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MADRAS

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Rare.

How rare it is to find a soul
Perfected in self-control,
Whose words are fruit of gentle thought
And ne'er with spite or venom fraught,
Whose deeds are such as can be given
The benediction of high heaven.

How rare it is to find a man
Who day by day does all he can,
At home, in business, in the streets,
To cheer and succour folk he meets,
And who would rather suffer loss
Than fail to share another's cross.

How rare it is to hear a word
Which cheers one like a singing bird,
To feel the clasp of hands that we
Are sure from selfish ends are free ;
And yet though rare as winter flowers,
Thank God these virtues can be ours.

—*A. B. COOPER*
in Tit-Bits.

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The Madras University & The S. S. L. C. Curriculum.

(By Principal A. V. K. Krishna Menon.)

THE main difficulty in framing a suitable High school curriculum is, as matters stand at present, that the curriculum has to be acceptable to the Madras and Andhra Universities and has also to meet the needs of a course of useful secondary education. In fact, the revised S. S. L. C. Scheme of 1929 (revising the scheme of 1910) was the outcome of a compromise between the Government and the Madras University. A short history of the S. S. L. C. Scheme will make this clear and will not, therefore, be out of place here.

The old system of secondary education with the Matriculation Examination at the end of the school course was found very unsatisfactory and in 1908, a committee was appointed by the Government to improve the system and bring about a much-needed change. The Government stated in their order appointing the committee that "they wished to replace the Matriculation Examination by a School Final Examination which would serve both as an entrance test for the public service and as a final test for young men who were leaving school and who desired to enter a school for professional or technical training not connected with the University", that "the new examination should embrace a wider range of studies than the Matriculation Examination and guarantee not merely that a boy had passed a certain test but also that he had got through a definite course of study in a recognised school, conducting himself in a satisfactory manner" and that "the examination should be acceptable to the Madras University as a substitute for the Matriculation Examination".

The committee which consisted of eminent educationists drew up a scheme which, after approval by the Government, was accepted by the Madras University and was introduced in 1910. There were three groups of studies under this scheme, namely, *A group* consisting of English, a second language and Elementary Mathematics, *B group* consisting of History, Geography and Elementary Science and *C group* consisting of many subjects out of which two had to be selected by the student. This scheme was worked for a few years but failed to give satisfaction. One of its most glaring defects was early specialisation; another was the neglect of subjects like Elementary Science, History and Geography in which there was no examination.

In 1921, the Government appointed the Sir Venkataratnam Committee to look into the matter. A report was submitted but it was not acted upon.

Another Committee, the Secondary Education Reorganisation Committee, went into the question but nothing came of its enquiry either.

It was then that the Madras University, alarmed at the unsatisfactory equipment of students entering the colleges, appointed a committee to consider the question of taking away the recognition given to the S. S. L. C. Examination as an entrance test and replacing it by its own Matriculation Examination. This ultimately led to a compromise between the University and the Government accord-

Principal A. V. K. KRISHNA MENON.

[The illustrations in this issue are by Mr. C. Kesava Menon, an Old Boy. Our thanks and congratulations to him.]

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ing to which the latter agreed to transfer the *B group* subjects (History, Geography and Elementary Science) into the *A group*. The scheme of 1910 was materially altered and the revised scheme came into force in 1929. Under this scheme which is now followed in our schools, there are three groups of studies, namely, *A group* consisting of English, a second language, Elementary Mathematics, Elementary Science, History and Geography, *B group* consisting of Manual training, Drawing etc., and *C group* consisting of many subjects out of which one has to be selected by the student.

This scheme was received with satisfaction and the only complaint against it has been that the syllabuses in History, Geography and Elementary Science are a bit heavy and that the *C subject* is an unnecessary burden to the young students who without it have to study as many as six subjects.

And now comes the strange part of this history. Though the scheme of 1910 was revised in the manner suggested by the Madras University and though it had not been given a fair trial like its predecessor, the Syndicate appointed a committee in 1931, long before the first examination under the scheme, to consider the question of altering it. This committee went on with its work and at last, in consultation with the S. S. L. C. Board, has now evolved a new scheme which briefly is this. There are to be three compulsory subjects, namely, English, a second language and Elementary Mathematics, and two optional subjects to be selected out of a number of varied subjects. It is curious to note that History, Geography and Elementary Science are not to be studied as compulsory subjects, even though the University insisted on their inclusion in the *A group* in the scheme of 1929.

