnets.

6

To this period also belong the poet's best dramas, among others the powerful tragedy of

Visarjan and the magnificent romantic play *Chitrāngadā*. Even in his dramas we feel that Rabindranath is a lyric poet. He wrote in the dramatic form because he wanted a larger scope than what lyric poetry afforded. There is no subtlety in the conception of the characters. There is no living movement in the action. There is no variety. But *Visarjan* has much "passionate action" and strongly marked characterisation. This was brought home to those who witnessed the poet's own marvellous acting of the part of Raghupati. *Chitrāngadā,* with its wonderful word-pictures, its lyrical blank-verse, its burning unity of conception, is a superb romantic play. Love is here presented in its "intensity and absorption" when there are youth and beauty to feed it, and in its enduring strength when these are taken away.

7

To this "magnificently creative" period also belongs the brilliant magazine *Sādhanā*. Rabindranath was its chief contributor and, for some time, its editor. The amazing versatility of his genius is reflected on its pages. In many of

the essays the poetic temperament is seen even when the subjects are highly philosophical, as in the essays collected under the name of *Panchabhūter Diary,* the Diary of the Five Elements. Politics, social questions, literary criticism—everything was touched in the essays with a masterly hand.

8

And last, but not least, it is the period of the short stories on which possibly Rabindranath's fame will rest as much as on his poetry. As his boat sailed on the placid waters of the Padma near Sheleida or rested quietly by a *chur*, he wrote charming sketches of life and character as they met his eyes. The simple people of the place sometimes came to see him, the influential landlord of the locality, and left impressions upon him which he forthwith wove into the fabric of a tale.

9

Yet he had often to come out suddenly from his seclusion to address his countrymen on some burning political or social question of the hour. The next five or six years after the

Sādhanā had ceased to appear (1895) were a time of distraction in his poetic life. He was drawn into politics by the general unrest that showed itself in the country. He did not join any party and remained a "lonely and independent figure", but he spent anxious thought on the situation that had arisen in the country and wrote and spoke about it. He felt more and more that mere art could not satisfy the souls of men; that the deeper moral problems had to be faced. The many-sided thinking of the *Sādhanā* showed the restlessness of his spirit. In politics he raised his voice against a mendicant policy and against unthinking imitation of Western ways and methods. When he spoke, his humorous and effective phrasing, his charm of delivery, the way in which he illuminated the issues by showing them in the light of broad principles of morality—made him a most effective speaker. The workings of his mind at this time are also shown in his poems *Kathā o Kāhini* (1900) in which he draws his inspiration from the examples of noble renunciation and self-sacrifice in past Indian history—the times of Buddha, of the Sikh *gurus* and of the Mahratta patriots.

10

But he wrote other poetry also—*Nadī* (1896), *Kanikā* (1890), *Kalpanā* (1900), *Kshanikā* (1900).

Nadi is a single poem, a rapidly moving picture of the scenes on the banks of a river from its rise among the snowy peaks till its absorption in the sea. The lines flow in little waves of music. The long poem is wonderfully sustained. It is even a greater achievement than Tennyson's well-known poem, *The Brook.*

In *Kalpanā* and *Kshanikā* the poet's lyric genius is at its best. The art is more nearly consummate, more varied. The poet passes at will from grave mood to light. The poems sing themselves. We may mention particularly two groups of poems in these two volumes. In the first group we have tender pictures of womanhood in the romantic manner. Let us take two, *Piyāsi* and *Pasārini* (both in *Kalpanā).* The first is a picture of a young girl milking the cow in the freshness of the early morning. The second is a picture of a tired market-girl returning with her load in the heat of the day. They are familiar pictures. But over them the poet's

imagination has shed a strange light that brings out a new beauty and mystery. The other group consists of Nature poems—*Sarat, Baisākh, Āshārh, Nababarshā, Ābirbhāb.* Each is a study of the spirit of the season that it presents. The study is somewhat in the manner of Keats's *Ode to Autumn,* but much more elaborate. As regards the splendour of diction and of music in these poems, even Swinburne has given us nothing better.

Kanikā or Epigrams (1899) constitutes a new venture. Here we have terseness, "much in little". They are as neatly turned as any Greek epigram —and the subject-matter is often a profound truth :

The First Cause

Says the Flute, "No glory mine ;
'Tis the Breath, that comes out fine ".
Says the Breath, "I'm empty air :
Neither of us knows the Player".

11

With the opening of the new century Rabindranath entered upon a new chapter of his career. In the course of this period he tried his hand

at new kinds of literature such as the novel, the symbolic prose drama, new poetic forms (akin to the sonnet and the ode) and new themes (such as love of country and religion). In this period he started and developed his Santiniketan school. He also made his world tours and formed new ideas of universal culture which were to be the inspiration of his Asiatic University, *Visvabhārati*, at Bolpur. And last of all it was during this period that, by winning the Nobel Prize (1913), he emerged as a world poet.

12

The novels are *Chokher Bāli* (1903), *Naukā-dubi* (1906), *Gorā* (1909) and, much later, *Ghare Bāhire* (1918). There is very little of plot-construction in these and, where there is, it is hardly convincing. That was not Rabindranath's strong point. The novels are studies of character and situation. Their interest is psychological. The last two are novels with a purpose. In all of them the women usually have much more life and character than the men. In any case the women interest us more.

13

The more important symbolic dramas were —*Sāradotsava* (1908), *Rājā* (1910), *Dākghar* (1912), and *Phālguni* (1916). *Sāradotsava* or Autumn Festival, and *Phālguni* or Spring Festival are attempts to give *rūpa* or form to the spirit of the season. By means of the songs and general festive atmosphere the spirit of the season is brought home to us. The poet has not yet written any symbolic play for summer or winter. But the spirit of summer has been well brought out in the long poem *Baisākh* (in *Kalpanā*) in which summer is pictured as a *sanyāsi* sitting in the midst of blazing fires. He did not attempt winter. Winter, he thinks, has no particular *rūpa* in India as it has in the West.

Rājā and *Dākghar* deal with the soul's mystical relation with God. *Dākghar* is the most popular of his symbolic dramas and, on account of its perfect simplicity, is the most successful. Its central figure is a sick child who yearns for the great world outside. He hears its call but knows not whither it will lead.

14

Naivedya (1901), *Kheyā* (1906) and *Gitānjali* (1910), besides his *Brahma Sangit* or Hymns, contain his most important religious poetry. Rabindranath's religion is a poet's religion. He has told us himself that the path of austerity and self-denial is not for him. He says he came as an invited guest to the world's feast of joy. In the beauty of Nature and of human life he realises himself, and, he adds mystically, through his realisation God realises Himself. The images by which he expresses the relation of his soul to God are not simple but elaborately developed. This way of expressing religious experience is not new in the East. It is to be found in Vaishnava poetry and in Sūfi literature. It was new to the West. It is when the cry of the soul is heard through all the poetic imagery that the purpose of such religious poetry is attained.

In 1912 the poet made his third visit to England. Before he left he was making prose translations of some of the *Gitānjali* poems "to while away the time". He made more translations on board the steamer. In England he lived in a house near that of Rothenstein. The artist

took away some of the translations to read, was greatly struck by them and "sent them to Yeats, Stopford Brooke and Bradley". The translations were published. There was a chorus of praise. He sent copies of his book and press-cuttings to the Nobel Prize Committee. In the autumn of 1913 he returned to India after a very successful visit to America, following his stay in England. In November when he was living in Santiniketan "suddenly a hub-bub arose and the masters rushed up with a sheaf of telegrams". He had won the Nobel Prize! He had become a world-figure.

Between 1914 and 1916 he wrote *Balākā*, Flight of Wild Swans. A brief period of rejuvenation seemed to have come back to him, a sort of Indian summer. Here we have the old lyrical manner again with an added intellectual depth. He was over fifty now. In one of the poems, *Yauban*, he speaks of the youth of the soul which is not affected by age or outer circumstances. But there is another note also in the poems of this volume, the note of a pilgrimage to the

Unknown. Most of the poems are long, and somewhat ode-like in their unity and movement. Some of the poems have become famous, for example the poems *Balākā* and *Tājmahal*. In *Balākā* the background is magnificent,—a vale in Kashmir. Gleaming in lights of eve, flowed the winding Jhelum. Gradually night fell. On the stream of darkness floated the stars, like offered flowers. Then, suddenly, the evening sky was swept with a "flash of sound". It was a flight of wild swans :

> O wild swans
> Drunk with the tempest's madness those your vans
> With sound of laughter went
> Awakening all the sleeping sky to wonderment.

With a sudden shock the poet realised that the whole physical world, even the spiritual world, was filled with the movement of growth and progress. Everything was going from the Unknown to the More Unknown. *Tājmahal* deals more with the feelings which prompted Shahjahan to raise this beautiful memorial, than with the wonders of the Taj itself. It is a love-message in marble to his departed queen. It is his weeping held in marble.

16

In the summer of 1916 he went to Japan. On the way he made some more translations of his own poetry into English. In Japan he delivered his English lectures on Nationalism. From Japan he proceeded to the United States where he repeated his lectures on Nationalism and delivered another series of English lectures on "Personality". In 1917 he returned home.

Rabindranath says, in the course of a lecture he delivered in America (published in "*Personality*"), that he started his school when he was nearing forty. He did not begin with a cut-and-dried theory of education. But he had not forgotten the unsatisfactory method of teaching during his own boyhood. What he chiefly felt was that at school he had been cut off from the surroundings of Nature. Nature not only appealed to his childish soul, not only furnished food for his mind and heart, but almost brought him into touch with a Personality. Amid natural surroundings pupils are like children fed upon their mothers' milk. "They find their food and their mother at the same time. It is complete nourishment for them, body and soul." The poet does not believe in mechanical

methods of education, has no faith in dead routine. To impart true education the school should bring the children into close, free and natural contact with the external world. Simple living is best for children because it brings them more into touch with life. "Living richly is living mostly by proxy." Children, he thinks, gather knowledge best "through their love of life", through sympathy. Moreover education is not merely the training of the intellect. It is the training of all the faculties so that the pupil may be able to grasp every aspect of truth—intellectual, moral and spiritual. This high ideal Rabindranath has been trying to realise in his school at Bolpur. The classes are held in the open air. There is no rigid formality. There are no high buildings to draw the mind away from the greatness of Nature. The approach of each season is hailed with joy. Music is taught. An atmosphere of freedom prevails. Self-help is the rule. A time is fixed for silent meditation under the trees. The whole place is sanctified by the reminiscences of the Maharshi's communions with God. But really the greatest part of the education of the pupils is their daily contact with the personality of a poet of genius.

17

After the outbreak of the disturbances in the Punjab in 1919 Rabindranath Tagore took a step which brought him very much before the public eye in India. He renounced his Knighthood. "The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab", he wrote to Lord Chelmsford, "for quelling some local disturbances, has with a rude shock revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India.... Considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population disarmed and resourceless by a power which has the most terribly efficient organisation for destruction of human lives, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification." His countrymen, he said, had been "surprised into a dumb anguish of terror". At such a time he thought badges of honour only made the shame of his countrymen all the more glaring.

In 1920 he went to England. This was his fifth foreign tour. After a brief stay there he went to France and thence to America. The next year he went to Denmark, Sweden and Germany. In the Continent he was received with great honour

"His lecture rooms were crammed", says Mr. Thompson, "and his plays were received with wild applause...European Governments made him their guest and put aeroplanes at his disposal."

One effect of all this homage was that it encouraged him to develop the Santiniketan school into an international university, called *Visvabhārati.* It was formally opened by Sir Brajendranath Seal on December 23rd, 1921. Its object was to gather up "the scattered cultures of the East", to study their "fundamental unity" and thus to realise the "spiritual purpose" of these cultures. Its further aim was ultimately to bring about a "co-operation of East and West", so long hindered by imperfect grasp of the real mind of the East, and thus to open the way to "universal culture".

18

In the meantime India under the lead of Mahatma Gandhi had entered upon the paths of non-co-operation. When Rabindranath returned from the West he was astounded at the changed mentality of the people. His views were at variance with those of Gandhi. "The controversy between Tagore and Gandhi", says Romain Roland, "between

two great minds, both moved by mutual admiration and esteem, but as fatally separated in their feeling as a philosopher can be from an apostle,...is important. For, on the one side (Gandhi's) we have the spirit of religious faith and charity seeking to found a new humanity. On the other (the poet's) we have intelligence, free-born, serene and broad, seeking to unite aspirations of all humanity in sympathy and understanding." Rabindranath "deplored that the overflowing wealth of Gandhi's love and faith should be made to serve political ends". On the other hand Gandhiji said, "If I seem to take part in politics it is only because politics to-day encircle us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake....I am trying to introduce religion into politics". The poet called non-co-operation a "negative ideal" and therefore opposed it. To this Gandhiji replied that "eliminating" (the *ne-ti* of the Upanishads) was as important as accepting; that the two must be combined. He said that he laid stress on the negative side because "India had lost the power of saying 'No'".

19

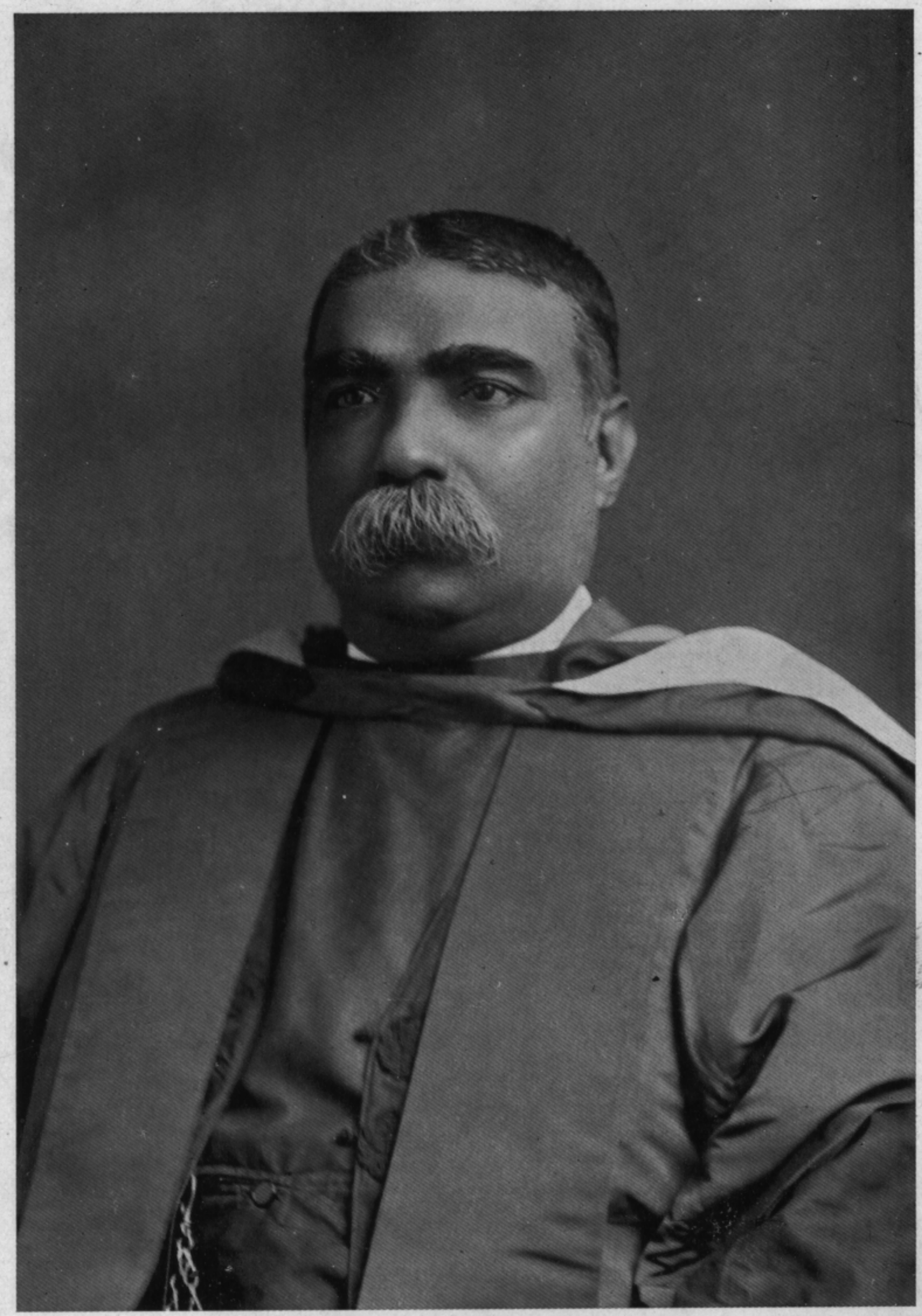
It is not the intention, nor indeed is it possible in this brief sketch, to take a complete view of Rabindranath's poetic works. But it is necessary to note that about the *Balākā* period and after it, indeed even to the present day, the fountain of the poet's song has remained undried. Here and there the old lyrical splendour, the old word-painting has been recovered. His poems now are his real evening songs. With the serenity of evening its greyness undoubtedly is falling; yet that greyness is here and there shot with many-coloured rays that come from reminiscences of the past and from gleams of the future. Wonderful is his energy still and the urge of the wanderer to see the world. His view of life is the romantic view, namely, that life is an adventure, a quest of beauty. Life is a continual advance, never a standing-still and a quiet garnering of past experience. As the child goes from old toys to new toys, never looking back to the broken ones that strew his path behind, so, says he in *Sisu Bholānāth* (1922), must man go on. Life's experiences form a cinematograph film. Each picture presents a vital movement; yet it is by the rapid movement that the complete picture can be seen.

20

On the 8th May, 1931, at 6 o'clock in the morning the poet's seventieth birthday was celebrated amid the mango groves of Santiniketan. The poet occupied a raised seat under a small canopy. It was made beautiful with leaves and flowers and with auspicious paintings. The smoke of incense rose. The poet was dressed in golden-yellow silk. Red lotuses were entwined all round and from the mango trees many coloured cloths were hung. As the poet entered, his brow was painted with *chandan*. A band of girls sang a welcome song. Verses from the Atharva Veda were chanted. Five ladies bearing auspicious gifts—incense, lamp, conch-shell, flowers and sandal-wood paste—walked round the poet's seat by way of ceremonious welcome. A Chinese poet present greeted him reciting a Chinese poem. Artists presented their pictures. Then the poet spoke to the assembly.

He said that it was not easy to know oneself rightly. If his years had not been lengthened out, he might never have come to a clear understanding of himself, for he had taken up many occupations in his time. But now, near the end, the broken arcs had joined into a perfect round. Now he knew himself.

"I found", said he, "that by one thing only I might be known—I am a poet; I am nothing else; I am not a philosopher or a learned preceptor or a leader." Then he proceeded in mystical language to set forth his vocation as a poet. He said that God though essentially One—"a shining whiteness"—manifests Himself, as in sport, in the infinite variety of creation, and in so doing, finds joy. The poet's vocation is to catch some aspects of this *leela*, this divine sport, which is everywhere—in music and song, in dance and in picture, in colour and in form, in joy and in sorrow, through good and through evil—and to express some of it again in his song. Even in the work of Santiniketan, he did not take much share in the mechanical part of its administration. Here also his was the poet's part to help in man's self-expression. The life that had taken shape there in peaceful beauty out of the harmony of various influences, was his to express.



ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

Most men, however simple they may appear to be, are in reality a mass of contradictions. Very often, when their powers are weak, they fall unconsciously into a beaten track and continue placidly in it. The genius is generally a man with one supreme gift, a gift which overshadows all other gifts. There is occasionally another sort of the exceptional man. His abilities lie in more directions than one, all equally developed and all equally noteworthy. Such a man does not always know what course of life to adopt and which particular powers to mature. Some make a choice and live happily for a time, and, later on, turn to another career and are equally happy in it. There are others who seem unable to make a definite choice or to stick to one when it is made, and are, so to speak, at constant strife with themselves. There are others, again, much smaller in number, who insist on an equal expression of all their varied gifts, and who create their own environments, which ultimately lead to their splendid success in life. Such pre-eminently was Asutosh Mookerjee.

2

Asutosh Mookerjee was born in Calcutta on the 29th June, 1864. His father, Dr. Gangaprasad Mookerjee, was one of the earliest graduates of the Calcutta University and a well-known medical practitioner of his time. His grand-father, Biswanath Mookerjee, was a resident of a village called Jirat, in the district of Hughli, at one time a flourishing place, but now fallen on evil days owing to the ravages of malaria. He had four sons of whom Gangaprasad was the third. While bathing in the Ganges Biswanath met with an accident which proved fatal. The four brothers, who were then all very young and had already lost their mother, found themselves at sea. With an intrepid self-reliance and initiative uncommon among young men of that time, they moved down to Calcutta. Their old maid-servant, who was intensely devoted to them, helped them with what little money she had. After years of struggle against adverse circumstances, Gangaprasad passed his Entrance Examination in 1857 and took his Bachelor's degree in 1861. He read law for a few months but gave it up in favour of medicine. He took his M. B. degree in 1866 from the Calcutta Medical College.

Gangaprasad decided to settle at Bhowanipur, then a growing suburb in the south of Calcutta. He purchased a house in Russa Road which was the scene of the activities of his distinguished son throughout his life. Within a few years, Gangaprasad established his reputation as a successful physician and became well-known for his liberality. He had besides great love for his mother-tongue and all but completed a Bengali edition of the *Ramayana*. He was again one of the earliest in Bengal to write books in the vernacular dealing with the theory and practice of medicine and the health and proper development of the future mothers of the race. Gangaprasad was held in esteem and respect by all who came in contact with him. He was a man of unimpeachable character, of regular habits, hard-working, independent and generous, though occasionally subject to fits of temper.

Young Asutosh grew up in this somewhat grey and subdued domestic circle in which the only touch of colour was added by his great passion or books, a passion which was steadily encouraged by his watchful father. This intense love for books lasted till the end of his life with the result that Asutosh's library is one of the largest and most valuable collections of books in this country.

3

Gangaprasad's great ambition was to give his son the best possible education. At the age of five Asutosh was sent to a vernacular school at Bhowanipur where he read for two years. He then spent several years at home pursuing his studies with a tutor under the guidance of his father. Asutosh had a prodigious memory and his father took care to help in its development. He next joined the South Suburban School where he came under the influence of Pandit Sivanath Sastri, who was then its Headmaster. He passed his Entrance Examination in 1879, standing third in the list of successful candidates. Asutosh joined the Presidency College in 1880 and was profoundly impressed by the masterful personality of Principal Tawney, who was then the head of that famous institution. He fell seriously ill before the First Arts Examination and nearly lost the use of his right hand. In spite of this he appeared at the examination and stood second in the whole Presidency. About this time his uncle Radhikaprasad Mookerjee was appointed a Fellow of the Calcutta University. Asutosh's interest in the affairs of the university began at this period. Some-

which were sent to his uncle and he studied them with special interest and care. Thus were laid the foundations of his unique knowledge of university affairs which, as years rolled by, became the secret of his power. Asutosh topped the list in the B. A. Examination of 1884. He took his Master's degree in mathematics the next year and in physical science the year after. He sat for the Premchand Roychand Studentship Examination in 1886 in mathematics, pure and mixed, and physics and won the award. Within two months of the publication of the result he offered to appear at the Premchand Roychand Studentship Examination again in 1887 in literary subjects. But the Syndicate did not grant him the necessary permission. Actually, however, in that year no one was found fit for the studentship. It is worthy of note that Asutosh was appointed examiner at the M. A. examination in mathematics the year after he himself took his Master's degree.

4

In those days research was practically unknown among Indian students. But even in his young days Asutosh had appreciated its value. "A good

a fire which needs but the match to start it. It is a discipline to put a text-book to one side and get out further knowledge by one's own efforts." As Asutosh grew in years he came under the influence of brilliant mathematicians, and his capacity for mathematical research became not only firmly established but also greatly enlarged. To quote one of his contemporaries, "he was the *beau ideal* of a mathematician to those who loved and had begun to cultivate mathematics". His love for mathematics did not, however prevent him from paying attention to other subjects. His versatility struck all with wonder. English, Sanskrit, philosophy, history, law and science claimed his attention as much as mathematics, although in those early years mathematics perhaps was the subject which fascinated him most. His contributions appeared in well-known journals of the day in and outside India and won for him well-deserved recognition. He acquired a knowledge of French and German to study in the original the works of famous mathematicians and also memoirs published in foreign scientific journals. His researches led to his appointment early in life as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, a member of the Royal Irish Academy and of

Sir Alfred Croft, the then Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, greatly impressed by the intellectual powers of Asutosh, offered him a post in the Education Department soon after he had passed the M. A. Examination. The proud patriot in Asutosh asserted itself and he declined the offer, as he could not get the post on his own terms. He claimed that he should have the same status as the European professors and be not transferred from the Presidency College where he should be offered every facility to carry on his research work. Sir Alfred Croft was greatly annoyed by this seemingly foolish ambition and overweening self-conceit of a young Indian scholar.

Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, himself a Senior Wrangler, writing of Asutosh says, "If he had made up his mind to devote himself entirely to the study of mathematics, he was sure to have secured a place in the front rank of world mathematicians". In 1920, in reply to the felicitations of the Senate on his appointment as officiating Chief Justice of Bengal, he incidentally referred to this aspect of his career. "Nothing", said he, "is dearer to me, nothing has been dearer to me than my University. I began life as a research student in mathematics when research was practically unknown in this country and the ambition of my life was to be

a research professor in my University. Mr. Justice Gooroodass Banerjee, who was then Vice-Chancellor of this University, made a desperate attempt to create a chair for me, but such were the times that he failed to collect even a sum which would yield a modest income of Rs. 4,000 a year which was all that he and I thought would be sufficient to maintain me as a research professor. The result was that I drifted into Law, but I made a determination at the time that, Heaven willing, I would devote myself to the service of the University, so that in the next generation any aspiring scholar in my position might not drift into Law but have full opportunities to serve the cause of Letters and Sciences."

5

In 1885 Asutosh married Sreemati Jogmaya Devi, daughter of Pandit Ramnarayan Bhattacharyya of Krishnagar. Gangaprasad took care to select his daughter-in-law from a respectable and pious middle-class Brahmin family. To the great delight of Asutosh, his father refused to accept any dowry on the occasion.

6

Asutosh joined the law classes at the City College in 1884 where the late Lord Sinha (then Mr. S. P. Sinha) was one of his professors. He attended also the Tagore Law Lectures, and for three successive years won the gold medal awarded for high proficiency in the subject-matter of the lectures. In 1888 he took the Bachelor's degree in law and was enrolled as a vakil of the Calcutta High Court. He served his articles under that great jurist, the late Sir Rash Behary Ghose. About this time Asutosh lost his father, who did not live to see the fruition of his labours in building up the career of his beloved son. Asutosh continued his legal studies even after he joined the High Court and obtained the degree of Doctor of Law in 1894. He was appointed Tagore Law Professor in 1898, and delivered a course of lectures on the Law of Perpetuities in British India which was highly appreciated. For several years he diligently engaged himself in studying, under the guidance of well-equipped scholars, and from original texts, the principles of Hindu law and of Mahomedan law. He steadily built up a considerable practice. His eminent success was due to his forceful character and

extensive study, to his unremitting industry and brilliant advocacy, and to his genial temper and wonderfully quick comprehension. Before, however, he could reach his destined place at the very top of his profession, he accepted a seat on the Bench in 1904. His elevation was a sacrifice to which he cheerfully submitted, mainly because the position and prestige of a High Court judge were likely to give him an opportunity to serve his *Alma Mater*. At this time he was barely 40 years old.

7

The manner in which the news of his appointment as a judge was received by his mother throws an interesting light on her character. She could claim no high education, but she had, all the same, solid and sturdy commonsense and an ardent love of freedom. Asutosh went to his mother with the letter of Government offering him the appointment and broke the news to her. In those days a judgeship of the High Court was regarded as the highest post that was open to Indian talent. The old lady could, however, hardly reconcile herself to the idea of her son

accepting service, however exalted it might be. The son argued with his mother and reminded her how his father often used to say that if Asutosh accepted any appointment, it should be nothing less than a judgeship of the High Court. That offer had come quite early in life, and further it would bring great opportunities for serving his university. The mother at last reluctantly acquiesced. The letter of acceptance was duly sent by Asutosh but the proud lady had no peace. She passed a sleepless night and before day-break she came to her son and very firmly told him that she had decided that the offer must not be accepted. Asutosh pointed out that the letter of acceptance was already on its way to Simla. But his mother said that a telegram of revocation would reach its destination sooner. Asutosh explained that such a step would place him in a most awkward position. Upon this his mother kept quiet and Asutosh eventually accepted the judgeship.

8

From 1904 till the end of 1923 Asutosh was a Judge of the High Court. For a few months in 1920 he officiated as Chief Justice of Bengal

He was universally regarded as one of the greatest judges in British India. Of Asutosh it may be said, as has been said of Sir George Jessel, the illustrious Master of the Rolls, "there may have been judges more learned, judges more subtle, judges more eloquent, but none who possessed his rare combination of clearness, vigour of understanding, varied knowledge, swiftness of apprehension and mastery of legal principles. He had always the faculty of hitting the right nail on the head". He was also noted for his remarkable independence and enjoyed the full confidence of the public.

As soon as he was raised to the Bench, Asutosh set before himself an almost impossibly lofty standard of judicial work which it was his glory to have maintained till the very last day of his official career. When yet a comparatively junior judge and after he had delivered some of his classical judgments, one of his colleagues, who was approaching the retiring age, told him that the high standard which he had set for himself would be difficult to maintain. In the prime of life when enthusiasm was great and energy still greater it might be possible to write such exhaustive judgments, but with declining years the standard was bound to deteriorate. The answer given by

Asutosh was characteristic of him; it was that he would not be justified in continuing on the Bench for even a single day, when his enthusiasm for doing justice would abate or his capacity for work diminish.

Asutosh had an unbounded confidence in his own powers and an unlimited capacity for work. The number of his judgments which can be found in the pages of the Law Reports exceeds two thousand and they relate to almost every branch of law. Asutosh maintained that in order to formulate new principles of law one must so equip oneself as to be able to make a comprehensive survey of the great historic prospect which stretches out from the Roman times to the most recent developments in all well-ordered polities. Such knowledge can never be fruitless, for it has been well said that law is but the product of human life, the expression of the human mind, the declaration of the social will for the satisfaction of human needs. He was thus led to cultivate a thorough knowledge of almost every modern system of law. His quest for principles sometimes took him far afield to the decisions of American courts, not merely of the Supreme Court of the United States, but also of the State courts, and to the decisions of the highest

It has been said that there are two things which a judge has mainly to do. He has to make the law wisely (though the legal fiction is that judges do not make laws), "to fashion each stone he adds to fit the architecture of the vast fabric reared by the wisdom of past centuries"; he has also to administer law wisely. This ideal Asutosh always kept before him.

In December 1923, on the eve of Asutosh's retirement from the Bench, the judges and the members of the different branches of the legal profession met in the High Court to bid him farewell. The then Advocate-General, in the course of his speech, made a special reference to two of his outstanding qualities. "No junior", said he, addressing the retiring judge, "felt embarrassed in your court where good law was well-administered. In the maze and labyrinth of adjudged cases you ever walked with a firm step holding aloft the torch of justice. You demonstrated the truth of the old saying, "no precedents can justify an absurdity". The occasion must have deeply stirred Asutosh's innermost feelings. "I have", said he, in the course of his reply, "worked strenuously in the belief that without great labour success cannot be attained. It would have been impossible

those important and abstruse questions which have come before me for adjudication during my career. But notwithstanding a diligent study of the science of law for more than a third of a century, I have now a more profound and abiding sense of ignorance than what oppressed me in the beginning of my career. I have throughout endeavoured steadfastly to hold the scales of justice even and to treat alike all litigants without distinction of caste, creed, race or position, regardless of the status of the counsel engaged before me, whether barrister or vakil, whether senior or junior. I have never favoured attempts to restrict the jurisdiction of this court. I have tried uniformly to keep wide open the gates of the temple of justice, so that every litigant who considered rightly or wrongly that he had a grievance might not have his case summarily rejected and might have the amplest opportunity to place his case fully on its merits before the highest tribunal—the ultimate court of appeal in the land. My ambition has been to attain the ideal of judicial administration, to hear patiently, to consider diligently, to understand rightly, to decide justly. It is for others to judge what measure of success I may have achieved notwithstanding inevitable errors of judgment."

9

It is unfortunate for the public life of this country that Asutosh became a judge of the High Court so early in life. For a short time he was in the Legislative chambers of India. In 1899 he was returned to the Bengal Legislative Council as the representative of the Calcutta University. He was re-elected to it in 1901. In 1903 the Calcutta Corporation sent him there as its representative. The same year he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council. For some time he also served as a member of the Calcutta Corporation. When he was appointed a judge in 1904, he resigned his seat on these bodies. While connected with the Legislature he took an active and vigorous part in the discussion of several important bills which were then under consideration. These measures included the Calcutta Municipal Bill, the Official Secrets Bill and the Indian Universities Bill. "His utterances were measured but always without any suspicion of falsehood or flattery in them. He was as loyal and courageous a defender of popular rights as the most aggressive of our patriots and politicians."

10

The greatest work of Asutosh Mookerjee lay, however, in the sphere of university education. He himself once said, "It had always been my ambition to be allowed to do something—something great as I flattered myself in my youthful dreams—for the good and glory of my *Alma Mater*". And his lasting achievement was the transformation of the Calcutta University from a merely examining body to one of the greatest Teaching Universities in the East Asutosh was appointed a member of the Senate in 1889, when he was only 25 years old. Soon after his passing the M. A. examination he was sent for by Sir Courteney Ilbert, the then Vice-Chancellor, who had already come to know of the brilliant achievements of the young graduate. On being asked whether Sir Courteney could do anything for him, Asutosh replied that he would like to have an opportunity of serving the university. In those days all the members of the Senate were nominated by Government. Sir Courteney Ilbert was not a little surprised at the answer, for he had expected that the ambitious youth would ask for some decent appointment under Government. Sir Courteney readily agreed to help Asutosh

and was in fact mainly instrumental in getting him nominated to the Senate.

Soon after his appointment as a Fellow he was elected to the Syndicate, and from that time began his active connection with the university which terminated only with his death in 1924. Here his broad statesmanship, his remarkable powers of organisation, his versatility, his administrative skill, his love for national culture, his courage and tact came into full play. The Calcutta University has produced many a distinguished son but none so passionately devoted to her as Asutosh Mookerjee. In 1906 he was appointed Vice-Chancellor and continued to hold the office till 1914. He was again appointed Vice-Chancellor in 1921 and held office for two years.

When the Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904, it barely supplied the frame-work of university reconstruction, and upon the shoulders of Asutosh fell the task of re-shaping the university in accordance with the requirements of that Act. He presided over the committee appointed by the Government of India to prepare the Regulations. These, when formulated, were approved by the Government of India. The most important departure related to the scope which the Regulations afforded for the development

of the teaching activities of the university. "These Regulations", he said in one of his earliest Convocation addresses, "indicate that the University is no longer to be a merely examining body with power to grant degrees; it is not even to be merely a federation of colleges; it is to be these and a great deal more. It is ultimately to be a centre for the cultivation and advancement of knowledge. This is unquestionably the true ideal of a university, and the realisation of this stimulating ideal, though it may be attended with difficulties, is imperative and is by no means impracticable. Among the brightest signs of a vigorous university, is its zeal for the advancement of learning, and the true function of a university is not merely the distribution of knowledge, but its acquisition and conservation."

11

During the eight years that he was Vice-Chancellor, the foundations of a teaching and research university were laid on a firm basis at Calcutta. Practically from out of nothing the university began to grow and expand. Asutosh took the fullest advantage of whatever opportunity came in his way, and had often to fight against tremendous odds in giving effect to his ideas.

One of his most remarkable utterances was his Convocation speech of 1914, when his term of office as Vice-Chancellor came to a close. He surveyed on this occasion the progress which the university had made during his stewardship. He referred in particular to the worries and anxieties through which he as the executive head of the university had to pass in initiating the scheme of university reconstruction. In the course of his address, he said : "The last eight years, in truth, have been years of unremitting struggle ; difficulties and obstacles kept springing up like the heads of Hydra, each head armed with sharp and often venomous fangs. A late lamented member of the Syndicate once very aptly alluded to the toil of the Syndicate and the Vice-Chancellor as truly Herculean. Of myself, I may say with good conscience that if often I have not spared others, I have never spared myself. For years now, every hour, every minute I could spare from other unavoidable duties—foremost among them the duties of my judicial office—has been devoted by me to University work. Plans and schemes to heighten the efficiency of the University have been the subject of my day dreams into which even a busy man lapses from time to time. They have haunted me in the hours of nightly rest. To

University concerns, I have sacrificed all chances of study and research, possibly, to some extent, the interests of family and friends, and certainly, I regret to say, a good part of my health and vitality. Do not imagine, however, that I repine at the sacrifices made. I have had my reward in many ways. I need not remind you that great comfort springs from the consciousness of rectitude of purpose, from the conviction that the cause to which one devotes all his strength and for which one renounces the ordinary delights of life, is a high and sacred one. But, in addition, I have enjoyed many bright moments of a more definite character. I have been cheered by expresssions of confidence and approbation on the part of successive Chancellors and Rectors, by the sympathy and applause of friends, by a long-continued series of successes, and even the constant toil and strife have not been devoid of inspiring effect, for as you know, there is such a feeling as the 'joy of battle'."

12

In 1917 the new scheme of post-graduate teaching was adopted. The system came into

Government of India of the recommendations of a committee appointed by them to devise means for the consolidation of post-graduate work in Calcutta. The committee was presided over by Asutosh Mookerjee himself and consisted of eminent educationists. Previous to 1917 such arrangements for M. A. and M. Sc. teaching as the university made under Asutosh's guidance were in addition to separate arrangements which existed in at least two colleges in Calcutta. The result of the introduction of the new scheme was that post-graduate teaching in Calcutta became centralised under the control of the university. The privilege previously granted under certain conditions to the affiliated colleges in Calcutta to impart post-graduate teaching was withdrawn. The outstanding feature of the organisation was the predominance of teachers on the various bodies, all of whom, young or old, senior or junior, occupied recognised positions and had opportunities of meeting one another on a common platform. Asutosh was elected President of both the Arts and Science Councils, and was Chairman of almost all the Boards of Studies. It was necessary at the time of the initiation of the new scheme that his genius should control the directions in which

Elaborate arrangements for the teaching and study of different branches of learning were made, and they were left almost invariably in charge of Indian scholars. Asutosh's love of learning as such, his genius for getting together eminent men from all parts of India, and his great faith in the youth of this country, explain the presence in the university to-day of numerous scholars who have shed lustre not only on the university but on the country at large. Only a man of Asutosh's boldness and keen discernment could have entrusted the Palit Chair of Physics to a young scientist with a reputation yet to make and with no previous teaching record. But to-day we appreciate the wisdom of his choice, for that scientist has accomplished work of the first quality and has won the highest distinction open to any man of science. The brilliant teachers of the university were deputed to visit foreign countries whenever possible, and they thus received special training in their respective subjects under eminent scholars. This system worked exceedingly well, for it helped to give the fullest possible scope to gifted young Indians for the proper utilisation of their powers and attainments. Distinguished scholars from different parts of the world were also from time to time invited to visit Calcutta.

and teachers and advanced students working here were brought into intimate contact with these master minds.