This new scheme was placed before the Academic Council at its meeting on the 28th August last for its approval and acceptance. A keen discussion took place and divergent views were put forward. The scheme placed before the Council was disapproved and an amedment to include History, Geography and Elementary Science in the *A group* and to remove the *C group in toto* was passed by a majority. The result is that according to the Scheme accepted by the Council, there are to be only two groups, namely, *A group* consisting of English, a second language, Elementary Mathematics, Elementary Science, History and Geography and *B group* consisting of Manual Training Drawing, etc. In other words, *the Academic Council is in favour of the present scheme without the C group.*

The decision, so far as the needs of the University are concerned, is, in my opinion, quite correct. I think that a student who has not had instruction in the six compulsory subjects in the *A group* ought not to be eligible for admission to a University course of study. To exclude subjects like History, Geography and Elementary Science from a scheme of Secondary education will result in the production of badly equipped students who are likely to lower the standard of our University. The Madras University which has all along enjoyed a reputation for high standards has, therefore, acted wisely in rejecting the new scheme. Regarding the abolition of *C group*, opinions differ but it cannot be said that the University will in any way suffer on account of the want of on optional subject in the school course. For the Matriculation Examination conducted by the University, there are only the six compulsory subjects of the *A group* mentioned above and no member of the University has desired a change in the curriculum prescribed for this examination. It is, therefore, clear that the abolition of the *C group* will not adversely affect this standard of the University.

But the matter does not end here. The Government have now to consider very carefully in all its bearings the question whether the scheme which has now been

accepted by the University will develop Secondary Education on healthy lines or not. It is a thorny question and ought not to de disposed of in haste. As Mr. Champion said at the meeting, "the question whether Secondary Education should consist only of compulsory subjects or should consist also of optional subjects is one over which controversy has waged for many years and in many countries". Optional subjects have some advantages, no doubt, but they increase the strain on our young boys and girls and have, so far, produced no good result. In the course of the discussion in the Academic Council, the Director remarked that most of the students took up Mathematics as their optional subject under the present scheme. This is a strong argument against the introduction of optional subjects, for it shows that students at this stage are not able to select for themselves subjects for which they have a natural aptitude but have to be guided—or rather they are misguided—in their selection by their parents, teachers or friends.

A *Via media* has, therefore, to be found which will effect a happy compromise, unless it be that the University resolves to have its own entrance test for the admission of students into its sacred portals. It is earnestly hoped that a proper solution will be arrived at before long and that once a scheme is settled, it will be given a fair trial before a change is thought of. There is no hurry, as the present scheme without the *C group* and with a few alterations in the syllabuses in Elementary Mathematics, Elementary Seience, History and Geography may be worked with advantage until a better one is introduced. *Festina lente*!

I want each one of My children to be a hundred times greater than what I could ever be.

Every one of you MUST BE A GIANT—MUST, that is my word.

Obedience, readiness, and love for the cause—if you have these three, nothing can hold you back.

If you are really my children, you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be like lions.

We must rouse India and the whole world.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Charity on the Rail Road.

By P. S. Narayanan (*Senior Intermediate.*)

IT was a wet December evening in Madras. My brief sojourn in that city having ended, I took a west-bound mail-train from the Central Station. The crowd in the small ten-seater compartment was not unusual at that time of the year. But the company was very pleasant and we whiled away the long hours in cheerful talk until sleep overtook a good many among us. There was some rain. The drizzling went on until we passed Jolarpet, and a very chill breeze took its place.

"Tat-tat-tat"!

I opened one eye to glance at the intruder and there, in the customary white uniform and with a pair of books tucked under his arm, was the infernal Ticket-examiner.

I shut my eye in disgust and pretended to sleep like a baby. But the T. X. R. advanced towards me in a flash. "I want your ticket," he grunted, "you, mister, yes, yourself."

"Take it," I grinned, again pretending to be fast asleep, and thinking he would have to wake me up again and rouse my anger, when he returned the ticket. But the T. X. R. was a past-master in those old tricks and jokes; he left the ticket in my shirt-sleeve and passed on—the brute!

In a quarter of an hour, he had finished his business and sat in a corner, a very limp figure, looking tired and hungry. I could see with the corner of my eye that he was cursing his own lot as a T. X. R., cursing the passengers (for being honest in purchasing tickets and thus denying him the 'presents' he would get otherwise), the railway administration and everything else.

And as he nearly dozed off with outstretched limbs, the lavatory door swung open while a force from within tried to shut it again.

The T. X. R. sprang up and with lightning speed gripped a very miserable, clumsy and helpless-looking fellow. The whole crowd stood up to watch the duel with which we are all familiar at one time or other in a railway journey.

It was the oddest scene imaginable. The T. X. R. *anxious* to rid his railway of rogues, snarling at a poor up-country fellow, who either had lost his ticket, or was too poor to purchase one.

But the T. X. R. was adamant. "Now shut up," he commanded in a gruff voice, "keep your tricks to yourself. Ticket or money, that's what I want. If you don't have either, well, you get the usual trouncing from the railway police."

The frail old creature stood shivering, both on account of his age and the fearful prospect of being stranded somewhere in pitch darkness. Though he said nothing, his face bore an expression which would have melted the stoniest heart. It was a picture full of torture and misery.

But the tyrant was unmoved by the obvious misery his victim was in; the whole fraternity of T. X. R's are so. As for the victim, his whole person was searched and he was roughly handled and harassed in a hundred indescribable ways.

Next to me, sitting cross-legged and comfortable, was a buxom Chettiar, who was all pity for the poor old blighter.

"Where are you going, poor man"? he asked in Tamil, turning to the T. X. R's victim.

"Attur," came the reply, "on the Salem—Vriddhachalam railway." And as if he felt some relief from the kind words of the Chettiar, he added, "It's true, Sir, I'm too poor to buy a ticket. But I must reach Attur befor noon tomorrow; the day

after is an important ceremony in my house, and I'm just a poor old cultivator, and can't spend five or six rupees on the journey." He sobbed, and it was obvious from the rags he wore and a certain honest look in his face that he did not want really to defraud the railway.

"Ticket-collector-aval," said the Chettiar, "you see the man is really a *bonafide* poor man. You must show some mercy, don't you think ?" The Mohammadan at the corner, and the Gowndan at the other end, also recommended mercy. And snatching this auspicious moment, I too dwelt a little on the philosophy of mercy (an adaptation from Portia's speech in *the Merchant of Venice*).

But the T. X. R. showed a very cold face and would not listen. The next step was decided on. The rich Chettiar shelled out an eight-anna piece, and the Mohammadan added his own four annas, the Gowndon two annas and every one else contributed to the Relief Fund. In the end, a good round sum of two rupees twelve annas was collected. The Mail had now reached Morappur Junction station. The T. X. R. was glad to retreat with a four-anna tip, and a third class ticket from Morappur to Attur was placed in the grateful hands of the poor old fellow who blessed us all in his own crude native fashion.

THE MIND, A MADDENED MONKEY.

"How hard it is to control the mind! Well has it been compared to the maddened monkey. There was a monkey, restless by his own nature, as all monkeys are. As if that were not enough, some one made him drink freely of wine, so that he became still more restless. Then a scorpion stung him. When a man is stung by a scorpion, he jumps about for a whole day ; the poor monkey, therefore, found his condition worse than ever. To complete his misery, a demon entered into him. What language can describe the uncontrollable restlessness of that monkey ? The human mind is like that monkey, incessantly active by its own nature ; then it becomes drunk with the wine of desire. After desire comes the sting of the scorpion of jealousy. Last of all, the demon of pride takes possession of the mind, making it think itself all—important. How hard to control such a mind !"

—*From "Rambles in Vedanta."*

പ്രാൎത്ഥന.

(1933 ഏപ്രിൽ 22, 23, 24 എന്നീ ൹-കളിൽ സാമൂതിരികോളേജിൽവെച്ചു നടത്തപ്പെട്ട സമസ്തകേരളസാഹിത്യപരിഷത്തിൻെറ സപ്തമ സമ്മേളനാരംഭത്തിൽ ചൊല്ലിയതു്.)

1.

സമ്പാദ്യം സാഹിതീമാധുരി,യതിന്നതകും കാൎയ്യസാരക്കരിമ്പിൻ
കമ്പാംവില്ലുംതകൎത്താ,രുചിപെരുകി രസാസ്വാദമിങ്ങേകുവാനായ്,
നിൻപാദംതന്നെഞങ്ങൾക്കൊരുഗതി വിശദജ്ഞാനമായ് നീണ്ടൊ
ഒററ-
ക്കൊമ്പാളും തമ്പുരാനേ! ഗജമുഖവടിവായ് നിന്നതങ്കത്തിടമ്പേ!

2.

വീണക്കമ്പികൾ മീട്ടിടുന്നസമയം വാൎകുന്തളപ്പൂവൊട്ടും
വീണക്കമ്പിതഭൃംഗമാലതുടരും നാനാപശബ്ദങ്ങളെ
പ്രാണപ്രേമരസായനപ്പടി ൹കന്നീടുന്ന നിൻ കണ്ണിണ-
ക്കോണല്ലോ ശരണം ജഗത്തിനഖിലജ്ഞാനപ്രദേ! ശാരദേ!

3.

പൂൎവ്വംഗോകുലവശ്യമന്ത്രരവമായേ,തേതു സന്താനമാം
നീർ വൎഷിപ്പൊരുശംഖനാദ സുഖമസ്സാന്ദീപനിക്കേകിയോ
പോർവന്നപ്പൊഴുതൎജ്ജുനന്നു ഭഗവൽഗീതാഖ്യയേതായത-
ക്കാർവൎണ്ണൻ ഭഗവാൻെറ തങ്കമുരളീനാദം മുഴങ്ങുന്നിതാ!

4.

ഭോഗത്തിന്നല്ല മൎത്ത്യപ്പിറവിയിതുമഹാത്യാഗമാൎജ്ജിക്കുവാ,നാ-
വാഗൎത്ഥംതന്നെ രാമൻ, രഘുപതിചരിതംതന്നെയാണാദികാവ്യം;
ഭൂഗൎഭത്തിങ്കൽനിന്നജ്ജനകതനയപോലാരിൽനിന്നിപ്പവിത്ര-
പ്രാഗത്ഭ്യം കാവ്യമുണ്ടാ,യരുളുക കവിതാദൎശമത്താപസേന്ദ്രൻ.

5.