One of the greatest achievements of Asutosh was the encouragement of the study of the Indian vernaculars, especially of Bengali. When the new Regulations were framed in 1906, vernacular was made a compulsory subject for study and examination up to the B. A. stage. Later on, Asutosh also organised a higher department of Indian Vernaculars. For the first time in the history of any Indian university, it became possible for an Indian to take the highest degree on the basis of his knowledge of his mother-tongue. He also organised a scheme for the preparation and publication of volumes of typical selections in the important Indian vernaculars from the earliest stages to their latest developments in modern times. He secured for the university the services of scholars from different parts of India to collaborate in this great task.

While the system initiated by Asutosh fully kept in view the high character of the traditional civilization and culture of India, it aimed at greater comprehensiveness according to the requirements of modern ideas of culture. Asutosh had faith in the philosophy of the East and in the science of

the West. He firmly believed that the future of India depended on a proper synthesis of the two. He, therefore, paid equal attention to the development of Indian culture and of modern science. Thanks to the unparalleled liberality of Sir Taraknath Palit and Sir Rashbehary Ghose, the University College of Science made remarkable progress within a few years of its foundation and became the pride of this country. Its laboratory sent out to the world a galaxy of brilliant scholars of whom any university might justly feel proud.

From 1906 to 1924 the university secured, mainly through Asutosh's efforts, a number of rich donations from various public-spirited citizens, some of which were truly unique in character. The total value of such endowments amounted to nearly fifty lakhs of rupees. With the help of special endowments, Government grants and university funds, various professorships were founded in different branches of study. There was only one professorship in 1906 when Asutosh accepted the Vice-Chancellorship, and the number rose to as many as twenty-five in 1924 when he died. In addition to these, the university maintained more than one hundred lectureships in different subjects of study in Arts and Science. The great service

to higher education in this province is the fruit of the labours of a growing school of Indian scholars devoted to the pursuit of different branches of learning, men who, engaged in the work of teaching, are also devoting themselves to the task of spreading the bounds of knowledge. It has now been demonstrated beyond a shade of doubt that, given adequate facilities, Indians are capable of doing original work in various branches of learning. The story of the activities of the teachers of the Calcutta University has travelled beyond the seas; their works have been placed before the world and appreciated by eminent thinkers and scholars.

13

Asutosh's plan of a teaching and research university was a new phase in the educational system of the country; and, perhaps because it was new, a proper acknowledgment and appreciation of its value was often slow to come from people nearer home. At the same time there were some who, from the beginning, understood the significance of the new movement. One of such

Marquis of Zetland), who was then Governor of Bengal. In his Convocation speech he referred to the post-graduate departments in terms which are worthy of being quoted.

"The greatest landmark", said he, "in the history of the University in recent years is undoubtedly the creation of the Council of Post-graduate studies. As Rector of the University at the time, I gave my whole-hearted support, because it seemed to me that it was calculated to establish in Calcutta, under the auspices of the University, a real centre of learning and research, and to do much by resuscitating interest in the ancient culture of the country, to stimulate thought on lines congenial to the particular genius of the Indo-Aryan race. I had in mind famous Indian universities of a past age, such, for example, as Nalanda which, if we may believe the Chinese pilgrims who visited it in the 7th century A. D., was a famous centre of learning, at which were congregated 10,000 students, and the examinations at which were so exacting that though learned men flocked to its doors, from different cities, those who failed to pass its tests as compared with those who succeeded, were as 7 or 8 to 10—a centre of learning, moreover, where the day was found

of profound questions and where discussion proceeded from morning until night. And I had visions of a modern Nalanda growing up in this the greatest and most populous city of the Indian Empire."

While announcing the re-appointment of Asutosh as Vice-Chancellor in 1921, Lord Ronaldshay paid a fitting tribute to the work done in the Post-graduate departments. "Surely", said he, "you must be proud of the splendid attempt which is being made here to render to Indian civilization and culture the homage which is its due. Teaching of the highest order, along with research work by Indian scholars of repute, is being carried on in a number of branches of higher Sanskrit which in themselves cover a wide field of ancient Indian learning, in Pali which embraces the far-reaching field of Buddhistic studies, in Islamic studies including Theology, Literature, Rhetoric, Poetics, Grammar and Philosophy, in Science, in Indian Vernaculars and in the elaborate course of study devoted to Ancient Indian History and Culture. Surely the gratitude and support of every Indian, who truly loves his country, is due to the man who has done so much for Indian learning. That man is himself an Indian among Indians, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee."

14

Asutosh had an abiding sympathy for scholars in all departments of knowledge. He had not only a unique enthusiasm for learning but had, what was still more important, the capacity to communicate such enthusiasm to all about him. His influence was not confined merely to those who were working directly in the University of Calcutta. Writing of Asutosh in *Nature* Professor Cullis remarked that "every earnest intellectual worker, however humble or however eminent, would find in him a wise and understanding friend, and could talk to him as to a co-worker and an equal. Specialists in the most diverse literary and scientific subjects would find him familiar with the latest relevant literature. To every band of men engaged in the quest after truth and light, his help and encouragement were greatly and unselfishly given, and in learned societies and gatherings he was a dominant figure, giving appreciation where it was due and advice where it was needed". Most of the important associations and learned societies interested in

in Bengal were either guided by him or benefited by his advice and experience. He founded the Calcutta Mathematical Society in 1908, was for a number of years President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He was also for many years Chairman of the Trustees of the Indian Museum, of the Council of the Imperial Library and of the Council of the Calcutta Sanskrit Association.

15

In Asutosh's opinion, the most essential feature of university life is absolute academic freedom. The memorable letter which he wrote to Lord Lytton gives us the views he held about the need for complete independence in the executive head of the university. For him Education was Religion, and freedom was the very breath of its existence. The part which the universities have to play in the life of a nation can be adequately fulfilled only in an atmosphere of perfect freedom; it is this which keeps the university alive. His estimate of the *rôle* played by universities in national life is well brought out in his last Convocation

University as your *Alma Mater.* Do you always realise the nobility of this commonplace expression ? What a singular endearment it voices—our fostering mother—what a fine relation is that for a great institution of learning to bear to all those who throughout the years have learned wisdom at her feet and have gone out into the world, sustained by her strength and inspired by her lofty example..... In whatever sphere your lot may be cast, whatever your hopes and fears, turn back to your *Alma Mater* with filial piety and attachment.....Councils will come and go, ministers will blossom and perish, parties will develop and disappear or change their nature and survive. But your university, my university, will live on for ever, if her children by thousands and ten-thousands stand by her with steadfast loyalty and devotion, alike in her days of triumph and affliction. Unalterable is my faith as to her bright future, because I feel she must be a national organisation, self-reliant though bound in service to the nation, adapting herself to the manifold and varying needs of the community, from generation to generation. I call upon you, fellow-graduates, to join with me in the words of the warrior poet, in a solemn pledge of eternal devotion to the spirit of our

Motherland, the protecting divinity of our *Alma Mater*:

"I vow to thee, my country—
All earthly things above,
Entire and whole and perfect,
The service of my love,
The love that asks no question ;
The love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar
The dearest and the best :
The love that never falters,
The love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted
The final sacrifice."

16

Great as the achievements of Asutosh Mookerjee were in the sphere of education, he never for a moment claimed that the university had attained such eminence that no further progress was needed. Such a self-complacent attitude, he once said, would be ruinous to the best interests of the university and the country. He was essentially a champion of progress. As a member of the Sadler Commission he was in favour of drastic reforms in the system of secondary and university education. He always

stood for expansion and not curtailment of educational facilities. It is unfortunate for the province that the recommendations of the Commission could not be carried into effect during his life-time mainly on account of lack of adequate financial assistance.

In 1923 he ceased to be the Vice-Chancellor, but he had already attained such a unique position in the university that it did not really matter whether he was nominally its executive head or not. He was regarded as the most powerful personality within the university, and its Vice-Chancellor, whoever he was, had to look up to him for inspiration and guidance.

17

As we have noticed already, Asutosh retired from the Bench on 1st January, 1924. He resumed practice at the Bar and accepted, within a few weeks of his retirement, an important case at Patna which kept him engaged there till his tragically sudden death on the 25th May, 1924. During this period he had to come to Calcutta every week-end to attend important university meetings. He was in Calcutta on the 17th and 18th May and returned to Patna on the morning of the 19th. He was then apparently in the best of health and felt as keen and vigorous as any

ambitious and energetic young man about to start life. On Friday the 23rd May, he was suddenly taken ill at Patna, and, after a brief illness, passed away two days later. The news of his death, so tragic in its suddenness, cast a gloom all over the country. It was decided to bring down his mortal remains to the city of his birth which had been the scene of his manifold activities. On Monday the 26th May, the remains arrived in Calcutta by a special train, and in death he received a most loving and impassioned homage from all sections of his countrymen. Memorable were the scenes that were witnessed in Calcutta on that day when thousands of persons in mournful silence followed the bier to the burning ghat. This spontaneous tribute was an unmistakable proof of the deep affection and respect in which his countrymen had held him. A great life was cut off just at one of its most important turning points, for it was generally well-known that after his retirement from the Bench he intended to enter political life.

18

Any sketch of Asutosh Mookerjee would be incomplete without a reference to some of his

personal characteristics. Asutosh always lived a life of the utmost simplicity. Dressed in a most ordinary *dhoti* and a short coat, he toured throughout the length and breadth of India as a member of the Sadler Commission. In the High Court itself he used to change into *dhoti* after finishing his day's work. It was a remarkable sight to see him walking vigorously down the staircase reserved for His Majesty's Judges, dressed in *dhoti* with the *chadar* carelessly thrown on one of his broad shoulders. It was he, though an official for the greater part of his public life, who more than any one else secured from Europeans a proper respect for our national dress.

A hard bed was all that he required on which he slept comfortably, his head being invariably supported by a still harder pillow. As a member of the Sadler Commission, he had often to stay as the guest of wealthy aristocrats in different parts of the country; he often caused them not a little surprise by refusing to use the luxurious bed especially arranged for him, and spreading his own scanty bedding on the bare floor itself. He never smoked, nor indulged in intoxicating beverage of any kind; nor even would he chew betel leaves. Once when pressed to take a *pān* at a wedding, he smiled and said: "For three

generations we have not touched these things. Why ask me to break away from the family tradition" ?

In social life he was extremely unostentatious. He always accepted invitations to social functions and made it a point to attend them, no matter how humble the status of his host might be. On the eve of his fatal illness he dined at the house of his chauffeur at Patna. He dreaded nothing more than unnecessarily wounding people's feelings in such small matters, although he never shrank from braving the frowns of the mightiest in the land, when his sense of duty pointed out to him that such a course was necessary in the interests of truth, justice and fair dealing. Then he was brave as a lion and nothing could daunt him.

From his very childhood Asutosh was an early riser. His habits were most regular and he worked with clock-like precision. By four o'clock in the morning he would leave his bed and within half an hour be at work at his desk. When he was a boy of ten, his father inculcated upon him the supreme need of having at least an hour's walk in the cool of the morning; and this life-long habit he regularly kept up till two days before his death. His capacity for work was

tremendous. In the morning he used to dictate judgments, reports, notes and replies to his numerous correspondents. Two shorthand typists were constantly in attendance and had their hands full. From the High Court he used to go daily to the university and sometimes to other institutions as well with which he was connected and was engaged in important administrative work till late in the evening. After his evening meal, he was again to be found at his desk till 10 o'clock; this was the time which he usually employed for his private study. He despised idleness and could not even conceive how men could find any pleasure in wasting time. Whatever he took up he did thoroughly and well. He never left a thing undone or half-done. It was a marvel to all how Asutosh found time to attend to his numerous duties and occupations.

Streams of visitors used to pour at all hours into his house, and his door was open to one and all without any distinction. All sorts and conditions of men came there "to seek advice and help from that man of stout heart and capacious brain". There was a remarkable absence of any formality when he received his visitors; visiting cards were not required, neither was any preference shown to particular individuals. He welcomed all

with that ready and good-humoured smile of his, often accompanied by that unforgettable twinkle in his brilliant eyes, which at once inspired courage and confidence. Outwardly he might sometimes appear to be rough, but he was gentle at heart, full of human sympathy and understanding. He was always frank and straightforward and hated giving empty assurances. If he thought it possible for him to do some good to any one, he did it with all his might.

Asutosh had a strong sense of humour and "a memorable laugh". One Sunday afternoon a young student came to see him from the distant Mufassil. It so happened he did not know Asutosh even by appearance. As luck would have it, the boy saw Asutosh himself coming along the corridor dressed in his simple attire. Little dreaming to whom he was putting his question, the boy eagerly asked him, "When may I see Asu Babu?" Asutosh's sense of humour asserted itself. He made the boy sit by his side on a bench and urged him to tell him what he wanted, adding that he knew 'Asu Babu' very well and would try to influence him in his favour. The boy did not, however, appreciate this attention on the part of a "stranger". He shook his head and said

shall speak to him and him alone". Asutosh thoroughly enjoyed the situation, went into his room and sent for the boy. When the latter came, he found to his amazement the same gentleman, beaming with smiles, occupying the biggest chair in the apartment. He at once realised his mistake and did not know how to beg Asutosh's pardon. He was about to fall down on his knees but Asutosh caught hold of him and soon made him feel perfectly at ease. The boy got all that he asked for ; in fact he got something more, for he was served with a plate full of sweets to which he did ample justice.

Indeed, there was no greater friend of the students of Bengal than Asutosh. Their hearts were spontaneously drawn to him for his genuine affection for them, and his sincere and heart-felt concern for their true and permanent well-being. Not only did they approach him for books and money which they invariably got, but they very often came to him for counsel and guidance. Amidst his multifarious and ever-increasing pre-occupations, he was always ready to listen to them and willing to lend them a helping hand. He had an abundant faith in the youth of the country. Of the numerous weighty messages

to time the following was a typical one : "Though steeped in the culture of the West, disregard not all that is most sublime in Indian thought and all that is best in Indian manners and customs. Neglect not, in the glare of Western light, the priceless treasures which are your inheritance. In your just admiration for all that is best in the culture of the West, do not, under any circumstance, denationalize yourselves. Do not hesitate to own at all times that you are genuine Indians, and do not fail to rise above the petty vanities of dress and taste. Above all, sedulously cultivate your vernaculars, for it is through the medium of the vernaculars alone, that you can hope to reach the masses of your countrymen and communicate to them the treasures you gather from the field of Western learning".

Asutosh had a prodigious memory and a remarkable faculty of remembering the faces and names of persons whom he had seen, perhaps only once, and that years before. It was a wonderful gift, and one could not but admire it highly, when one remembered the large number and variety of people, from far and near, who used to flock to him every day. He had a unique collection of books on all conceivable

catalogue prepared. At home he was always to be found in the midst of his books "all in methodical disorder, which to the eye of an expert meant work and not mere dilettantism". The books, however, were all arranged under his personal direction, and although they lay scattered about in every available corner of his house, he knew where each book was to be found.

Asutosh was a staunch friend who could always be safely depended upon. He would do everything in his power to do his friends a good turn if he could, and leave no stone unturned to rescue them from a situation of difficulty. At the same time, he was a "good hater". He was not, however, of a vindictive nature. His bitterest enemy could always count upon his help and support, if he happened to be involved in serious danger and difficulty, and sought Asutosh's assistance in a frank and free spirit, keeping nothing from him.

People used to regard him as an autocrat. Circumstanced as he was, he sometimes had to do things in a manner which provoked adverse criticism. But it would be wholly wrong to suggest that he restricted or repressed freedom of discussion in any way. All important matters were usually discussed before they were placed formally at meetings; and at such preliminary discussions

ample freedom was given to all to express their divergent views without the slightest reservation. At this initial stage he tried his best to keep an open mind, listening to everything with the utmost patience. But once he had made up his mind after thorough study and consideration, it was difficult to make him change his opinion unless fresh facts were placed before him. Such an attitude of mind was essential for carrying great schemes through stormy meetings where opposition often centred round his proposals. He was conversant with every minute detail of a projected scheme and, when he attended a meeting, he was one of those rare persons, who not only knew their own minds but had also a clear idea as to what they expected others to do. This "superior knowledge" was the result of sheer hard work and, added to his other natural qualities, it made him a man among men, a leader among leaders.

Asutosh never visited Europe. Towards the beginning of this century he was invited by Lord Curzon to go to England as the representative of Calcutta, then the capital city of India, and attend the coronation ceremony of King Edward VII. His mother strongly

not think of disobeying his mother. Lord Curzon summoned Asutosh to his presence. When Asutosh explained why he could not comply with the Viceroy's request, Lord Curzon said, "Please go and tell your mother that the Viceroy and the Governor General of India commands her son to go". Without a moment's hesitation came the reply: "Then I must tell the Viceroy of India on her behalf that the mother of Asutosh Mookerjee refuses to let her son be commanded by anybody excepting herself".

Though an orthodox Brahmin in whose house the numerous religious ceremonies, usually performed in a well-to-do Hindu family, were regularly celebrated, he was an ardent social reformer. In 1908 he gave his eldest daughter, who was a child widow, in marriage for a second time. This was an act of rare courage, and subjected him to a good deal of hostile criticism and social persecution. Unhappily, however, his daughter again became a widow the very next year. Asutosh had a remarkable power of self-control and he never gave any outward sign of his great grief. But this event broke Asutosh's heart and cast a shadow over his otherwise happy domestic life. He was intensely devoted to her, as she was to him, and he did all that a father's care could do to

redeem the saddened life of his beloved daughter. In 1923 she hurried before him into the "Land of Light and Peace" and this was the severest blow that Asutosh ever received. He was anxious to "keep her memory green". Early in 1924, a few months before his death, "the father's tender thought wove this dear memory into the very fabric of the University he loved so well"; he created an endowment in the university with a view to establishing a lectureship—the Kamala Lectureship—in her memory. "In life they were united and in death they were not long divided" and Asutosh passed away before Mrs. Annie Besant delivered the first series of Kamala lectures at the university in 1925.

19

How will the historian of the future view Asutosh's work and character? He is now too near us to admit of his many-sided character being viewed in its proper perspective. He dominated the minds of his countrymen and shaped their affairs in far too many departments—all with the same sheer plenitude of masterful control—for us now to predict that here only is his title to abiding

of intellect, in strength of character, Asutosh belonged to that brotherhood of adventurers who in ages past had founded states and kingdoms. As Sir Michael Sadler said, the world lost in him "one of its commanding personalities who could have ruled an empire". His star had placed him in India in the later years of the nineteenth and the earlier years of the twentieth century, and he gave the best of his powers to education, because "he believed that in education rightly interpreted lay the secret of human welfare and the key to every empire's moral strength". "Asutosh touched the Calcutta University with the magic wand of his creative will in order to transform it into a living organism belonging to the life of the Bengali people." Something of the stuff which forms the great military adventurer was unquestionably latent in his composition. He belonged to the race of heroes of action, the true *karma-virs* of ancient Indian conception. He had their go, their *elan*, the white heat of their ardour, the torrent-like sweep of their energy, their colossal faith in self and in the future, their tireless capacity for work, and their infinite patience under the most discouraging circumstances. In boldness of conception, in fertility of resources, in resoluteness of purpose which grows

and deftness of hand, which seeks to dare all and do all, Asutosh was almost without a peer. To him man was the creator and not the creature of circumstances; and he always impressed others as a supreme architect, a builder-up of the destinies of our society and nation.