ആരിബ്രഹ്മാണ്ഡവൃക്ഷത്തിനു മറയടിവേരൊന്നുനാലെന്നുകണ്ടു,
നേരിട്ടാർ കാങ്കെയാൽ തൽഫലപടലി പുരാണെതൃപ്പമാസ്വാദ്യമായീ,
ശൌരിക്കും സാക്ഷിയാരാപ്രഥിതനൃഷി മഹാഭാരതഗ്രന്ഥകാരൻ
വാരിക്കോരിത്തരട്ടേ പരിചൊടു "പരിഷത്തി"ന്നു സാഹിത്യധർമ്മം.

6

തന്നെത്താൻ കണ്ടു മർത്ത്യക്കനുപമസുഖസാമ്രാജ്യപട്ടം ലഭിപ്പാൻ
തന്നുള്ളജ്ഞാനകാവ്യാവലിമണിമുകുരം തീർത്താരതീർത്ഥപാദൻ,
അന്നക്കൈപ്പള്ളിയില്ലത്തിനു തൊടുകുറിയാം മണ്ണിനമ്പൂതിരിപ്പാ-
ടിന്നപ്പൊൻകിണ്ടികൊണ്ടിങ്ങരുളുക "പരിഷത്തി"ങ്കലത്തീർത്ഥതീർത്ഥം.

7.

സമ്മോദാൽക്കൈരളീദേവിയെ ലളിതപദന്യാസയെത്താളിയോല
പ്പൊന്മഞ്ചത്തിങ്കൽവെച്ചും പ്രണയമൊടുകിളിപ്പാട്ടുപാടിച്ചുചെമ്മേ
വിണ്മച്ചിൽത്തന്നെലാളിപ്പൊരു കുലപതി തുഞ്ചത്തെഴുത്തച്ഛനെന്നും
ധർമ്മത്തെദ്ദേശകാലോചിതമിഹ "പരിഷത്തി"ങ്കൽ വർഷിച്ചിടട്ടേ.

8.

"കൃഷ്ണാട്ടം", "രാമനാട്ടം", "കഥകളി", സരസം "തുള്ള"ലും, കാവ്യമാർഗ്ഗം
നിഷ്ണാതം കൈരളിക്കായഭിനവമരുളും "കൃഷ്ണാഗാഥാ"ദിയേവം,
ഉഷ്ണാംശുച്ഛായ "ഗൈർവ്വാണിയു"മഥ "തമിഴാം"വെണ്ണിലാവുംവിടർത്തി
ത്തൃഷ്ണാശാന്തിക്കു നീന്താൻവിലസിന കമലക്കൈരവപ്പൊയ്കവെൽക.

കുട്ടമത്ത് കുന്നിയൂര് കുഞ്ഞികൃഷ്ണക്കുറുപ്പ്.

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മാസികഗണം.

(സി. എൻ. എ. രാമയ്യശാസ്ത്രി എം. എ.)

മാസിക, ശ്ലേഷ, നിഷ്കൃഷ് ഈ പദങ്ങളിൽ ഒരു വിശേഷമുണ്ട്. സാധാരണ രീതിയനുസരിച്ച് ഇവ മലയാളത്തിൽ മാസികം, ശ്ലേഷം, നിഷ്കൃഷ്ടം എന്നു വരേണ്ടതാണ്. ശ്ലേഷാലങ്കാരമുണ്ടെന്നു പറയുന്നതിനു ശ്ലേഷമുണ്ടെന്നും നിഷ്കൃഷ്ടയ്ക്കു നിഷ്കൃഷ്ടമെന്നും പറയുന്നതിനു ഒരു വിരോധവുമില്ല. സംസ്കൃതത്തിൽ മാസികാ, ശ്ലേഷാ, നിഷ്കൃഷ്ടാ എന്നു ശബ്ദങ്ങളില്ല. ശ്ലേഷാലങ്കാരം എന്നു പറയുന്നതു ശ്ലേഷ+അലങ്കാരം (അലങ്കാരഃ) എന്നുള്ളവിധത്തിലാണ്. ശ്ലേഷാ+അലങ്കാരം എന്നുള്ളവിധത്തിലല്ല. മാസിക, ശ്ലേഷ, നിഷ്കൃഷ് എന്ന ശബ്ദങ്ങൾ മലയാളത്തിൽ നടപ്പുള്ളതുകൊണ്ടു സഹ്യമെന്നല്ലാതെ ഭജനം മൂത്ത് ഊരാണ്മ എന്ന കണക്കിന് അവ, മാസികം, ശ്ലേഷം, നിഷ്കൃഷ്ടം എന്നവയെ അബദ്ധമാക്കിത്തീർക്കയില്ല. മാസത്തെ സംബന്ധിച്ചതു എന്ന അർത്ഥത്തിൽ "മാസികം" ശരിയാണെങ്കിലും മാസംതോറും ഇറങ്ങുന്ന "പത്രഗ്രന്ഥ"ത്തിന് "മാസിക" എന്നതു സാങ്കേതികശബ്ദംപോലെയായിപ്പോകയാൽ അതിനു പകരം ചിലപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും മാസികം എന്നെഴുതാൻ കുറെ വൈഷമ്യമുണ്ട്.