In him was a dual personality acting in perfect harmony. The man of action and the man of imagination were not brought face to face, under their old-world relation of hostility; they became allies, good and true. To the superficial observer he was, as has been well said, "a great power-house of ceaseless practical energy"; but how few did know that he was a superb dreamer of dreams. Those who were privileged to see him in his rare moments of relaxation, knew that now and then there would come a certain strangely beautiful far-off look into those magnetic eyes of his, and that in such moments of abstraction and forgetfulness he would unconsciously slip into a reverie. As one recalls this elusive aspect of Asutosh's nature, one feels instinctively that herein he was a true son of India. Through the ages of history has not dreaming been our heritage, our pride, our glory? Has it not been in a special measure India's contribution to

But Asutosh was far from conjuring up shimmering Utopias of fancy. He was not like the lover or the lunatic, "of imagination all compact". One cannot say of him what Matthew Arnold says of Shelley, "a beautiful but ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." "He had", said Rabindranath Tagore, "the courage to dream because he had the power to fight and the confidence to win—his will itself was the path to the goal."

This part of Asutosh's character has eluded the searchlight of public scrutiny. But in studying the man, it is necessary to bear in mind that this very imaginative and speculative quality forms the guiding principle of all his practical schemes. It explains also another supreme trait of his mind, which rendered possible the crowded magnitude and extensiveness of his achievements,—his boundless, robust optimism. This optimism was not the happy-go-lucky, care-free, and magnificently irresponsible attitude of the arm-chair philosopher with his complacent formula, "God is in heaven; all's right with the world". Cheered as he always would have been even at the outset of a great endeavour by the silver lining in the lowering cloud, he never ignored the massed

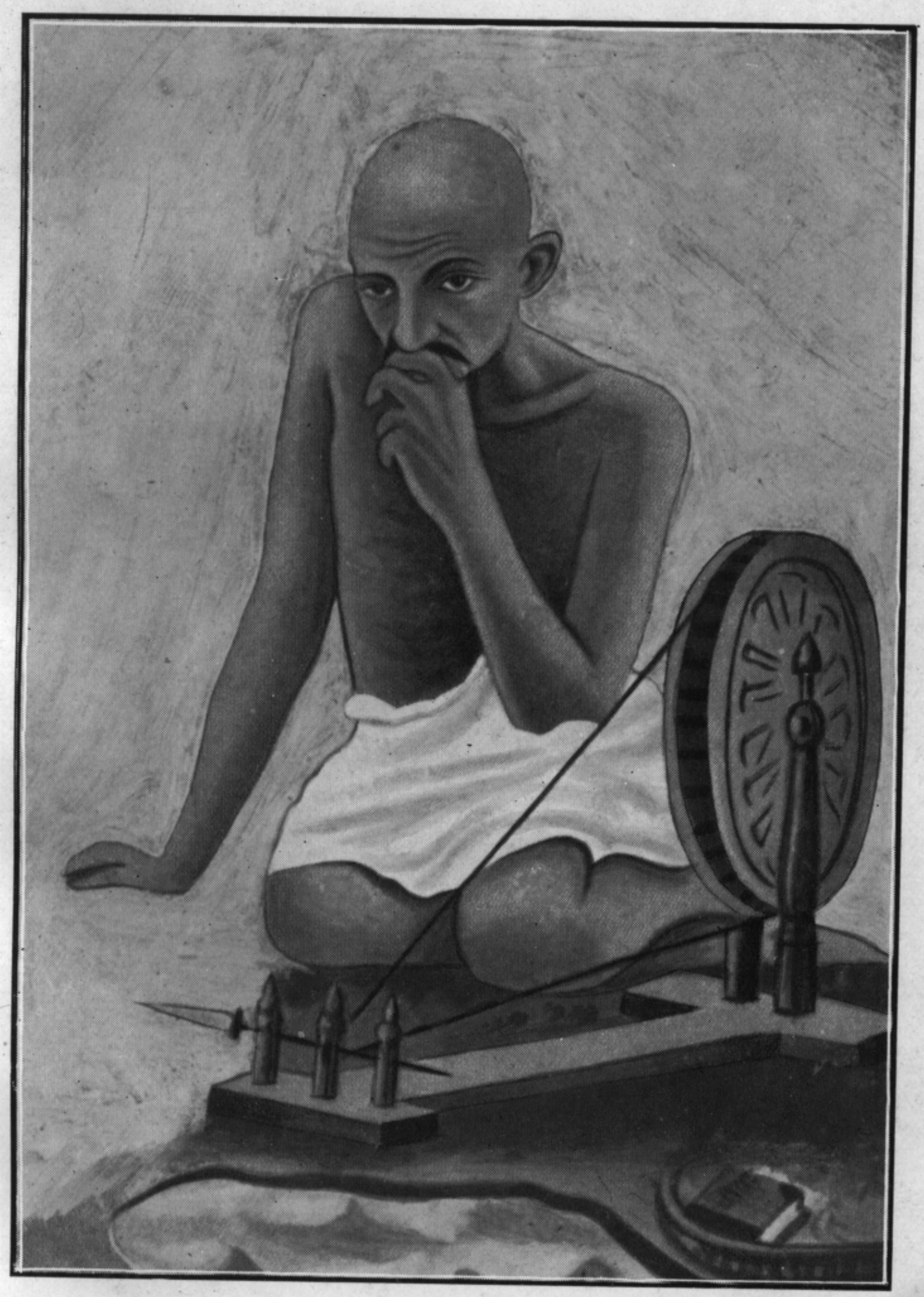
in all countries through whom the aspiration of their people can hope to find its fulfilment, who have the thundering voice to say that what is needed shall be done; and Asutosh had that magic voice of assurance." He had that hope, that faith in the future, which could move mountains. In the wildest of storms his sheet-anchor could hold. He intensely hated that whining namby-pamby poverty of spirit which oftentimes masquerades as fatalism or philosophic indifference. Into the lifeless torpor of his countrymen he sought to infuse the sanguine elixir of which he had himself drunk. His religion was the religion of Vivekananda—Glory to God in the Highest and Service to Man. It is true of Asutosh that despair never darkened his brow. His inner nature was alight, and this must have been due to his solemn sense of consecration akin to the stern joy of the martyr who knows that for him to lose all is to win all. As he set side by side what he had done and what he had still to do, as he made up the debit and credit sheets of his life's account, he felt a restless, uncontrollable impulse, a fierce urging of the spirit, fearing lest his dedication of self might prove an unworthy offering. Life piled on life were all too little for the service

remained. Had he been spared longer, what new fields of glory he would have elected to enter, what other and greater fights for freedom he would have fought, we know not. As it is, we are but left with an unfulfilled dream of what might have been.

MAHATMA GANDHI

To know that righteousness exalteth a nation and to pursue righteousness ; to know that truth makes a people free and to hold on to truth with the utmost faithfulness ; to meet organised Force by all-suffering Love ; to feel for the poor and, therefore, to live their life of simplicity and at the same time to invest that simplicity with a dignity and grandeur that beggar the pomp and magnificence of kings ; to be an idealist and yet to deal with the conflicting details of a grave and complex political situation ; to weep over the degradation of one's countrymen, to do penance for them, and yet never to give up faith and hope ; to sanctify politics by religion and to vivify religion with practical work—is to be a national leader such as the world has never seen before.

Mahatma Gandhi is in the line of the great religious teachers of India ; only the emancipation of his suffering countrymen has become woven into the texture of his *sādhanā*. As the artist, Abanindranath Tagore, has painted him, he is spinning on his *charkā* the thread of a nation's destiny. His words are simple, his actions are direct and straightforward,



MAHATMA GANDHI

We are often told that the world is becoming "material-minded". But the wondering appreciation of Mahatma Gandhi all over the civilised world, the acceptance of him as the greatest man now living on earth, has gone far to redeem humanity. After all, truth and love are still regarded as the noblest things in the world.

A frail, insignificant-looking figure, clad in coarse loin-cloth ; his shoulders bent down as if under the weight of a nation's woes, but his eyes serene and clear ; his manner courteous but unafraid and dignified ; his voice deep and convincing—such is Mahatma Gandhi, the nation-builder.

He is the Happy Warrior sung by Wordsworth,

"the generous spirit, who when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought :.....
By objects which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate ;
Is placable—because occasions arise
So often that demand such sacrifice ;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more ; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress. .....
Hence also more alive to tenderness. .....
Who if he rise to station of command
Rises by open means ; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire ;

Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace ;.....
... ...
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray ;.....
This is the happy warrior ; this is he
That every Man in arms should wish to be."

2

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on the 5th October 1869, at the little seaport town of Porbunder, in the small peninsula of Kathiawar on the extreme west of India. Porbunder "rises almost out of the sea". "It has all the infinite variety and charm of the expanse of ocean around it. Mists of extraordinary beauty constantly rise from the sea and encompass the land. The little town becomes a vision of glory at sunrise and sunset." The sea is "for ever sounding with its waves upon the coast". On the other hand the desert is always near.

The Gandhis belong to the Bania caste. The family held a high position. Gandhiji's grandfather, Uttamchand Gandhi, called Ota Gandhi, was Diwan or Chief Minister in one of the Kathiawar states. An interesting story is told of Ota Gandhi by his grandson. He was dismissed

for a time from his own state, Porbunder, and had taken service in the state of Junagarh. When he saw his new Chief he saluted him with the left hand. "Why do you salute me with the left hand?" asked the Chief. "Because the right hand is pledged to Porbunder", was the reply. Gandhiji's father was Karamchand Gandhi, Diwan of Rajkote.

"My father", says Gandhiji, "was a lover of his clan, truthful, brave and generous, but short-tempered". He had great experience in practical affairs. Gandhiji's mother was a very religious woman and must have deeply influenced her son's character. "The outstanding impression that my mother has left on my memory", says Gandhiji, "is one of saintliness." Gandhiji passed his childhood in Porbunder. He was admitted into the local high school in his twelfth year. At school he was a shy boy knowing nothing beyond his books and lessons and running back home to avoid his companions. He was a very truthful and mild-natured boy.

According to Hindu custom in those days he was married at the age of thirteen. "I do not think", says Gandhiji, "it meant to me (at that time) anything more than the prospect of good clothes to wear, drum-beating, marriage

processions, rich dinners and a strange girl to play with."

In early youth he often used to read aloud the Hindi *Ramayana* of Tulsidas in his father's presence and this made a great impression on him. He still regards that book as "the greatest book in all devotional literature". He also used to hear the *Bhagavat Purana* read. His father, who then resided in Rajkote, was a man of importance. Not only Hindus but Jainas and Muhammadans came to see him. He was friendly with them and the talk was often led to religious questions. "In Rajkote", says Gandhiji, "I got an early grounding in toleration for all branches of Hinduism and sister religions." Gandhiji had not yet any living faith in God. "But one thing", says he, "took deep root in me—the conviction that morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth now became my sole objective. Truth began to grow in magnitude every day. Since then, also, my definition of Truth has been ever widening." At this time another principle greatly impressed him. It was the precept "return good for evil". Here we see the seeds of Gandhiji's future greatness.

3

After passing the Entrance examination he joined the Samaldas College at Bhavnagar but did not stay there long. It was thought desirable that he should proceed to England to qualify himself for the Bar, particularly as it would enable him to succeed to the Diwanship. His mother agreed to let him go only on his solemn promise to live a chaste life in England and not to take wine or meat. He was at that time eighteen years of age.

While in England he was hard put to it to keep his vow of vegetarianism. His friends remonstrated with him. He could not at first get suitable food. But he remained adamant. He prayed that he might be able to keep his vow. At last he discovered a vegetarian restaurant. He took a room and lived a simple life. This was also a period of hard study. The two went very well together. "My life", says Gandhiji, "became certainly more truthful and the joy within my soul was unbounded."

After being called to the Bar he returned to India. When he came, his caste people wanted to excommunicate him. Even his relations dared not

openly eat with him, though they were prepared to do it secretly. "But it went against the grain with me", says Gandhiji, "to do a thing in secret that I would not do in public."

As a Barrister Gandhiji began practice at the Bombay High Court, then removed to Kathiawar. But he did not get many briefs. A client of his, however, who had business in South Africa engaged him for a case to be conducted there.

4

From 1893 to 1914 Gandhiji was in South Africa. There, for more than twenty years, he carried on a campaign, which not only raised his countrymen, settled there, from degrading humiliations, but which for Gandhiji himself "constituted", in the words of Romain Roland, "a soul's epopee, unequalled in our times, not only because of the intensity and the constancy of the sacrifice required but because of the final triumph". It was the great formative period of his life when he put into practice the religion of service. He came to South Africa in charge of an important case. But it was in another field that he was to find his real work.

Within a day or two of his arrival the humiliating conditions under which the Indians lived were brought home to him. He was not allowed to travel inside a coach with Europeans, was assaulted, thrown out of railway carriages, excluded from hotels, kicked out of a footpath because he was not a white man. In South Africa all Indians were "coolies" and he came to be called the Cooly Barrister.

New forms of injustice were being devised by the Government of South Africa. A bill for disfranchising the Indians was passed into law inspite of the protest organised by Gandhiji. Indian feeling became articulate. In their helplessness they pressed him to remain and join the Supreme Court in Natal. There was some difficulty "on the ground of colour" but ultimately he was enrolled. "I had thought of returning home by the end of the year", says Gandhiji. "But God had disposed otherwise." He had made the religion of service his own. "And service for me", says he, "was the service of India, because it came to me without my seeking and I had an aptitude for it."

In 1896 he came to India to fetch his wife and children. In India he wrote and spoke on the cruel disabilities from which the Indian community in

opinion in India. Reuter sent a report of these speeches which was somewhat exaggerated and which excited the white people of South Africa. They thought that the system of indentured Indian labour would come to an end and the European planters would suffer in consequence. In the meantime, a cablegram came from the Natal Indians asking Gandhiji to return at once to Africa. He sailed by S. S. *Courland* with his family. There were some three or four hundred Indian passengers on board. Another steamer, S. S. *Naderi*, also left for South Africa with about the same number of Indians. When the Europeans of Natal learnt this, they were greatly excited. They held public meetings and passed resolutions that the passengers should be prevented from landing at Durban. The bubonic plague had broken out in India in 1896. When the steamers reached Durban the Europeans took advantage of the quarantine restrictions and applied them for their own purpose. The passengers were detained for a period of twenty-three days which was much longer than the usual time-limit for quarantine. The Indian owners of the steamers or their agents were threatened with loss of business, if they permitted Gandhiji and the other passengers to land. But they stood firm. Notice

were in an excitable mood and if the passengers landed they would be thrown into the sea. The passengers were determined to land in spite of the threat. The steamers came into port. There Gandhiji received a message from the Attorney-General advising him not to land with the other passengers but to do so in the evening under police escort. At first, to avoid unpleasant consequences, he agreed and sent his family to the house of his client, Rustomji, to await his arrival. But when the advocate of Rustomji's firm, Mr. Laughton, came and told him that the situation demanded that he should land at once, Gandhiji put on his turban and was ready to accompany him. It was about half-past four in the afternoon in January 1897. The sky was overcast with clouds. It was an hour's walk to Rustomji's house. As soon as Gandhiji appeared in the street he was identified by his turban. Some young lads shouted, "Here's Gandhi ! Here's Gandhi ! Thrash him ! Surround him" ! Some threw stones. The number of rioters swelled. Mr. Laughton hailed a rickshaw for him but the rickshaw-boy was threatened by the crowd and refused to come. Some people tore Mr. Laughton away from Gandhiji. The crowd abused him and threw down his turban. A burly fellow came up and slapped him

fall down but saved himself by holding on to the railings of a house. He recovered himself and began to walk. A European lady came to his rescue. It was nearly evening when he reached Rustomjee's house. At nightfall a big crowd assembled before the house. The men demanded that Gandhiji should be given up to them. The Police Superintendent who had arrived stepped up to the crowd.

"What harm has he done to you ?"

"He has blackened our face in India and wants to flood Natal with coolies."

"What if he does not come out ?"

"We will then burn the house."

But the Superintendent of Police had sent Gandhiji out of the house secretly by another door.

All this enhanced Gandhiji's reputation and the prestige of the Indian community. The two sides had tested their strength. "Whenever I think of that day", says Gandhiji, "I feel that God was preparing me for the practice of Satyagraha."

And indeed when, at the instance of the British Government, the Natal Government was ready to prosecute the assailants of Gandhiji and he was asked to identify them, he refused to prosecute any one. This was a surprise to the Europeans in South Africa.

But a greater surprise was in store for them. The Boer War broke out in 1899 and Gandhiji, at the head of some Indian residents, offered his services on the British side. His point of view was that the Indians in South Africa had settled there as British subjects, were struggling to obtain their rights as British subjects ; therefore they must do their duty as British subjects and, what was more, must prove by their work in the war that they were worthy of their claim to better treatment. Led by Gandhiji the Indians expressed their willingness to do any work that might be given to them, not excluding sweepers' or scavengers' work in the war hospitals. Ultimately sanction was given to the formation of an Indian Ambulance Corps. A corps of eleven hundred Indians (including coolies) led by Gandhiji left for the front. They were given hard work to do. They had to carry the wounded seven or eight miles and sometimes over much longer distance. At the end they eagerly accepted work within the firing line. When the relief of Ladysmith was over, the Indian corps as well as the European was disbanded. The prestige of the Indians was greatly raised and the spirit in which they worked in the war was highly appreciated.

Gandhiji had shown heroism in connection with

nobler type of heroism. In that year pneumonic or "black" plague broke out in Johannesburg. Twenty-three Indians were attacked. The patients were segregated in a vacant hut and Gandhiji with four clerks of his office took charge of them. The risk was very grave. Twenty of the men died and the remaining three were removed elsewhere.

About the same time Gandhiji founded in South Africa an *āshram* which he called the Phoenix Settlement. The idea came to him from reading Ruskin's book *Unto this Last.* Ruskin teaches in that book that "a life of labour, *i.e.* of the tiller of the soil and handicraftsman, is the life worth living". The plan was that every settler should labour and draw the same living wage. Gandhiji's original idea was gradually to retire from legal practice and settle there. But he was only able to stay there at brief intervals.

On the outbreak of the Zulu rebellion in 1906 Gandhiji again went for a short time on ambulance work at the head of a small party of Indians. Their work consisted in nursing the wounded Zulus.