നിയമത്തിനുള്ള വ്യത്യസ്തങ്ങൾ ഒരേ കണക്കിനു വരുമ്പോൾ അവയെ ഒരു ഗണമാക്കി വ്യവഹരിക്കാം. മാസികഗണം എന്നൊരു പേരു് തലക്കെട്ടായി കൊടുത്തതു് അതുകൊണ്ടാണ്.

സംസ്കൃതത്തിൽ അകാരാന്തമായിട്ടുള്ള ഏതാദൃശശബ്ദങ്ങൾ കർണ്ണാടകത്തിലാണെങ്കിൽ മാസിക, ശ്ലേഷ, നിഷ്കൃഷ് എന്നിങ്ങനെ വരുന്നതു നിയമാനുസൃതംതന്നെയാണ്. മലയാളത്തിൽ ആശ്ലേഷം, ഉൽകർഷം, അപകർഷം എന്നെല്ലാം പറയുന്ന ശബ്ദങ്ങൾ അതിൽതന്നെ ശ്ലേഷ, നിഷ്കൃഷ് എന്നു പറയുമ്പോഴാണ് വിശേഷവിധി. തെലുങ്കിൽ ശ്ലേഷമു, ആശ്ലേഷമു, ഉൽക്കർഷമു, അപകർഷമു എന്നൊക്കെയാണ്.

പശ്ചാത്താപം.

I.

ഞാനും സുന്ദരേശനും ഒന്നിച്ചു പഠിച്ചവരാണ്. അയാൾ ഭാഗ്യാതിരേകത്താൽ ഐ. സി. എസ്സ്. പാസ്സായി നമ്മുടെ ജില്ലയിൽ—മധുരയിൽ—കലക്ടരായി വന്നു. പത്താംക്ലാസ്സു പാസ്സായതിന്നുശേഷം ദാരിദ്ര്യംകൊണ്ടു ഞാൻ പഠിപ്പു നിൎത്തി. ഇപ്പോൾ എൻെറ സ്നേഹിതൻ കലക്ടരായി വന്നിട്ടുണ്ടല്ലോ എന്നു വിചാരിച്ചു ഞാൻ ഒന്നു കാണാൻ ചെന്നു.

സുന്ദരേശൻ ഇപ്പോൾ സാൻേറഴ്സൻ ആയിരിക്കുന്നു. വലിയ പരിഷ്കാരിയാണ്. എല്ലാവരോടും ധിക്കാരംകാട്ടും. സിഗരററ് വായിൽനിന്നൊഴിഞ്ഞ സമയമില്ല. ഏതു സമയത്തും സൂട്ടിലാണ്. ഇതൊക്കെയാണ് എൻെറ ഉററ സ്നേഹിതൻെറ വിവരങ്ങൾ. ഒന്നു പറയാൻ മറന്നു. ഇംഗ്ലീഷിലേ സംസാരിക്കാൻ അറികയുള്ളു എന്നുംകൂടി ആയിരിക്കുന്നു.

കലക്ടർ എൻെറ സ്നേഹിതനാണ്. ഞാൻ ആരെപ്പേടിക്കണം; എനിക്കു വല്ല ഉദ്യോഗവും തരാതിരിക്കയില്ല; കിട്ടുന്ന ശമ്പളംകൊണ്ടു കുടുംബം പുലൎത്തണം; എന്നെല്ലാം വിചാരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണ് ഞാൻ സാൻേറഴ്സന്നുമായി കൂടിക്കാഴ്ചക്കുപോയതു്. ഞാനെന്തൊരു സാധു. ഇതെല്ലാം ആകാശക്കോട്ടകളായിരിക്കുമെന്നു ഞാൻ സ്വപ്നേപി വിചാരിച്ചിരുന്നില്ല.

ഞാൻ കലക്ടരുടെ വസതിയിൽചെന്നു വിവരമറിയിച്ചു. കുറച്ചുനേരം കഴിഞ്ഞു ഞാൻ സുന്ദരേശൻെറ മുമ്പിൽ എത്തി.

"സുന്ദരേശ, നമസ്കാരം" എന്നു ഞാൻ താഴ്മയോടെ പറഞ്ഞു.

"താനാരെടോ?" എന്നു അയാൾ കയൎത്തുകൊണ്ടു ചോദിച്ചു. ഇതു ആലോചിക്കാത്ത കാൎയ്യമായിരുന്നു. എൻെറ ദേഹം മുഴുവനും വിയൎത്തു. ഒരു തലചുററലും ഉണ്ടായി.

"സ്കൂൾഫൈനൽവരെ ഒന്നിച്ചു പഠിച്ച വാസുദേവനെ ഓൎമ്മയുണ്ടോ?" എന്നു ഞാൻ ചോദിച്ചു.

"എത്രയാളുകൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു; അവരെയൊക്കെ ഓൎമ്മവെക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കുമോ?" എന്നായിരുന്നു ആ മനുഷ്യൻെറ പ്രത്യുക്തി.