He tells us that, as he marched through the "solemn solitudes" of the Zulu country, he fell into deep thought. He thought of *brahmacharya* or chastity, and how necessary it was both for

to serve humanity, how it was not possible "to live both after the flesh and the spirit". And ever since Gandhiji has been a *brahmachāri.*

5

We have seen how suffering, service of man and influence of nature combined to form Gandhiji's character and to touch it to noble issues. Out of this nobility of character rose the Christ-like quality of passive resistance to evil. Passive resistance or *satyagraha* means the opposing of wrong or injustice not by aggressive acts or violence or brute force but by "soul-force". This soul-force is shown by suffering heroically the consequences of opposing the injustice. It may take the form of a strike or a refusal to pay taxes, or any other kind of civil disobedience to law. When such resistance is offered jointly by a large section of the people, it becomes very effective. It shows the moral earnestness of the resisters for they can suffer for their cause. It shows their moral superiority, for they can control themselves from giving way to violence. Though it can be used only by a morally strong people, it is the only weapon of a physically weak or disarmed population. It appeals to the better instincts

of the opposite party. It is a kind of opposition in which women and children can take part. On the other hand, so long as the resisters are not completely self-disciplined, it is fraught with grave danger, for it may easily exceed its limits and lead to outbursts of violence. It requires a Gandhi to inspire it and to guide it.

The time had arrived in South Africa to give a trial to passive resistance. The movement against the Asiatic emigrants was growing strong, for the European colonists wanted to keep South Africa "a white man's land" and to stop or restrict Asiatic immigration. In 1906 the Asiatic Registration Act was passed. By it all Indians were *compelled* to register themselves, as if they were convicts. Led by Gandhiji they refused to obey the law and prepared to suffer imprisonment. They agreed to register *voluntarily* if the compelling law was repealed. At first Government promised to repeal it, but then it held back. Passive resistance was intensified. Gandhiji went to jail. Many others followed him. More wrongs were inflicted. A judicial decision declared that all Indian marriages were illegal. A tax of three pounds was imposed on all indentured coolies who wanted to stay after the term of their contract

were filled. A large number of women, with Mrs. Gandhi at their head, went joyfully to prison. A procession of two thousand people, including women and children, marched into forbidden territory to defy the law. There was no violence, no breach of the peace. The coolies on the sugar plantations went on strike. Some of them were shot down. At last the Asiatic Registration Act was repealed, the tax was abolished and monogamous Indian marriages were recognised.

It was a triumph for Satyagraha. Its moral effect was incalculable. It raised the self-respect of the Indian settlers. It made the Europeans regard them with a new feeling of appreciation. It proved the superiority of soul-force to brute force. Above all it convinced Gandhiji of the value of Satyagraha. It placed in his hand a moral weapon of tremendous efficacy. Tolstoi had written to Gandhiji, " Your activity in the Transvaal, as it seems to us at this end of the world, is the most essential work, the most important of all the work now being done in the world, wherein not only the nations of the Christian, but of all the world, will take part ".

One incident during the struggle shows the chivalrous spirit of Gandhiji. A great strike of the

European employees of the Union Railways had broken out. Government was placed in a difficult position. Some said, "Assist the strikers now and obtain your own terms from Government". But Gandhiji said, 'No'. He played the game and refused to take an unfair advantage. This decision was bound to create, and did create, a great impression.

Thus ended the second period of Gandhiji's career.

6

Gandhiji returned to India in 1914. The Great War had already broken out. He still believed in the ideals of British rule and his attitude was that of whole-hearted support to Britain in the war. "I would make India offer all her able-bodied sons as a sacrifice to the Empire at its critical moment", said he ; "and I know that India by this very act would become the most favoured partner and racial distinctions would become a thing of the past."

Between 1915 and 1919, however, Gandhiji's faith in Government gradually weakened till, in 1919, his attitude had stiffened into non-violent non-co-operation.

But his first important act on coming home was to establish the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati. It is "a kind of home or settlement where the scholars, living in extreme simplicity and austerity and supporting themselves by hard labour, are trained to understand and to exemplify their master's principles".

Those principles will be seen in the following extracts from the Rules of the Ashram :

"*Object.*—The object of this Home is to learn how to serve the Motherland and to serve it.

The Vows.—1. The Vow of Truth.—It is not enough that one ordinarily does not resort to untruth ; one ought to know that no deception may be practised even for the good of the country, that Truth may require opposition to one's parents and elders. Consider the example of Prahlād.

2. The Vow of Ahimsā (Non-killing).—It is not enough not to take the life of any living being. The follower of this Vow may not hurt even those whom he believes to be unjust ; he may not be angry with them, he must love them : thus he would oppose the tyranny, whether of parents, Governments or others, but will never hurt the tyrant. The follower of Truth and Ahimsā will conquer the

will but he will suffer punishment even unto death for disobeying his will until the tyrant himself is conquered.

3. The Vow of Celibacy.—It is well nigh impossible to observe the foregoing two vows unless celibacy is also observed.

4. Control of the Palate.—Until one has overcome the pleasures of the palate it is difficult to observe the foregoing vows, more especially that of celibacy. Control of the palate is therefore treated as a separate observance. A person desirous of serving the country will believe that eating is necessary only for sustaining the body; he will, therefore, daily regulate and purify his diet and will, either gradually or immediately in accordance with his ability, leave off such food as may tend to stimulate animal passions or are otherwise unnecessary.

5. The Vow of Non-stealing.—It is not enough not to steal what is commonly considered as other men's property. It is theft if we use articles which we do not really need. Nature provides from day to day just enough and no more for our daily needs.

6. The Vow of Non-possession.—It is not enough not to possess and keep much, but it is necessary not to keep anything which may not be absolutely necessary for our bodily wants: thus if

one can do without chairs one should do so. The follower of this vow will, therefore, by constantly thinking thereover, simplify his life.

Subsidiary Observances.—Two observances are deduced from the foregoing :

1. Swadeshi.—The vow of Swadeshi requires the use of simple and simply-made clothing···and so will Swadeshi be applied to every department of life.

2. Fearlessness.—He who is acted upon by fear can hardly follow Truth or Ahimsā. Therefore endeavour to be free from the fear of kings, people, caste, families, thieves, robbers, ferocious animals, such as tigers, and even death. A truly fearless man will defend himself against others by truth-force or soul-force."

Such is the ideal of life that Gandhiji has set up in his Ashram. And here he made his home.

But he travelled throughout India to see things for himself, to succour the distressed and to prepare the mind of the people for accepting his high ideals.

7

In 1917-18 there were three occasions for applying the principle of Satyagraha which had been

First came the opposition to the '*tin-kathia*' system introduced by the indigo-planters of Champaran in Bihar. Under this system the tenant had to plant three out of every twenty *cottāhs* of his land with indigo. The people appealed to Gandhiji. He went to the place, saw the agriculturists, tried to find out what the planters had to say and proceeded to inquire into the conditions of the labourers on the indigo plantations. The planters said that he was an "outsider" and Government asked him to leave the place as his presence endangered the public peace. Gandhiji refused to quit till his inquiry was finished and expressed his readiness to suffer the penalty of disobedience. In the end the order was not enforced, and a commission was appointed to make an enquiry into the grievances of the labourers and Gandhiji himself was invited to become one of its members. He adhered so scrupulously to the truth, he was so courteous to the planters, he refrained so steadily from making the thing sensational, he was so earnest, that it all came right in the end. Satyagraha had triumphed.

Next came the representation from the villagers of Khaira that on account of a complete failure of the harvests the tenants were unable to pay the Government revenue and that they might be allowed

into the actual conditions and supported them. As Government did not comply with the request of the raiyats, Gandhiji made them take a vow not to pay the assessment. He induced them to stand boldly against what they believed to be a wrong and to assert themselves ; at the same time he restrained them from violence. At last a compromise was made. Again Satyagraha had triumphed.

The third instance was one of opposition, not against Government, but against the mill-owners of Ahmedabad. The mill-hands had grievances and they demanded certain terms from their masters. Gandhiji and two other arbitrators found that the terms were fair and when the mill-owners held out, he made the labourers take a vow not to give up their terms. After three weeks the labourers were ready to yield. But Gandhiji felt "that no body of men can make themselves into a nation or perform great tasks if they commit the impiety of breaking a sacred vow". So Gandhiji entered on a fast till the mill-owners should grant the terms of the labourers. And they came to be granted. Here, under trying circumstances and with a fickle mob, the sacredness of truth was maintained.

8

Non-co-operation was called by the poet Rabindranath Tagore a merely "negative" ideal. To this Mahatma Gandhi replied that, India had lost the power of saying 'no'; hence it was necessary. But his re-introduction of the *charkā* together with his preaching of its adoption by the rich and the poor alike was not altogether a negative ideal. The boycott of foreign cloth was not the only note in the music of the spinning wheel. Whatever the significance of the *charkā* may be in removing the wide-spread economic distress of India, its value as a link with the past, as a symbol of self-help, of simplicity of life, of the dignity of labour and of kinship with the rural poor is inestimable.

Perhaps, had any other man than Gandhiji preached the *charkā* and *khaddar* as a message of salvation for India he would not have obtained a hearing. But so earnest were the words of this *sanyāsi*, so faithfully did he act as he preached, so high, so full of compassion was the ideal that lay behind the movement, that even men and women brought up in the lap of luxury discarded their

9

The events of the years 1919 to 1922 pass before our eyes like the thrilling scenes of a drama. The Rowlatt Act, the Punjab Disorders and the Khilafat Settlement arrested the attention of one and all.

The Rowlatt Act embodied special legislation to deal with sedition and gave extraordinary powers to Government to keep people in prison without open trial. Gandhiji thought that sedition, though it existed, was not so widespread as to require special legislation. The ordinary laws were sufficient to deal with it. Nor was it right that people should be kept in prison without open trial.

The Punjab Disorders came in the train of the disturbances that followed the Rowlatt Act. At Amritsar there was a public meeting of protest. But two popular speakers were seized and deported. The angry crowds in the streets refused to disperse. The police opened fire—which had no good result. The situation got out of hand. The military authorities took charge of Amritsar. General Dyer prohibited all meetings. A meeting was held at Jallianwala Bag in defiance of the order. General Dyer marched to the meeting with his troops and

ordered them to fire on the unarmed gathering. There was a terrible massacre.

The Khilafat movement arose out of the dissatisfaction of the Muhammadans at the terms of the peace treaty with the Turks (who had sided with the Germans in the Great War). The Viceroy supported these terms. The Muhammadans claimed that the Turks should be allowed to retain European Turkey and that the control of the holy places of Islam should rest with the Sultan who was the Khalif or religious head. Gandhiji said in a letter addressed to the Viceroy that by the peace terms ministerial pledges had been violated and Muslim sentiment utterly disregarded. He thought that the Government of India should have tried to secure more just terms. "I consider", said Gandhiji, "that as a staunch Hindu wishing to live on terms of closest friendship with my Mussalman countrymen, I should be an unworthy son of India if I did not stand by them in their hour of trial."

The popular feeling against Government on these questions was strong and widespread. Gandhiji toured all over the country and wrote and spoke against the Rowlatt laws. In February 1919, he made his countrymen sign a pledge "to refuse civilly to obey" the Rowlatt laws until

"to follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person and property". Public meetings, hartals and demonstrations followed. Prohibited literature was openly read out as a form of civil disobedience. Gandhiji was arrested on his way to Delhi and was served with an order not to enter it. Then followed violence in the name of Satyagraha, such as, plundering and burning of houses, stopping of trains. And last came Gandhiji's noble and passionate words of remorse: "A rapier thrust through my body", cried he, "could hardly have pained me more.....If deeds such as these could save me from the prison-house or the scaffold, I should not like to be so saved." He postponed his visit to Delhi to seek re-arrest, temporarily restricted Satyagraha to a limited field and decided to fast for three days.

This was the first Act of the Drama.

After the Punjab disorders, the revolting details of which had come out in a Congress enquiry, the country resented that some of the guilty officers were not removed. For this and for the Khilafat wrong, non-violent non-co-operation was proclaimed including boycott of the reformed councils. In the special Congress held in Calcutta in 1920, Gandhiji carried his famous non-co-operation resolution, involving surrender of titles, boycott

of foreign cloth, boycott of schools, colleges and law-courts, boycott of the councils, and so on. In Calcutta volunteering was declared unlawful by Government. The order was disobeyed and people sought imprisonment in thousands. In Bombay where H. R. H. the Prince of Wales landed on the 17th November, 1921, on his Indian visit, hartals were organised and a terrible riot broke out. Again Gandhiji fasted and earnestly called upon all to abjure violence and peace was at last restored. On the other hand, as a protest against what he considered unnecessary and indiscriminate severity of Government action, he threatened to inaugurate Civil Disobedience in Bardoli and wrote an open letter to Lord Reading to that effect. But at that moment occurred the terrible outbreak at Chauri Chaura (February 14, 1922) where an infuriated mob attacked and burnt down the *thana* and beat to death twenty-two policemen. Gandhiji took this as a warning from God. He suspended Civil Disobedience and, indeed, all offensive action including even picketing and processions, confining himself only to *khaddar*. "Let the opponent glory in our humiliation, or so-called defeat", said he. "It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to

God. It is a million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves." Never did Mahatma Gandhi rise to a sublimer height of moral heroism.

And this was the second Act of the Drama.

Gandhiji was arrested at his Ashram in Ahmedabad on the 10th March, 1922. The next day he was placed before the Magistrate with the publisher of *Young India* on account of four articles published in that paper which were calculated to create disaffection against Government. Gandhiji, on being questioned, described himself as a farmer and weaver by profession, admitted that he was the author of the articles and was solely responsible for them. He was then committed to the Sessions and taken to the Sabarmati Jail. On the 18th March, 1922, the trial came off before Mr. C. M. Broomfield, District and Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad. "Men's minds involuntarily turned to another great trial, nineteen hundred years ago, when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate." Such was the dignity of the prisoner at the bar, so high was the regard in which he was held, so clear, fearless, utterly truthful, and pathetic was his statement before the court, that the feeling of the hearers was indescribable. "It is the most painful duty with me, but I have to discharge

that duty knowing the responsibility that rests upon my shoulders, and I wish to endorse all the blame that the learned Advocate-General has thrown upon my shoulders in connection with the Bombay, Madras and Chauri Chaura occurrences. Thinking over these deeply and sleeping over them, night after night, it is impossible for me to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura, or the mad outrages of Bombay·····I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it, and I am therefore here to submit, not to a light penalty, but to the highest penalty." He had not changed his opinion about Government. He had knowingly taken a great risk. None could be so firm and yet so gentle and sweet-tempered. "Never before was such a prisoner arraigned before a British Court of Justice. Never before were the laws of an all-powerful Government so defiantly yet with such humility challenged." The historic setting, the thin pathetic figure in loin-cloth, the thrilling tone, the noble words, so full of wisdom, so full of compassion, made it an unforgettable scene,—one of the greatest in the world's history. The judge also rose to the occasion. "Mr. Gandhi, you have made my task easy in one way by pleading guilty to the

discrimination of a just sentence is, perhaps, as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless it will be impossible to ignore that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. ...I have to deal with you in one character only. It is not my duty and I do not presume to judge or criticise you in any other character. It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law, who, by his own admission, has broken the law and committed what to an ordinary man must be a grave offence against the State." Gandhiji was sentenced to six years' simple imprisonment. "I should like to say", said the Judge, "that if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I."

And this was the third Act of the Drama.

10

Towards the end of the second year of his imprisonment, Gandhiji had an attack of appendicitis and was removed to the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, where he was successfully operated upon

by Col. Maddock. "Gandhiji endeared himself to all those who came in contact with him, on account of his unfailing courtesy and patience, his wonderful cheerfulness, thoughtfulness for others and complete forgetfulness of himself." After this he was released unconditionally. On coming out he saw that the Congress was drifting, the leaders distrusted one another and were divided, and communal differences between Hindus and Muhammadans had become very acute. Gandhiji's very presence was a great help in reconciling divergent interests. While re-affirming his own unchanged convictions he gave Deshabandhu Das and the Swarajists freedom of action regarding entry into the councils and turned the mind of the country to *khaddar* and constructive work. But to remove the tension of feeling between Hindus and Muhammadans seemed a hopeless task. Therefore, on the 4th September, 1924, Gandhiji undertook a fast of twenty-one days in Delhi. "The recent events", said he, "have proved unbearable for me. My helplessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever one is very distressed by something which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray. Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities

prayer. As penance I need not have taken the public into my confidence but I publish the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Mussalmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts."

Again he says, "I ask of no Hindu or Mussalman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussalman not to fight for an earthly gain".

So the great fast proceeded from day to day. People came to have a look at the "frail, wasted, tortured spirit bearing the sins and sorrows of the people".

When the time came for breaking the fast, a serene joy filled the heart of the holy sufferer. His friends drew near. There was a little ceremony expressing religious unity. A beautiful passage from the Quoran in praise of God was recited, a Christian hymn was sung, verses from the Upanishads, which were prayers for guidance in the path of truth, were read and the

song of the true Vaishnava was sung. "He is the true Vaishnava who knows and feels another's woes as his own. Ever ready to serve, he never boasts. He bows to every one and despises no one, keeping his thought, word and deed pure. Free from greed and deceit, passion and anger, this is the true Vaishnava."

Then Gandhiji turned to his friends and spoke, in a voice deep with emotion, of Hindu-Moslem unity. Dr. Ansari brought some orange juice and Mahatma Gandhi drank it. So the fast was broken.

The great effect of the fast was that it focussed the attention of all on the subject of Hindu-Moslem unity. A unity conference was held in Delhi on the 26th September, 1924, and there was an All Parties' Conference at Bombay in November. Much good feeling resulted and it was thought that something could be done at the Belgaum Congress (December, 1924) over which Gandhiji himself was to preside. In the Congress there were two main parties: the "Swarajists", who had been permitted to enter the councils and the "No-changers," as they were called, who had not changed their minds in regard to the boycott of the councils. Gandhiji, the peace-maker, tried his best to make them see each other's point

of view. Gandhiji himself remained true to his old ideal. Nor did he give up the idea of civil disobedience, though it still remained suspended.

11

There also arose the question of India's political goal. Gandhiji at that time said that inter-dependence on the basis of perfect equality should be the relation between England and India. He said, " it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection ". But in the Madras Congress, 1927, and in the Calcutta Congress, 1928, inspite of Gandhiji's moderating influence, opinion drifted towards the idea of " complete independence ". In 1929 Labour came into power in England and initiated a broader foreign policy. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, in consultation with the Cabinet, suggested the calling of a Round Table Conference, and on the 31st October, 1929, issued a statement declaring Dominion Status to be the goal of British policy in India.

This declaration turned the tide for a while. The leaders met and expressed their willingness to co-operate with Government in evolving a scheme

Viceroy invited them to confer with him in regard to the proposed Round Table Conference. Gandhiji was present at the discussion. But he could not agree with the Viceroy and the conference came to nothing. At the Lahore Congress which followed (December, 1929) Gandhiji moved that the Congress would not participate in the Round Table Conference, that the tentative scheme of Dominion Status drawn up by Pandit Motilal Nehru had lapsed and that "Swaraj" as conceived by the Congress should mean complete independence.

But Gandhiji at the same time made it clear that no violence should ever be used in reaching this goal. It was for the first time in history that such a purpose was sought to be achieved by such means. No one could visualise how it was to be done. Yet, so great was the faith that people had in Mahatma Gandhi's wisdom, fearlessness and miracle-working love, that all eyes were turned hopefully to the frail form in loin-cloth in his Ashram at Sabarmati.

The cleavage between the Congress and Government had now become pronounced. In the meanwhile Gandhiji wrote suggesting to His Excellency the Viceroy certain "vital needs" of reform which he invited him to take up. These

points". Failure to comply with his request was made the basis of a new campaign of Civil Disobedience. This took the form of disobeying the Salt Act, by manufacturing salt and otherwise, in a disciplined and non-violent manner. Gandhiji had seen that the masses practising Satyagraha often lapsed into violence. Therefore he decided to lead this campaign of Civil Disobedience himself with seventy-nine volunteers, all students of his Ashram. The plan was to set out, on the 12th March, 1930, with this band to the village of Dandi on the sea-coast where the law was to be broken by the manufacture of salt.

The whole of the previous night a ceaseless stream of men and women flowed to the Ashram to witness the march. The suspense was unbearable in its intensity. Early in the morning Mahatma Gandhi came out of the Ashram at the head of the procession with a gentle smile on his lips. He carried for support a long stick in his hand. Between dense rows of people waiting for hours for his *darshan* he marched forward with firm steps. Cries of *Gandhiji-ki-jai* rent the skies. The crowds strewed the road with green leaves. The halting stations were made gay with flags and festoons as if it was a national festival. At every halt Gandhiji addressed kindly

words of advice and encouragement to the crowds that drew around him. To the simple villagers he said "take the spinning wheel, love the untouchables as your brothers". He said that he had no desire to return to the Ashram till Swaraj was won. Pandit Motilal Nehru said that it was like the march of Ramchandra from Ayodhya. Professor Prafullachandra Ray said that it was like the march of Moses leading the Israelites towards the Promised Land. Wherever he paused, he was hailed as an auspicious guest. They were filled with pride to have him in their midst. He spoke everywhere of his faith and ideals. He spoke of the spirit of love in which the movement must be carried on. He said he would suck the poison out of a dying enemy that was bitten by a snake. At the same time he expressed his determination to carry the movement on to the end. "Either I shall return with what I want", said he, "or else my dead body shall float on the ocean." On the 5th April, 1930, they reached Dandi on the sea-coast where the salt law was to be broken. Gandhiji fixed the next day for the ceremonial breaking of the law. On the morning of the 6th at 6 o'clock he offered a solemn prayer, as if he was proceeding to a *yajna*, and, walking

Rising from the bath they picked up the salt lying on the sea-shore and Gandhiji was greeted smilingly by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu as the "law-breaker". There was no interference from the police.

But it was the signal for breaches of the salt law all over India. Many arrests were made. Thousands of men and women were put into jail.

Then came Gandhiji's turn. On the 4th May, 1930, he was sleeping quietly in his tent at Karadi. It was midnight. A District Magistrate and two police officers and about twenty armed policemen entered his tent. They threw their flash-light on the sleeper. Gandhiji woke up.

"Do you want me?"

"Yes. We have orders to place you under arrest."

With their permission Gandhiji went through his morning routine, "took his two bags and a *takli*", bade adieu to those who were about him and got into the motor lorry that was waiting for him. He was taken by train to a place near Bombay and thence by motor car to Yerwada jail.

12

But the work he had begun went on. It was felt by the high-minded statesman who then stood

by mutual understanding that the *impasse* could be removed. Lord Irwin took advantage of the efforts of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others to bring about an agreement and pushed forward his scheme of a Round Table Conference of British and Indian representatives in London. In the meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi was released and invited by the Viceroy to discuss matters with him. They came to an agreement as to the conditions for further negotiations. It is hoped that a new chapter is going to be opened not only in the history of India but in the history of the world.

As Sreemati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya said recently, "Mahatma Gandhi, although now sixty-two years in age, is the youth of youths. The outlook of youth is more international than national, more cosmopolitan than sectarian, and the keynote of the Youth Movement is limitless optimism. The aspiration of the youth in India is to secure the free growth of Indian manhood and womanhood to their full height unhampered by physical, economical and social limitations. Mahatmaji, rich in experience and richer in sacrifice, is the embodiment of this ideal".

CHITTARANJAN DAS

DESHABANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS

Speaking of Burke, Johnson said that it had been his good fortune to see a good deal of many of those who played great parts on the stage of the world during nearly a quarter of a century, and the not infrequent impression left on his mind was that of wonder how such very ordinary men had such greatness thrust upon them. There are, however, many cases in which a doubt of this kind does not arise. Chittaranjan Das, better known throughout India by the title spontaneously given him by his fellow-countrymen *Deshabandhu*, the 'Friend of the Country', is one of them. In the crowded and critical period of India's history since the beginning of this century, his figure stands out for its extraordinary vigour, ardent patriotism and noble sacrifice.

2

Chittaranjan was born in Calcutta on 5th November, 1870. He came of a well-known Vaidya family long settled in the village of Telirbagh.

in Vikrampur in the district of Dacca. His father, Bhubanmohan Das, was a cultured member of the Brāhma Samāj, a man of great social courage and enthusiasm,—characteristics which young Das possessed in a pre-eminent degree. Though Bhubanmohan was a solicitor by profession, he practised journalism in his leisure hours. The weekly organ *Brahma Public Opinion* became in his hands more political than religious in its tone and its proprietors forced Bhubanmohan to sever his connection with it and to start an independent weekly called *The Bengal Public Opinion.* Chittaranjan's passion for politics is another characteristic for which he was indebted to his father. The generation which had welcomed British connection with India as a blessed relief from widespread internal strife was passing away, giving place to another which emphasised its evil effects such as racial discrimination, economic exploitation, disrespect for Indian culture and contempt for the Indian character. The young intelligent patriots of the day longed for a healthy and unfettered expression of the nation's life and its development on strictly national lines. There was none who shared this feeling more than Chittaranjan. "I have", he once said, "loved this land of mine with all my heart from childhood, in manhood through all my manifold weakness,

unfitness and poverty of soul. I have striven to keep alive its image in my heart; and to-day on the threshold of age, that image has become truer and clearer than ever."

The element of feeling moved Chittaranjan in his life's activities as powerfully as did his head. Emotion and sentiment occupied a large place in the make-up of his character. His mother, Sreemati Nistarini Devi, possessed in an abundant measure a genuine love for suffering humanity and the spirit of selflessness,—marked characteristics of Indian women at their best. Chittaranjan seemed to his opponents not only as a man of decision of character, but also as greatly daring in his methods. Yet, underneath this forbidding exterior, there was a large human heart throbbing with ardent sympathy and deep affection for the afflicted and downtrodden. It was a realisation of this inner greatness of the man that often disarmed his critics. If humanity, fellow-feeling and a strain of mysticism were found combined in Chittaranjan's nature with a quick apprehensive mind, supplemented by a bold imagination and a peculiar genius for action, these were due in no small measure to the moulding influence of his mother.

3

Chittaranjan's career as a student was not very remarkable for its brilliance. He was educated at the London Missionary Society's Institution, Bhowanipur, from which he passed the Entrance examination in 1886. He then joined the Presidency College and took his Bachelor's degree in 1890. Chittaranjan was not a promising student in the generally accepted sense of the term. He was given to play and threw himself unreservedly into all the boyish activities of his school-fellows. He was much loved by his fellow-students and was always surrounded by hosts of friends. Young Das delighted in every variety of physical and mental excitement, and was actively connected with students' associations, both at school and college.

A few months after his graduation, Chittaranjan went to England for higher studies. He sat for the Indian Civil Service examination in 1892, but failed to secure a place among the successful candidates. There is a Higher Power that shapes our course to a goal that we do not always foresee. He had already joined

in 1892. More than once it has been noticed that education and training in the West have their own peculiar effects on Indian students. Paradoxical as it may seem, among other things, it makes them burn with a passion for national freedom. Chittaranjan was not an exception to this almost universal rule. While in England, he took an active part in the election of Dadabhai Naoroji to a seat in the House of Commons.

Chittaranjan returned to India in 1893, and was enrolled as an advocate at the Calcutta High Court. In 1897, he married Sreemati Basanti Devi, daughter of Mr. Barada Haldar. Like many a member of the legal profession who subsequently made his mark, his early career at the Bar was a period of anxious waiting and desperate struggle. Part of the leisure he enjoyed during this time was spent by him in occasional verse-making. Perhaps the anguish of thwarted ambition found vent in the fervour of poetry. To add to his anxiety and distress, the pecuniary troubles of the family became an almost insupportable burden. His father had stood surety for a friend for nearly forty thousand rupees. The latter failed to redeem the security, and both father and son were obliged

to have recourse to the Insolvency Court in June, 1906, in order to save themselves from a terrible financial crash. But a sudden change in the fortunes of the family unexpectedly brought to him the beautiful residence in Russa Road, where he lived like a prince for nearly a generation.

4

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 created profound unrest in the country which provoked repressive measures and led to wholesale prosecutions. It was now that Chittaranjan found his life's great opportunity. By the spirited and successful defence of Srijut Arabinda Ghosh, he won his reputation as a lawyer of remarkable ability and persuasive eloquence with singular skill in advocacy and cross-examination. Like Lord Byron one morning Chittaranjan rose and found himself famous. His reputation as a brilliant and forceful advocate being firmly established, his practice grew astonishingly in volume. In almost all the great political cases Chittaranjan appeared for the defence. Even as a civil lawyer his success was no less signal. We may quote here the appreciative testimony of a brother lawyer :

"He possessed an iron strength and never yielded an inch of ground either to the judge or to his adversary, and combined with it a driving power of argument before which even hostile judges faltered and ultimately fell. There was not the least trace of sycophancy in his pleading, nor the faintest of tremors at the knees in the presence of authority. He stood and spoke like a man to a fellow-man, but gave off all the time that unconscious magnetism which generally overpowered judge and audience. The most noteworthy feature of his advocacy was that its quality improved in proportion to the difficulty of its subject-matter. He was on his best mettle in the worst case, and I know of none who has succeeded anything like him in winning hopeless causes. One is instinctively reminded of his last Dumraon case in which he revived his client's cause from what was regarded as its last stage of collapse by the united legal talent of India. His cross-examination was a mercilessly calculated process of dissolving human testimony from the effects of which no witness survived."

His income as a lawyer rose by leaps and bounds, until it reached an average of Rs. 40,000 a month. But in 1921 he gave up his lucrative practice in response to Mahatma Gandhi's call

for non-co-operation. It is worthy of note that in 1913, Chittaranjan paid off his father's debts for which both father and son had taken the protection of the Insolvency Court seven years before, although he was not legally bound to do so.

Chittaranjan never developed any love for money. In fact, he used to pour out his wealth in a stream of bounty. When Mahatma Gandhi was collecting funds for his campaign in South Africa in the early years of this century, Chittaranjan, who was then only a struggling junior, was so impressed by the righteousness of the cause that he at once gave him a cheque for the whole of his bank balance. He used his money as a fund held in trust for the public and was noted for his unbounded charities. Many were the individuals and institutions that derived substantial assistance from his earnings. Indeed, he was often generous to a fault. There were occasions when unscrupulous persons took advantage of his largeness of heart and obtained financial assistance from him on false pretences. Such instances, however, seldom angered him, much less did they produce any change in his supremely generous disposition. He often observed that God had given him means only to enable him to help the needy and the distressed. Never was he found

to take pride in his acts of charity although these were often performed on a lavish scale.

5

Before we pass on to the political period of Chittaranjan's life, we may refer briefly to his work as a poet. Keats, in *The Fall of Hyperion : A Dream,* observes :

> **"Who alive can say,**
> **'Thou art no poet—mayst not tell thy dreams ?'**
> **Since every man whose soul is not a clod**
> **Hath visions and would speak, if he had lov'd,**
> **And been well nurtured in his mother tongue."**

All men, if they are true, have their dreams, though only the poet may utter them. Many of us are poets without the gift of song. Amplitude of experience, maturity of mind and mastery of *technique* are essential in a great poet. While Chittaranjan was not a poet of great distinction, he was much more than a mere amateur dabbler in verse. In spite of his preoccupation with law, politics and social service, the inner urge was unsatisfied and demanded expression. Poetry was not with him a mere hobby or relaxation. It came from the depths of his being as naturally as leaves come to a tree.

It was a spontaneous utterance of his inmost self. In the character of the Bengali there is a notable emotional element derived from the mediaeval Vaishnava poets. Chittaranjan had the soul of a poet. Besides, he was "well-nurtured in his mother tongue". Even his earliest production, *The Garden (Mālancha)* is much more than the usual under-graduate verse, although it deals with the conventional themes of love and religion. In it he shows a depth of feeling, a boldness of conception and a fearless candour which perhaps shocked and surprised his generation.

While Chittaranjan's early poems are the expression of a soul surcharged with perturbation and unrest, torn with doubts and distractions, his later poems breathe devotional fervour. The style attains to a greater directness and force and reflects a remarkable change in the poet's attitude towards life and its problems. The wine of youth no longer stimulates the poet's imagination. It is out of repose and from a poet at peace that the second book of verse, *The Garland (Mālā)*, came before the public. The share of suffering which he had to bear—the loss of his brothers, parents and sister—deepened and purified his spiritual nature. This chastened and subdued mood found its fullest utterance in the

later poems, *Budding-Youth (Kishore-Kishore), The Song of the Sea (Sāgar-Sangit)* and *The Heart-Reader (Antaryāmi). The Song of the Sea* reveals Chittaranjan the poet to the fullest depths. His spirit's sister was the sea, whose restless energy and profound peace at heart symbolised the real nature of the poet. The sea was not only the eternal minstrel singing to the listening earth but she was also the mother towards whom the children of the earth yearned in their deeper moments. All the later poems are marked by the spirit of acceptance and the soul-felt yearning of the Vaishnava for the Divine Presence. The world is swept aside by the strong current of this spiritual love ; the poet stands before the shrine of the Beloved celebrating in ecstatic song the joy of a blessed union.

6

Though Chittaranjan Das joined the Indian National Congress as a delegate in 1906, he did not take on himself the *rôle* of an active politician until 1917. Lord Curzon's decision to partition Bengal in 1905 as a measure of administrative convenience was regarded by the people of Bengal as

ceased to be of mere academic interest and became an all-absorbing passion. Bankimchandra Chatterjee's immortal song *Bande Mataram* became the rallying cry of the nation and boycott of foreign goods was regarded as a solemn and religious duty.

Chittaranjan's conduct of the defence in the major political cases of the time brought him into intimate touch with several persons whom he regarded as among the finest spirits of the time, imbued with fearless courage, capable of the noblest self-sacrifice and ready to undergo the greatest sufferings. As he was a man of an essentially poetic temperament, the innermost depths of his being were stirred. Chittaranjan longed to fight by the side of his countrymen and to free them from the age-long weight which oppressed their hearts so sorely. A few weeks before the famous declaration of the 20th August, 1917, Chittaranjan presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference at Bhowanipur. His presidential address set forth his political creed and might be said to mark the beginning of his brief, but brilliant, political career. He asked the people to resist the encroachments of the West on their national culture, their politics and industry, and to create a homogeneous social body through the

self-restraint. He announced also a comprehensive scheme of rural re-construction on indigenous lines, aiming thereby to revive the ancient village communities which had played such an important part in building up the history of India in its palmy days.

The Satyagraha agitation of Mahatma Gandhi drew Chittaranjan into the deeper currents of India's public life and soon raised him to the position of an unquestioned all-India leader. In 1919, he became a member of the non-official committee appointed to enquire into the administration of martial law in the Punjab. It was on this committee that Chittaranjan was brought into intimate personal contact with Mahatma Gandhi, which proved to be the most important landmark in Chittaranjan's life. It wrought so complete a change in his whole manner and mode of living that one might almost characterise it as a new birth. But this loyal devotion to Gandhiji which was life-long did not deprive him of his independence of judgment.

7

When Mahatma Gandhi declared for non-

not convinced of the wisdom of such a move. While he had full sympathy with the ideal, he had grave doubts about its practicability. At the special session of the Congress in Calcutta held in 1920, he opposed it with all the force and fervour of his nature. But this opposition did not last long. Three months later, the Nagpur Congress decided for non-co-operation, and Chittaranjan loyally obeyed the mandate of the Congress, suspended his practice at the Bar, took to the wearing of *khaddar* and lived a life of the utmost simplicity.

Though there was in Chittaranjan a deep vein of spirituality, there was in addition an untamed element in his nature, a craving, almost impossible for him to check, to taste life and its experiences in all their varied aspects, to participate in its passions and pleasures. The completeness of the transformation was indicated not simply by his giving up life-long habits of smoking and drinking. He rose all at once to such a high moral and spiritual level that it made the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier, say on the authority of Lord Lytton that "Mr. Das in India had the reputation of being a particularly upright and scrupulous politician second only to Gandhi

to the marvellous influence of the Saint of Sabarmati on every aspect of Chittaranjan's life.

Needless to say, this sudden and radical change, this renunciation of a princely income and the ascetic denial of the luxuries of life gave Chittaranjan a high place in the affections of his countrymen. When after such a signal sacrifice, he toured the province advocating the policy of non-co-operation and appealed to the public for help in the volunteer movement inaugurated by him, no wonder schools and colleges were emptied, and volunteers flocked under his banner. The volunteer movement was soon proscribed by Government. Chittaranjan was unlike those who send others to the front line and themselves remain at a safe distance from the danger zone. He rose equal to the occasion. He unhesitatingly permitted his only son, his wife and his sister to join the volunteer movement and be arrested. Chittaranjan himself was shortly afterwards arrested on 10th December, 1921, a few days before the meeting of the Congress at Ahmedabad, of which he was the president-elect. He was sentenced on 6th January, 1922, to six months' simple imprisonment. On the eve of his arrest, he exhorted the volunteers never to for-

the non-co-operators claim to hold the country. Let us realise that to the extent to which we do not succeed in so controlling the masses, to that extent non-co-operation has failed".

8

When Chittaranjan was released, he found the country in a mood of deep despondency and despair. Mahatma Gandhi was in prison and his great movement almost in a state of collapse. Many of his followers were weary of working almost single-handed in the midst of such discouraging circumstances. Chittaranjan's eager and restless spirit urged him to a more effective, though a somewhat spectacular, programme. He declared himself in favour of obstructive tactics from within the councils. At the Gaya Congress over which he presided in December, 1922, Chittaranjan made a strenuous attempt to secure the revocation of previous resolutions against entering the legislatures. Undaunted by the scanty support he got for his programme at Gaya, he zealously set to work on it immediately, by founding with the help of a handful of his supporters, the Swaraj party even before the delegates dispersed to their

strengthening of the party became his absorbing pursuit during day and his dream at night. Under his able leadership the Swaraj party soon came to be recognised by friend and foe alike as a formidable force in the country, certainly the best organised and disciplined political party in the whole of India. He also founded the daily paper, *Forward*, as the organ for popularising the movement; and both in the press and on the platform, he evoked a great deal of enthusiasm in support of his line of action. His policy received qualified support in September, 1923, at the special meeting of the Congress in Delhi.

Chittaranjan's policy steadily gained ground and influenced the general elections held in 1923, when the Swarajists were returned as the largest single party to the new council in Bengal. As the head of a constitutional government, Lord Lytton, the then Governor of Bengal, sent for Chittaranjan and requested him to form a ministry for the administration of the "transferred" subjects. After due consideration at a party meeting, Chittaranjan wrote to the Governor the following letter :

"I placed before our Party the position as explained by Your Excellency and they have just

offer. The members of the Party are pledged to do everything in their power by using the legal right granted under the Reforms Act to put an end to the system of Dyarchy. This duty they cannot discharge if they take office. The Party is aware that it is possible to offer obstruction from within by accepting office, which under the existing system is in Your Excellency's gift, and then turning it into an instrument of obstruction. The awakened consciousness of the people of this country demands a change in the present system of government and until that is done or unless there is some change in the general situation indicating a change of heart, the people of this country cannot offer willing co-operation. Under the circumstances, I regret I cannot undertake responsibility regarding the 'transferred' departments. My Party, however, wish to place on record their appreciation of the spirit of constitutionalism which actuated Your Excellency in making the offer which they feel bound not to accept."