ഞാൻ ഒന്നും മിണ്ടാതെ തിരിച്ചുപോന്നു. ആരോടും മിണ്ടാതെ ഞാൻ അകത്തുകടന്നു വാതിലടച്ചു കിടന്നു. "എന്തവസ്ഥയാണ്. ഒരു സ്നേഹിതനെ കണ്ടാലറിയില്ലത്രെ! എന്തൊരു സ്നേഹം! ഇമ്മാതിരി സ്നേഹമാണ് എല്ലാവരും സമ്പാദിക്കേണ്ടതു്" ഞാൻ ഇങ്ങിനെഓരോന്നാലോചിച്ചു കിടന്നുറങ്ങി.

II

ഞങ്ങളുടെ ബാല്യത്തെപ്പററിയും ഞാൻ കുറച്ചു പറയാം. ഞങ്ങൾ ഒരേക്ലാസ്സിൽ പഠിച്ചിരുന്നവരാണ്. അയൽവക്ക

ക്കാരുമായിരുന്നു. മിക്ക സമയത്തും ഞങ്ങ ഠം ഒരുമിച്ചു വസിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഞങ്ങഠം രണ്ടു ദേഹവും ഒരു ജീവനുമെന്നവിധം കഴിച്ചുകൂട്ടി.

ഒരുദിവസം ഉച്ചക്കു ഞാനും സുന്ദരേശനുംകൂടി അങ്ങാടിക്കുപോയി. അവൻ അന്നു യാതൊന്നും കഴിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ലെന്നു എനിക്കറിയാമായിരുന്നു. ഞാൻ അവനെ ഒരു ചായപ്പീടികയിൽ കൊണ്ടുപോയി വയറുനിറച്ചു ചായ വാങ്ങിക്കൊടുത്തു. അവൻ അപ്പോഠം പറഞ്ഞു: "വാസു, നീതന്നെയാണു ചങ്ങാതി. സാധിച്ചുവെങ്കിൽ ഞാൻ മടക്കിത്തരും."

"നിൻെറ ഇഷ്ടം" എന്നുപറഞ്ഞു ഞാൻ അവനേയുംകൂട്ടി നടന്നു. അങ്ങിനെയുള്ളാളു് ഇന്നു് പറഞ്ഞതു്. ശിവനേ! ശരണം!!

ഒന്നാമദ്ധ്യായത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞ സംഭവങ്ങഠം നടന്നു് നാലു ദിവസംകഴിഞ്ഞു. അന്നാണു് പുതിയ കലക്ടരുടെ വക നായാട്ടു് നിശ്ചയിച്ചിരുന്നതു്. ഞാനും എൻെറ അച്ഛൻെറ ഒരു തോക്കെടുത്തു് കാട്ടിലേക്കു പുറപ്പെട്ടു. അനവധി ആളുകഠം അവിടെ കൂടിയിരുന്നു. എല്ലാവരും കാട്ടിൽകടന്നു; എന്നാൽഎനിക്കതിലൊന്നും യാതൊരുന്മേഷവു മുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. ഞാൻ സുന്ദരേശൻെറ കുറെ പിന്നിലായി നടന്നു.

പെട്ടെന്നു് ഒരു വലിയ നരി ആയാളുടെമേൽ ചാടിവീണു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻെറ അനുയായികളെല്ലാം പലായനംചെയ്തു. ഞാൻ എന്താണു് ചെയ്യേണ്ടതു്എന്നു എനിക്കു നല്ലപോലെ അറിയാമായിരുന്നു. ഞാനും മററവരുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ ഓടുകയായിരുന്നു വേണ്ടതു.

"ഹെൽപ്പ്! ഹെൽപ്പ്!" എന്നയാഠം ഉറക്കേ നിലവിളിച്ചു. ഈ സമയത്തിൽകൂടി ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ പറയുന്നല്ലോ എന്നു ഞാൻ അത്ഭുതപ്പെട്ടു. ഞാൻ തോക്കെടുത്തു്, വെടിവെച്ചു് നരിയെ താഴത്തുവീഴ്ത്തി. അടുത്തു ചെന്നപ്പോഴേക്കും സുന്ദരേശൻ ബോധരഹിതനായിരുന്നു. ഞാൻ ആളുകളെ വിളിച്ചുവരുത്തി. അവരെല്ലാം എന്നെ വളരെ അഭിനന്ദിച്ചു കലക്ടരെ താങ്ങിപ്പിടിച്ചു വീട്ടിലേക്കു കൊണ്ടുപോയി. കുറച്ചു ദിവസംകൊണ്ടു ആയാളുടെ ദീനം മാറി.

III

അച്ഛൻെറ ആവശ്യപ്രകാരം ഞാൻ ഒരിക്കൽകൂടി സുന്ദരേശൻെറ അടുത്തു് ഉദ്യോഗാൎത്ഥിയായിച്ചെന്നു.

"അന്നത്തെ വാഗ്ദത്തമോൎത്തിട്ടെങ്കിലും എനിക്കു വല്ല ഉദ്യോഗവും തന്നാൽകൊള്ളാം" എന്നു ഞാനപേക്ഷിച്ചു.

"എന്തു വാഗ്ദത്തം?"