Refusal of office and command of votes in the legislature could have only one result, namely, suspension of dyarchy. Chittaranjan so used his power and influence in the council as to expose

system of administration and thus compelled the Governor to take over the "transferred" subjects. By ending dyarchy Chittaranjan changed the political outlook of Bengal. He was undoubtedly the foremost political leader of his province, and, outside of it, his influence was second only to that of Mahatma Gandhi.

9

The new Calcutta Municipal Act which was passed in 1923 came into force in April, 1924, and at the first election nearly fifty-five out of seventy-five elected members were returned from the Swaraj party. At the first meeting of the new Corporation, Chittaranjan himself was elected Mayor of Calcutta. The inaugural address which he delivered as Mayor marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of municipal administration in Calcutta. He indicated a future programme of work which, although difficult of achievement in a comparatively short time, was still worthy of acceptance as its goal by any municipal body. Chittaranjan's anxiety to ameliorate the condition of the poor, and the vision

this direction, are summed up in the concluding passage of his inaugural address :

"It is the great ideal of the Indian people that they regard the poor as '*Daridra Nārāyana*'. To them, God comes in the shape of the poor. And the service of the poor is the service of God to the Indian mind. I shall therefore try to direct your activities to the service of the poor and you will have seen that in the programme which I have drawn up, most of the items deal with the poor,—housing of the poor, free primary education and free medical relief ; these are all blessings for the poor and if the Corporation succeeds even to a very limited extent in this work, it will have justified itself."

10

In 1925, Chittaranjan presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur. His presidential address on the occasion may be regarded as his last will and testament to the nation ; and by reason of its ripe wisdom and sweet reasonableness, it deserves a high place among the highest records of his country.

Chittaranjan was suffering from occasional

change of air. This illness proved to be his last illness, and he died at Darjeeling on Tuesday afternoon, the 16th June, 1925. His mortal remains were brought down to Calcutta the next day for cremation. The scenes that were witnessed on that day were truly unique in character. The funeral procession from Sealdah station was nearly two miles long, and about three lakhs of men and women came out into the streets and in mournful silence followed the bier to the burning ghat. The citizens of Calcutta fittingly paid their last homage and bade an affectionate farewell to one who was not only the city's first Mayor but who had infused new life and energy into the entire nation.

About six months before his death Chittaranjan drew up a trust deed willing away the whole of his real property to the nation, including his beautiful house, for female education and the relief of poor women. After his death his trustees decided to utilise the gift for imparting medical training to Indian girls and to found a hospital for Indian women. The result of this decision is the Seva-sadan, which has already attracted well-deserved praise,—a monument of Chittaranjan's generosity and his undying love for suffering humanity.

11

It is remarkable that the great political leaders of our time have all been, more or less, actuated in their activities by the spirit of religion. Tilak and Arabinda Ghosh, Gandhi and Das, are all deeply religious men. Only their religion takes the form of love of country and social service. "With me", said Chittaranjan at Mymensingh, "work for my country is not imitation of European politics. It is part and parcel of all the idealism of my life. I find in the conception of my country the expression also of divinity: the service of country and of nationality is the service of humanity; service of humanity is the worship of God."

Chittaranjan's nationalism is the outcome of a love brought from India's hoary past. It rests on a deep appreciation of the value and vitality of Indian culture, and, what is more, on a conviction of its power to help to build a mansion for the human spirit to dwell in during its earthly sojourn. "We are the inheritors of a great culture; we are the stewards of a spirituality which must be presented to the world. India will impress her ideals, her civilization, and her

contribute her proper share to world-thought and the progress of mankind, until she is free. With all its efficiency a foreign government can never be a source of inspiration. It cannot touch the soul of the people to finer issues. It can neither supply the incentive, nor stimulate self-expression." While keenly alive to the value of modern science and modern thought, Chittaranjan insisted on their being accepted only on the basis of our ancestral culture. Though Chittaranjan was aggressively national, he was by no means anti-international. Lord Ronaldshay, now the Marquis of Zetland, is not right when he says that Chittaranjan's "dominating note was hatred and dread of everything that savoured of the West". We have already noticed with what great difficulty he was persuaded to accept the non-co-operation movement. Even while he was behind the prison bars in 1922, he gave his consent to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's proposal for a Round Table Conference with the British Government, subject to Mahatma Gandhi's approval. As the founder of the Swaraj party, he lifted the ban against the legislative councils. His presidential address at the Faridpur Conference, delivered only a fortnight before his death, had for its key-note co-operation

between Dominion Status and Independence in these words: "Indeed, the Empire idea gives us a vivid sense of many advantages. It is essentially an alliance by consent of those who form part of the Empire for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation. Before the war, a separatist tendency was growing up in several parts of the Empire, but after the war, it is generally believed that it is only as a great confederation that the Empire or its component parts can live in isolation, and the Dominion Status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realise itself, develop itself and fulfil itself; it therefore, expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.

"To me the idea is specially attractive, because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world-peace, in the ultimate federation of the world. I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of different races, each with its distinct life, its distinct civilization, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led by wise statesmen at the helm, is bound to make lasting contributions to the great problem—

greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race. I think it is for the good of India, for the good of the world, that India should strive for freedom within the Commonwealth, and so serve the cause of humanity.

"I seek a federation of the states of India ; each free to follow, as it must follow, the culture and the tradition of its own people ; each bound to each in the common service of all ; a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations, whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among the peoples of the earth."

Chittaranjan has taught us to foster the spirit of nationality, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition to them, but as a part of a great scheme.

12

Chittaranjan was not in favour of terrorism as a method of political agitation. In a manifesto issued in March, 1925, Chittaranjan said :

"I have made it clear and I do it once again that I am opposed on principle to political assassination and violence in any shape or form. It

is absolutely abhorrent to me and to my party. I consider it an obstacle to our political progress. It is also opposed to our religious teaching. As a question of practical politics I feel certain that if violence is to take root in the political life of our country, it will be the end of our dream of *Swaraj* for all time to come. I am, therefore, eager that this evil should not grow any further, and that this method should cease altogether as a political weapon in my country."

But he knew from personal knowledge that the revolutionaries were not the dregs of society but were usually recruited from the educated middle class. Their unrestrained youthful ardour and their inability to calculate consequences made them impatient for a speedy realisation of their cherished dream. They accordingly took to terrorism as a short cut to their objective, forgetting that all history is opposed to the adoption of such an unwise course of action for the attainment of so great an object. A shrewd judge of men and things, Chittaranjan fully realised what volcanic energy was surging in the hearts of our young men, a force which must either expand or explode. He knew well that they might be tempted to commit excesses, unless some one in whom they had

boundless faith, took them in hand and found a healthy outlet for their irrepressible enthusiasm, already at white heat. Calmly and dispassionately he set to work to give that energy and enthusiasm a healthy and fruitful direction. He taught them, as no other man in those days possibly could, that a life of sacrifice involving daily toil and suffering for the sake of the poor, ignorant millions of India, demands great courage, stronger character and steadier faith than a few years of plotting and violence, ending in murder and death.

13

Chittaranjan had a clear vision of the weaknesses of our social system and the disabilities under which the masses labour. He insisted on a change of the whole scheme of life, a remodelling of our social economy from the villages upwards. In his Gaya address he said : "To me the organisation of village life and the practical autonomy of local centres are more important than either provincial autonomy or central responsibility; and if the choice lay between the two I would unhesitatingly accept the autonomy of the local centres. If to-day the British Parliament

grants provincial autonomy in the provinces with responsibility in the Central Government, I for one shall protest against it, because that will inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the middle class. ... How will it profit India, if in place of the white bureaucracy which now rules over her, there is substituted an Indian bureaucracy of the middle class? .....My ideal of *Swaraj* will never be satisfied unless the people co-operate in its attainment." Though in 1917 Chittaranjan pleaded against the wave of industrialism, in 1923 he found himself in great sympathy with it. He presided over the All-India Trade Union Congress in December, 1923, at Lahore, and at its next meeting at Calcutta in April, 1924. His scheme of *Swaraj* gave an important place to the workers in the industrial centres.

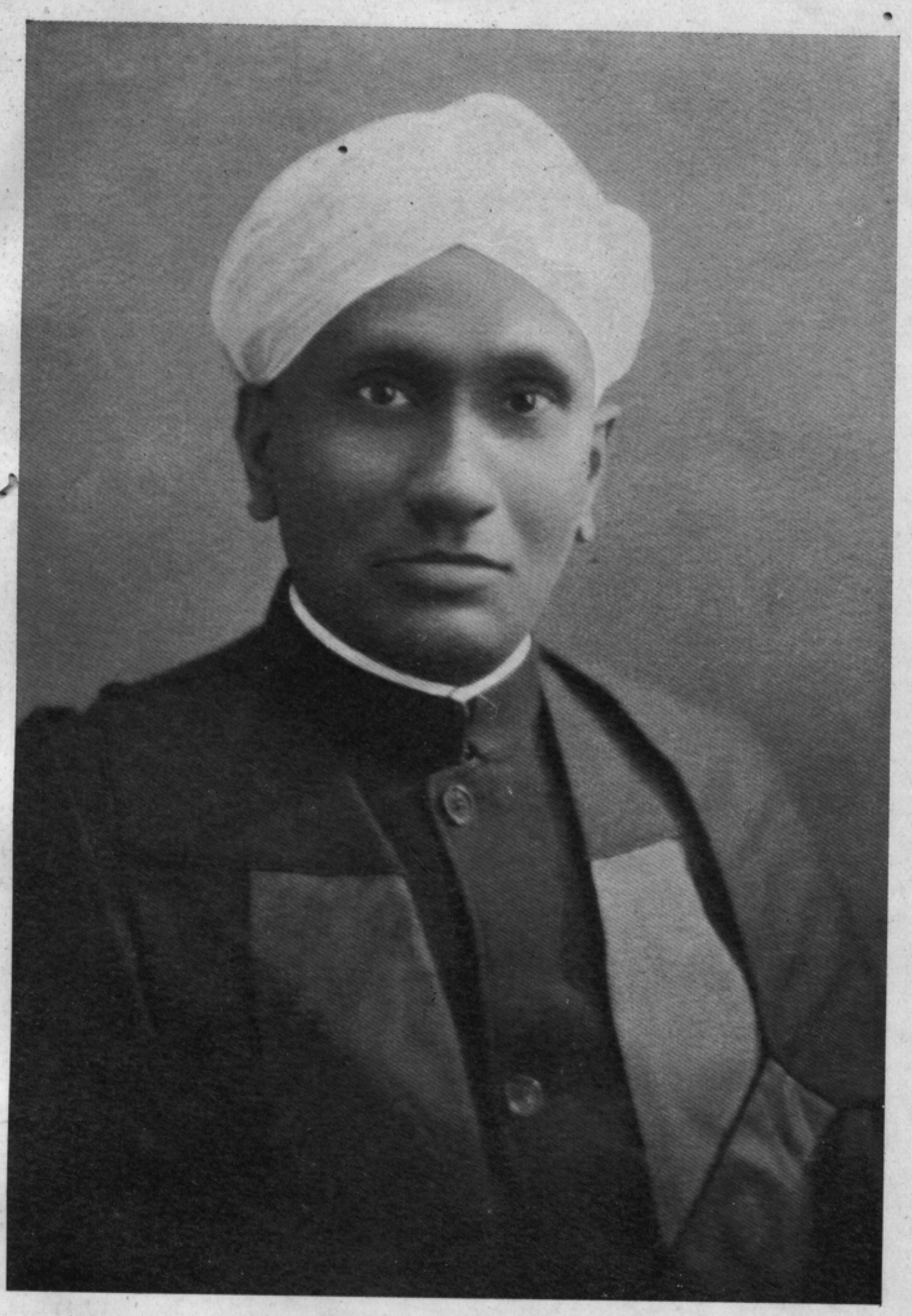
14

"The best gift", says Rabindranath Tagore, "that Chittaranjan has left for his countrymen is not any particular political or social programme but the creative force of a great aspiration that

his life represented.". His life is a noble example of the great truth so splendidly uttered by the poet : "The path of duty is the way to glory." It is a supreme example of what is called a "dedicated life". His great courage in act and utterance, his marvellous skill in organisation, his resourcefulness, his driving power, and, above all, his sacrifice of wealth, health, and life itself at the altar of his country, will ever remain an inspiration to his countrymen. His whole life was an eloquent example of living obedience to the supreme Biblical exhortation : " Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might".

PROFESSOR SIR VENKATA RAMAN

The Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm chose Sir C. V. Raman as the recipient of the Nobel Prize for physics in 1930 for his investigations on the scattering of light and his discovery of the new property of radiation now known as the Raman Effect. The award is a recognition of the enduring value of Professor Raman's contributions to science. It places him in the company of such world-wide celebrities as Einstein, Rutherford and Marconi, and establishes his claim to be considered as one of the leading physicists of the modern world and a true benefactor of the human race. His brilliant achievements have helped to revive the ancient glory of India in the field of natural science and to raise the stature of his country in the intellectual world of the present day. Born in humble circumstances, without the advantages of wealth or position, his education gave him no opportunity of deriving inspiration from scientists of eminence. After the completion of his university career, the ten following years of his life were spent at the desk in Government offices. That, in these circumstances, he has succeeded in reaching the acknowledged eminence



Yours sincerely
C. V. Raman

of a Nobel Laureate at the early age of 42 is due to his innate ability and extraordinary force of character. His enthusiasm for science, his sacrifice of pecuniary advantage in the cause of knowledge and his unselfish devotion to the work of training the younger generation in scientific research, will be a source of noble inspiration to future generations of teachers and scholars. The story of his life, therefore, cannot fail to be of absorbing interest.

2

The fertile delta of the Cauvery, which is thickly dotted with towns, villages and temples has long been the cradle of South Indian culture. Raman was born on the 7th November, 1888, near the town of Trichinopoly, which is well-known in history and is picturesquely situated at the head of the Cauvery delta. The ancestors from whom Raman claims descent were a family of Brahmin landholders living at Mangudi in the neighbouring district of Tanjore. The impoverishment of ancestral lands due to their excessive subdivision among the various branches of the family, naturally drove many a scion springing from the original stock to seek the

found hardly sufficient to furnish means of their livelihood. Raman's father was one of those who had thus left the ancestral village. Mr. R. Chandrasekhara Iyer, then a young under-graduate pupil-teacher at a high school at Trichinopoly, and Parvatiammal, the daughter of a local pleader, were the parents of Venkata Raman. The income of the family hardly sufficed for a bare living, and it was fortunate that Chandrasekhara Iyer succeeded not long afterwards in taking his Bachelor's degree in physics and in obtaining promotion to a lectureship at a college at Trichinopoly. The story goes that one of the first uses made by Chandrasekhara Iyer of his increased salary was to buy a violin on which he learned to play. In time he became an accomplished violinist, and his love of the instrument left an impress on the mind of the young Venkata Raman which was to bear fruit in later years.

Chandrasekhara Iyer had both physical vigour and ambition, and was fully prepared to take risks in order to find fuller scope for his talents. An opportunity for improving his position offered itself when a personal friend, Mr. P. T. Sreenivasa Iyengar, was chosen as Principal of the Hindu College at Vizagapatam and invited him to accept the lectureship in physics at the same institution. The offer was accepted without hesitation

It is not easy to realise what an adventure the move to the Telugu country must have seemed at the time. It took some twenty days of continuous travelling by train, boat and country-cart for the young teacher with his wife and children to reach his destination. Venkata Raman was less than four years old at the time.

3

The sea-beach between Waltair and Vizagapatam is now a fashionable resort, but in 1892 it was a lonely spot in which the dweller could enjoy, amidst beautiful scenery, a solitude almost undisturbed except by a few fisher-folk and their boats. Charming sunrises and sunsets, a vista of blue sea, rocky headlands and foaming breakers by day and a picture of sandy hills and stately palms dimly seen by night, make the coast at Waltair one of the loveliest spots in India. To live amidst such surroundings must have been an education in itself. The two teachers from the Tamil country shared for some years one of the few houses then to be had on the sea-shore. Chandrasekhara Iyer was an enthusiastic teacher and loved his work. Being anxious to improve his knowledge, he set to work to study higher

mathematics, and, later, when the opportunity came, exchanged his lectureship in physics for one in mathematics. The atmosphere of the house on the sea-beach was one of culture and scholarship, varied occasionally by musical recreation.

Living in such a favourable environment with a discerning parent encouraging his efforts, young Venkata Raman naturally made rapid progress in his studies. A copy of Paul Bert's *First Year of Science*, found in his father's library, proved an arresting study, and implanted in the young boy's mind an enduring love for the study of physical phenomena. From this book to Ganot's *Physics* was an easy step. About this time, however, a dacoity at a neighbouring house on the sea-shore resulted in Chandrasekhara Iyer's moving into the unhealthy town of Vizagapatam with rather unfortunate results for his son. The growing young lad became sickly and physically very weak, and on one occasion, indeed, he fell so seriously ill that his life was almost despaired of. The story is told that during this illness, Venkata Raman insisted on the phenomenon of the discharge of a Leyden jar being shown to him. The electrical apparatus was brought from the college laboratory to the boy's bedside, and the successful demonstration of the experiment made

4

It was characteristic of Raman that his enthusiasm for physics and the English language was coupled with an indifference to other subjects of study. He preferred carpentry to the study of Sanskrit grammar and was inconsolable when his father was unable, owing to lack of money, to purchase for him the materials with which to build an electric dynamo at home. Such enthusiasm for un-academic pursuits and a distaste for the subjects usually considered necessary for general culture, proved a source of serious anxiety to his teachers. His knowledge of Sanskrit, in particular, was so bad that Raman had to be sent away to Madras for the whole of a summer vacation to study the *Balaramayana* with a cousin of his who had the traditional love of his cultured caste for the sacred language of ancient India. The strain of uncongenial studies and the physical weakness due to constant ill-health, caused the young lad a severe break-down at the time of the Matriculation examination for which he sat when he was barely twelve years of age. Nevertheless, he passed the portals of the university and continued his studies at Vizagapatam for a further

period of two years. He then passed the First Examination in Arts, obtaining a first class and securing a high position among the successful candidates of his year.

5

The scene now shifts to Presidency College, Madras, where Raman proceeded to study for the Bachelor's degree. Here he at once attracted the attention of his teachers. The professors of physics and chemistry lost little time in discovering that Raman was a student of exceptional calibre who stood in need of encouragement rather than instruction, and so they allowed him special privileges. Their kindness was much appreciated by the young student who devoted his time chiefly to the study of dynamics, working out hundreds of problems in this subject, though it had only a minor place in the examination syllabus. At the university examination, he was the only first class man of the year in physics, thus winning the Arni Gold Medal.