"ഒരു ദിവസം ചായവാങ്ങിത്തന്നപ്പോഠം പറഞ്ഞതോൎമ്മയുണ്ടോ? സാധിച്ചാൽ ഇതു മടക്കിത്തരുമെന്നു്"

"വാഗ്ദത്തം വെച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു!" എന്നു് ആയാഠം കടിച്ചു മുറിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു് മറുപടി പറഞ്ഞു.

"പ്രിയപ്പെട്ട സാറേ" ഞാൻ പ്രസംഗിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങി, "പണത്തിൻെറ ത

ള്ളിപ്പ് അധികം അരുത്. അതെല്ലാവ ക്കും നാശമാണ്. അതു്—''

"പടിപ്പുറത്തു്'' എന്നു ആയാൾ ഗ ർജ്ജിച്ചു.

"അന്നു നരിയെ വെടിവെക്കാതെ ഓ ടിയിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ ഇതൊന്നും വേണ്ടിവരി ല്ലായിരുന്നു''എന്നു് പറഞ്ഞുംകൊണ്ടു ഞാ ൻ ഉടനെതന്നെ മടങ്ങി.

വൈകുന്നേരം ശിപായി വന്നു് "യജ മാൻ നിങ്ങളെ കൂട്ടിക്കൊണ്ടു ചെല്ലാൻ പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു''എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു.

"ഏതെജമാൻ?''

"കലക്ടരു്''

കാരണമറിയാതെ ഞാൻ വല്ലാതെഭയ പ്പെട്ടു. ഗത്യന്തരമില്ലെന്നുവെച്ചു് ഞാൻ പുറപ്പെടേണ്ടിവന്നു. സുന്ദരേശൻ ഉമ്മ റത്തു് നടന്നുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. എന്നെകണ്ട ഉടനെ ആയാൾ പറഞ്ഞു.

"പ്രിയസ്നേഹിതാ''എന്റെ കുററം ക്ഷ മിക്കണെ. ഞാൻ അറിയാതെ ചെയ്ത താണ്.''

"നിങ്ങൾ എന്നെ നിരസിച്ചപ്പോൾ എനിക്കു വല്ലാത്ത വ്യസനമുണ്ടായി. എ ങ്കിലും ഇപ്പോൾ കാൎയ്യം സാധിച്ചല്ലോ.''

എങ്ങിനെയാണു് എന്റെ സ്നേഹിത ന്റെ സ്വഭാവത്തിൽ ഇത്ര വേഗത്തിൽ ഒരു മാററം വന്നതെന്നു് എനിക്കിതേവ രെ മനസ്സിലായിട്ടില്ല. ഞാൻ ഒരു ഉ ദ്യോഗസ്ഥനായി കാലംകഴിക്കുന്നു. സുന്ദ രേശൻ നല്ലവണ്ണം പശ്ചാത്തപിക്കുന്നു ണ്ടാവണം.

കേ. എസ്സ്.
ജൂനിയർ വിദ്യാൎത്ഥി.

A Comedy in Three Acts.

[We cordially commend to our readers this clever play by Miss Kamala Gopal Menon, B. A.]

ACT I.

[*A Sitting Room in the house of a middle class Hindu family. Mr. Prabhakar, a man about 48, a very successful lawyer, sitting and reading a newspaper on a Sunday Morning. He is reading the account of the Round Table Conference when his wife Gowri, a handsome woman of about 40 enters the Room. Mr. Prabhakar takes no notice of her but reads on.*]

Gowri: You've been reading all the morning, haven't you? I don't suppose you intend to take the slightest interest in family affairs. You know exactly what I am about and yet everytime I bring up the subject, you avoid giving me a definite answer.

Mr. Pra: I don't exactly understand what you mean, Gowri, Haven't I always treated you as the traditional Hindu wife is treated by her husband—almost a queen of the house? Not at all like the Hindu wife of today. To my horror some of them are treated almost like slaves. And may I ask you if I haven't respected every wish of yours? You have every right to decide things for yourself, and I for one will certainly not stand in the way. Only at the moment I wish you'd leave me in peace, dear, as I do want to finish the account of the Round Table Conference. Lady Drummond-Hay has written a topping article about Gandhiji. In her opinion Gandhiji is the most Christ-like person living today. I wish you'd read it.

Gowri (*angrily*): I don't want to read it. Gandhiji may be Christlike or not. That has nothing to do with me. What I am concerned about is a husband for Malini. How perfectly foolish of you to ask me to decide things for myself! You seem to be under the impression that it is an easy job! As if an eligible husband is just waiting round the corner to marry Malini! She is a pretty girl and we are both proud of her. She is just the girl who will make a splendid wife for an I. C. S. man. But of late, I'm afraid I'm inclined to believe that she is living in a fool's paradise and it is all your fault.

Mr. Pra: Malini living in a fool's paradise, and all my fault? What do you mean, Gowri?

Gowri: Poor innocent darling! You are awfully good at pretending when it suits your convenience not to understand. Well, I'm frightfully serious, and besides I'm anxious to come to the point. What I mean is, Malini is getting all sorts of new-fangled notions into her silly head about Gandhiji, Khaddar, Women's Rights etc, and it's all your influence.