6

The next two years were the most fruitful period of his collegiate life. Freed for the first time from the incubus of literary studies, Raman had leisure to read the great masterpieces of science, and the love of music acquired from his father led him naturally to the study of acoustics. There were happily no lectures to attend and, except for the courses of practical work in the physical and chemical laboratories, no compulsory acquirement of undesired knowledge. Realising the impossibility of being a physicist without mathematical equipment, Venkata Raman set himself to the task of becoming a self-taught mathematician, and in the process acquired those qualities which are more important than knowledge, namely, self-reliance and courage. Soon he felt the urge towards research and suggested to his professor that he might be excused from compulsory practical work and allowed instead to try new experiments. But this was thought too revolutionary a proposal and vetoed. Nevertheless, the opportunity for research came in a remarkable way. While engaged in the usual course of experiments with the spectrometer

he noticed an interesting optical phenomenon produced when a beam of light suffers very oblique reflection at a plane polished surface. As no mention of the phenomenon could be found in any of the standard treatises or reference books, Raman at once proceeded to work out a theoretical explanation of it and to test the same by careful measurements. The tests proved completely satisfactory, and a paper describing the results of the investigation was written and handed over to the professor with the request that it might be forwarded to the *Philosophical Magazine* of London for publication. The work impressed the professor, who, however, hesitated to take action. Tired by several months' delay, Raman finally decided to take the matter into his own hands and forwarded the paper directly to the editors of the magazine by whom it was promptly accepted and published.

Another opportunity for research arose when a fellow-student in the laboratory, while performing experiments with vibrating strings, noticed some puzzling phenomena and drew the attention of Raman to them. The problem which presented itself was immediately and successfully solved, and a new experiment was devised illustrating the

7

Venkata Raman had clearly shown his originality and capacity for independent work and he was obviously marked out for a brilliant career in the domain of higher scientific research. This fact was fully realised by the authorities of the college. But in those days the official view was that no Indian, however talented, could be accepted for any of the highest educational or scientific positions. It was also believed that no one could be a real physicist who had not taken a degree from a European university. To young Raman, the idea of going abroad was repugnant, and he felt rather relieved when a British medical officer, to whom he was sent, reported him as unfit to stand the rigours of the English climate. On the other hand, Raman believed that it would be useless to accept a subordinate position in the educational service. If the example of his father had taught him to love knowledge for its own sake, it had also taught him that the life of a teacher in India was generally a ceaseless grind of dull routine-work, unrelieved by the joy of discovering new knowledge by research which formed its highest reward. Being the second of

eight children in a family burdened with ancestral debts, he had learnt to appreciate the virtues of simple living but had also understood that the deprivations enforced by poverty were not all agreeable. He therefore readily acquiesced when it was suggested that he should appear at the all-India competition to be held at Calcutta in February, 1907, for recruitment to the Finance Department under the Government of India. He had come to know that the service was an attractive one, in which Indians had the same salary and position as Europeans and, though liable to transfer to the chief cities of India, the officers were not overworked or badly treated.

Raman was now faced with a serious situation. He was determined to continue the research work he had in hand and to push forward his studies in higher mathematics. He decided also to sit for the M. A. examination which included an extended course of studies and practical work both in physics and chemistry. On the other hand, he was equally determined to appear at the competitive examination which involved the study of a variety of subjects including English literature and history, Indian history, political economy and deductive and inductive logic. No assistance of any kind was available in the lecture-

room to aid him in his studies. The time available was also very limited, as the two examinations were to follow within a few weeks of each other. The task was one which might easily have appalled any one, specially one who was hardly eighteen years of age. Nevertheless, Venkata Raman went to work with undaunted courage and accomplished everything he undertook. His confidence in his own powers was illustrated by an incident at the time of the M. A. examination. The questions set by the examiners in practical work included some experiments not previously performed by the candidates, and the latter were offered the privilege of making a choice amongst them. Venkata Raman declined the privilege and declared himself ready for any test the examiners might decide upon. When the results were announced in due course, he was found to have secured the highest record of marks ever obtained at the examination. This success was followed by his securing the highest position at the competitive examination, and by his appointment as an enrolled officer of the Finance Department.

8

With an assured career now before him, Raman felt justified in choosing a partner for life and was married in May, 1907, to Lokasunderammal, a cultured young lady who was the daughter of a retired Brahmin official living in Madura. Accompanied by his wife, Raman left for Calcutta to join his appointment. He was in Calcutta from June 1907 to January 1909, first as Assistant Accountant General, Bengal, and later as Coin Officer at the Currency Office. From January 1909 to March 1910, he was at Rangoon as Currency Officer, Burma. After a short period of leave spent at Madras, he was transferred to the Central Provinces as the head of the Postal Accounts Office at Nagpur and returned to Calcutta in November, 1911, as Assistant Accountant General, Posts and Telegraphs. He was Deputy Accountant General, Telegraphs, in July 1917, when he left Government service at the invitation of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee to accept the Sir Taraknath Palit Professorship of Physics at the Calcutta University.

One might be tempted to believe that there could be few occupations so dull as that of an officer concerned with public accounts and audit.

In reality, however, Raman did not find his duties in the department altogether irksome and he brought to bear upon them the characteristic energy and enthusiasm he displayed in anything he undertook. Many stories are told of his doings in the department, some of which were not pleasant for every one concerned. For instance, at the Currency Office in Calcutta, his observant eye detected a fraudulent attempt to evade the law requiring destruction of counterfeit coin, with the result that three highly-paid employees of the office lost their jobs. As an audit officer, he was laboriously thorough, and the officers whose claims to excess pay or allowances were disallowed by him did not always appreciate his keenness for work. On the other hand, Raman was equally prepared to take almost infinite pains in order to be able to meet a claim which he felt to be just. On one occasion, a Burman presented at the Rangoon Currency Office a packet of notes, each for one-hundred rupees, which had been burnt black in a fire and could not be identified. After weeks of laborious personal research, Raman succeeded in reading the printed numbers on the notes and thus helped the claimant to obtain payment of their value.

The department realised that in Raman it had a highly gifted officer and appreciated his services.

At least twice during the period of his service, he received the special thanks of the Finance Member for the good work done by him for the department. He was also asked to accept an appointment in the Secretariat at Delhi ; but this invitation he declined.

9

In the light of later events, one naturally regrets the circumstances which led Raman to devote ten years of the most active period of his life to official routine-work, so little worthy of his gifts. The loss to the cause of science in India resulting therefrom is probably incalculable. But that his choice of a career did not result in his being altogether lost to science is something to be thankful for. From the first, Raman was determined not to allow his scientific interests to be neglected. The investigations successfully undertaken by him as a student at Madras had opened to his vision a limitless vista of research work in the fields of optics and acoustics which he was anxious to follow up. A fortunate circumstance gave him an opportunity for giving effect to this desire. Soon after his arrival in Calcutta in June 1907, he became aware of the

existence of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science founded by the late Dr. Mahendralal Sircar. He lost no time in getting into touch with the authorities of the Association, and received a warm welcome from them. The Association had a laboratory in which it was possible for him to carry on research. The difficulty, however, was that Raman's official duties kept him engaged every day during the usual hours of the Association. Babu Amritalal Sircar, the son and successor of Dr. Mahendralal Sircar, was then its Honorary Secretary. He was impressed by the enthusiasm of Raman and his record of published research. In order to meet the situation, he agreed to keep the laboratory specially open early in the morning and late in the evening when alone it was possible for Raman to conduct experimental work, and also to provide him with such other facilities as were needed.

Raman's activities at the Association soon bore fruit; and a steady stream of research publications began to appear in the scientific periodicals as contributions from its laboratory. The authorities of the Association were delighted and warmly encouraged Raman in his work. It seemed at first that these activities would suffer

an abrupt termination when Raman was transferred to Burma early in 1909 to take charge of the Currency Office at Rangoon. But, once again, his enthusiasm rose superior to his circumstances. A room in the upper flat of the Currency Office, which was his official residence, became a private laboratory, the pantry was converted into a photographic room, and some make-shift apparatus was got together. With these resources, the investigations were continued. From Rangoon, and later in the same way from Nagpur, numerous original contributions were forwarded and published in the columns of *Nature*, the *Philosophical Magazine*, the *Physical Review* and the *Journal of the Indian Mathematical Society*.

10

Raman's return to Calcutta in the winter of 1911 led to a rapid increase in his output of original work, which during this period dealt mostly with the study of vibrations and the theory of musical instruments. He arranged for the publication of a new scientific journal, called the *Bulletin of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of*

Indian Association and firmly established the reputation of Raman as an original investigator. His scientific attainments soon attracted the notice of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee who was on the look-out for a physicist to fill the chair newly endowed by Sir Taraknath Palit. Sir Asutosh saw in Raman a suitable incumbent who could fulfil his cherished ambition of creating a school of research in physics in Calcutta. A difficulty lay in the fact that Raman was already a member of one of the most highly-paid services in India, and the funds of the university would not permit of his being offered a salary approaching anything like what the officers in that service could expect to reach. But Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was a good judge of men and rightly believed that Raman would, in his enthusiasm for science, cheerfully face the financial sacrifice involved in the acceptance of the professorship. In the famous speech he made when laying the foundation stone of the University College of Science, on the 27th March, 1914, Sir Asutosh thus observed :

"For the chair of Physics created by Sir Taraknath Palit, we have been fortunate enough to secure the services of Mr. Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman, who has greatly distinguished

himself and acquired a European fame by his brilliant researches in the domain of Physical Science, assiduously carried on, under the most adverse circumstances, amidst the distractions of pressing official duties. I rejoice to think that many of these valuable researches have been carried on in the laboratory of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, founded by our late illustrious colleague, Dr. Mahendralal Sircar, who devoted a life-time to the foundation of an institution for the cultivation and advancement of science in this country. I should fail in my duty if I were to restrain myself in my expression of the genuine admiration I feel for the courage and spirit of self-sacrifice with which Mr. Raman has decided to exchange a lucrative official appointment with attractive prospects, for a University Professorship, which, I regret to say, does not carry even liberal emoluments. This one instance encourages me to entertain the hope that there will be no lack of seekers after truth in the Temple of Knowledge, which it is our ambition to erect."

Various legal difficulties meanwhile arose in connection with the endowment of Sir Taraknath Palit and it was not till July 1917, that these obstacles were smoothed away and Raman took the

plunge, quitting the service of Government. Joining the University College of Science, he threw himself heart and soul into the work of establishing for the Calcutta University a reputation as a centre of research in physics. Several young men who had been selected by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee were already on the physics staff of the university. Others again offered themselves eagerly to work as students under the new professor. Raman concentrated on the task of inspiring and guiding these colleagues and students in the work of research. His efforts soon proved successful, and the work of the new school began to attract attention abroad. For the first time papers by young Indian physicists became a feature, month after month, in such periodicals as the *Philosophical Magazine*, the *Physical Review*, and the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*. Several of the physicists, working under Raman, succeeded in winning academic recognition and obtained their doctorates in science. But Raman himself published very little during these years. To him the success of the department meant more than the enhancement of his personal reputation.

11

Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was anxious that Raman should make at least a brief visit to Europe in order that the great leaders of physics abroad might become acquainted with him and appreciate the work done by the Calcutta University. The opportunity arose when the Congress of Universities of the British Empire was held in Great Britain in the summer of 1921. Sir Asutosh nominated him as a delegate of the university to the congress and by persuasion overcame the disinclination which Raman had always felt for travel outside India. The visit was a very brief one. But Raman's reputation as a physicist had preceded him, and secured for him a warm welcome from British men of science, amongst whom he made many friends. His lecture at the Physical Society of London on his optical and acoustical researches was received with great enthusiasm. The journey had other momentous consequences. During the voyage the attention of Raman was drawn to the much-debated problem of the origin of the blue colour of the deep sea. Already in 1919, the optical researches carried on under his

in the problem of the scattering of light. The observations made during the voyage suggested that the colour of the sea was due to the scattering of light by the molecules of water. Immediately on his return from Europe in September, 1921, Raman undertook researches in his laboratory with a view to test this theory. The experiments were completely successful and gave an entirely new direction to the scientific activities of the Calcutta school of physics.

Early in 1922, the Calcutta University published an essay by Raman on the molecular diffraction of light in which the whole subject of the scattering of light in gases, liquids and solids was reviewed, and its relation to such phenomena as the blue colour of the sky, the blue colour of the sea, and the colour of ice in glaciers was elaborately discussed. During the years 1922 and 1923, the publication of this essay was followed by a long succession of experimental and theoretical researches, thus opening up a new and most fruitful field of knowledge. Many of these papers were written by Raman himself and thereby established his reputation as an investigator of no ordinary merit.

12

Raman freely undertook many other duties besides his research work. He lectured to the post-graduate classes in the university and endeavoured to stimulate the interest of the younger generation in advanced physics. On the death of Babu Amritalal Sircar, he assumed the office of Honorary Secretary of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. He played a leading part in the organisation of the Indian Science Congress, and held office as its General Secretary for several years, and was twice elected as the President of its Physics Section. He also visited and lectured at various places in India, endeavouring everywhere to promote the spirit of enquiry and advance the cause of research.

The fame of Raman's contributions to science and the influence exercised by him towards the promotion of research spread far and wide, and honours commenced to pour on him. The various universities in India vied with one another in seeking his services as a lecturer on modern developments in physics. The most significant of

in January, 1922, of the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, by the Calcutta University. The next great recognition was his election to the signal honour of the Fellowship of the Royal Society of London in February, 1924. In the summer of the same year, he was invited by the British Association for the Advancement of Science to proceed to Canada and inaugurate a discussion on the scattering of light at its Toronto meeting. Raman accordingly visited America in June, 1924, and travelled across Canada and back with the British Association. He also attended the International Congress of Mathematicians at Toronto and proceeded to Philadelphia in the United States to represent the Calcutta University at the centenary of the Franklin Institute. Here he received an invitation from Prof. R. A. Millikan to cross the American Continent once again and accept a visiting Professorship of the California Institute of Technology. During the autumn and winter of 1924, Raman resided at Pasadena and lectured regularly to a group of American teachers and advanced students at the Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics. He returned to India in February, 1925, visiting *en route*, several countries in Northern Europe and making the acquaintance of many

After a few months' sojourn in Calcutta, he was again called out of India to represent the Calcutta University at the bi-centenary of the Russian Academy of Science in September, 1925, at Leningrad and Moscow, where he was received with great honour. From Moscow he travelled across Russia and over the Caucasus to the ancient town of Tiflis in Georgia, and returned *via* Baku and the shores of the Caspian Sea to Leningrad and thence through the Baltic region to Germany, visiting Switzerland and the Italian lakes *en route*. He came back to India towards the end of the year.

13

The prestige conferred by his election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society enabled Raman to obtain funds for improving the laboratory of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. Students eager to carry on research work under his guidance flocked to Calcutta from far and near. The laboratory of the Association became an active centre of research. The papers produced by its workers became numerous, and the question of finding prompt publication for them required

discontinued in 1918, and its place was taken by the *Proceedings of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science* which was issued at irregular intervals. Raman now felt that the time was ripe for giving this publication a new status. Early in 1926, it was given the title of the *Indian Journal of Physics*, its form being improved and arrangements made for its appearance with greater regularity. The journal was intended to be the normal venue for publication of all the papers contributed by the members of the institute ; it was hoped that in time it would become the national organ of Indian physicists and acquire a prestige and influence comparable to that of any European or American periodical.

About this time Raman was invited to contribute an article on the theory of musical instruments to the great *Handbuch der Physik* published by the German Physical Society. The article was written and published in the eighth volume of the *Handbuch,* and was the only contribution from any man of science outside Central Europe to this great encyclopaedia of modern physics. The article contained an account of Raman's own investigations on the physics of musical instruments, including those that were specially of Indian origin. His work had proved that the Indian

instruments, the *veenā* and the *mridangam*, showed great ingenuity in acoustical design and had even at the present time a distinct scientific interest.

His numerous interests did not prevent Raman from returning again and again to the subject of the scattering of light which he felt had great potentialities both for physics and chemistry. Along with Krishnan, his collaborator, he wrote numerous papers on this subject and its relation to such questions as the nature of liquids and their electrical, optical and magnetic properties. Besides physicists, there were also amongst the students in his laboratory some chemists who worked on the subjects lying on the border line between the two sciences. The programme of work in the laboratory included a detailed study of the scattering of light in many chemical compounds in order to elucidate the influence of chemical constitution on the phenomenon. As early as 1923, it had been noticed that when blue light was made to fall on a liquid like water, the scattered light did not consist of blue light alone but also contained a small admixture of green

light. The phenomenon had been under more or less active investigation since that time. In February, 1928, a thorough study of it was undertaken. It was found that if light of strictly one colour was sent into a liquid, the scattered light consisted, in addition to light of that colour, light of other pure colours also—the purity of the modified light increasing with the purity of the original light. The new light was, so to say, manufactured out of the original light by the substance. That the phenomenon was not a property of a particular substance, but was universal, was rapidly established. The connection of the change of colour with the chemical character of the substance was also established. The announcement of the discovery aroused great excitement in the scientific world. Workers in many laboratories took up the subject with enthusiasm. It was recognised that the discovery was of a fundamental character; it gave a new insight into the nature of radiation and provided a new and powerful tool for investigating the forces binding different atoms in a molecule, thus affording a basis for the further study of the physical and chemical properties of matter. The new effect came to be known, in honour of the discoverer, as the "Raman Effect."

Further honours began to pour on Raman. He was elected General President of the Indian Science Congress, held in Madras in January, 1929. The Italian Society of Rome awarded to him the Matteucci Gold Medal. He was made a Knight in June, 1929. The scientific activity following the discovery of the Raman Effect had created such a flood of iiterature that it was considered desirable to take a general survey of the whole subject; and the Faraday Society of England accordingly arranged a meeting at Bristol to which prominent workers on this and related subjects from all parts of the world were invited. Raman was specially invited to inaugurate the discussion. He set sail for Europe in August 1929, accompanied by Lady Raman. On his way they passed through Italy and the Riviera. The discussion at the meeting of the Faraday Society focussed the attention of scientific workers on the significance and importance of the Effect and some of the outstanding problems that required immediate attention. The discussion was reported in an important memoir published by the Society. After the meeting, Raman undertook a short tour in Britain and in the Continent lecturing by invitation at various universities, namely,

Brussels and Zurich. The Physical Societies of Belgium and France arranged receptions in his honour, the University of Freiburg conferred on him the honorary degree of Ph. D. and the Swiss Physical Society at Zurich created him an Honorary Fellow. The Royal Society of London awarded the Hughes Medal to him in 1930 for distinguished work in optics.

15

Alfred Nobel, an imaginative and inventive Swedish chemical engineer, earned a fortune by his numerous successful applications of nitro-glycerine and nitro-cellulose to the manufacture of explosives. By his will he left property worth about £1,400,000 to constitute a fund, the interest accruing from which was to be awarded annually as prizes to those persons who had contributed most materially to the benefit of mankind—by discoveries in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, or by the production of literature of an idealistic tendency, or by efforts towards international peace. The award of the Nobel Prize is recognised throughout the world as the

aspire. To those who could judge, it had been clear from the beginning that it was only a question of time when the discoverer of the Raman Effect would receive the award; and it did not therefore come as a surprise when it was announced that the Nobel Prize in Physics for 1930 was awarded to Professor Raman. The announcement was hailed with universal satisfaction and pleasure throughout India.

The prize-giving ceremony took place at Stockholm on the 10th December, 1930. Raman sailed for Europe on the 18th November accompanied by Lady Raman and arrived at Stockholm on the 9th December. After the award of the prize, diploma and medal by the King of Sweden on the 10th, Raman visited and lectured at various academic centres in Sweden, Britain, Denmark and Germany. The University of Glasgow conferred on him the honorary degree of LL. D. and the Philosophical Society of Glasgow made him an Honorary Fellow. Raman returned to India in February, 1931.

Various researches are being actively pursued in his laboratory. The Raman Effect has proved to be a veritable gold mine from which workers in all parts of the world are garnering fresh riches. But

probe further into the mysteries of nature. He is still in the prime of life and may well be expected to produce work which will leave a lasting mark on the scientific and industrial progress of his motherland.