Mr. Pra: I'm just beginning to understand you, Gowri. So, all these "new-fangled "notions," as you call them, are *my* influence? I hardly think there's any necessity for you to accuse me, for I assure you that they are perfectly sane notions. Every boy and girl ought to know Gandhiji, as he is one of the greatest men living today. Then about Khaddar, don't you think it's our duty to encourage our own industries and make India a a self-sufficing country—and oh! as to women's rights,—I think Indian women ought to have economic and all the thousand-and-one other kinds of indepen-

dence. They are disgracefully lagging behind the women of other countries.

Gowri : I say, aren't you simply disgusting this morning—as if I care a dump about your silly hero-worship! And, as for khaddar, it's all very easy to talk about making India a self-sufficing country and all that sort of nonsense, but it isn't easy to go about in sack-cloth all your life. Just try the experiment and you'll find what a vain aspiration it is.

Mr. Pra : My dear, I'm trying the *experiment* just at the moment. To think that you talk of khaddar in this jeering fashion! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! (*mimicking her voice*) I say you are simply disgusting this morning.

Gowri : (*sulkily*): Am I disgusting? Well it's rather late in the day to notice it, isn't it? Haven't I very often said that you don't love me enough, though we have been married 30 years now? You don't care for me *enough*, otherwise you'd never have called me disgusting.

Mr. Pra : (*laughing*): Now, doesn't all this apply to you as well? You called me disgusting not five minutes ago. What am I to gather from that?

Gowri : I'm sure I didn't call you disgusting. A Hindu wife never talks rudely to her husband even in jest.

Mr. Pra : But my dear, you did use the word disgusting.

Gowri : That may be, but. I never called *you* disgusting.

Mr. Pra : You did.

Gowri : I didn't.

Mr. Pra : Now don't let us quarrel over little things. I gathered you had something very important to tell me.

Gowri : So I have. How thoughtless of me to forget! It is about Malini's marriage. I want you to come to some definite arrangement. Perhaps I 'll have to wheedle you in to giving me your consent ; but that doesn't matter if I get what I want.

Mr Pra : My good woman, you needn't wheedle me. I'll straightaway give my consent if Malini is willing to marry. And have you collared the intended bridegroom?

Gowri : No, I haven't. That's not my job, surely. It's yours.

Mr. Pra : Oh! But you talked about *my* giving my consent and I presumed that everything had been arranged.

Gowri ; Nothing of the sort—And now my dear man, you'll have to set about capturing an Eligible.

Mr. Pra : I see. Well don't you think we might consult Malini? You know she is the all-important person in this affair provided we get the man.

Gowri : How exasperating you are! You don't seem to be particularly anxious to see the child happily married. That is why you want a thousand and one consents. Ask Malini's consent! I certainly shall not. *My* father never asked my consent for our marriage. And we are perfectly happy. Besides you know what these modern girls are! They seem to have fantastic notions about Love and Marriage. If you ask them to marry, they'll straightaway give you a lecture yards long,—"Mother, you surely don't expect me to marry a man without my falling in love with him? Why, I haven't even seen the man", and so on. You see how impossible it is to coax them? The best thing is to get about the business at once and see that Malini gets a husband who has a decent position in life. We Hindus believe in "Marry and Love" and not "Love and Marry".

Mr. Pra : Right you are. The only drawback is that I don't know any of these young men of position.

Gowri : Look here, it is very foolish of you to talk in this fashion. Do you know the Hindu Sastras say that if the father of a marriageable daughter sees the mother of an eligible young man, he has to stand as a mark of respect? Mind

you, it is done as a mark of respect, and not as a mark of mere courtesy. When so much tact is needed, isn't it a shame to own that you don't know any suitable young men? You'll have to hurry up and make friends with some of these nice men: invite them to your house to tea, to dinner, anything, till Malini gets a husband. Otherwise I warn you that your daughter will die an old maid.

Mr. Pra; (*laughing*). You believe in the idiotic convention of jeering at spinsters, don't you? Besides, what a name to give a nice unmarried woman. One would gather from your talk that marriage is a great qualification. Despite all the education we get, I think our society is still very narrow-minded. What do you know of spinsters, Gowri, beyond their name? You want every woman to conform to your standard pattern and you think to be different is to be damned. Well, some of the nicest women I know are unmarried.

Gowri: (*sarcastically*). Much you know about unmarried women!

Mr. Pra: Well, don't I? My sister is a child widow, and has never had a day's experience of married life and yet she is such a sensible, broad-minded woman. Never once in my life have I heard her gossip as some of you women do. Oh! you married women! How you love gossip! You feel gossip is a homely fellow who doesn't in the least bother brain. But my sister is far above that. She simply loathes it. You might say that all this talk is uncalled for, but it's all your fault, for I simply hate the idea of your talking of unmarried women with such scorn.

Gowri: You can talk very rudely to me sometimes, can't you? You are an extraordinary man. There is no one quite like you for saying the wrong thing. And after all, you quoted your sister who is only an exception. Not logical, is it?

Mr. Pra: You seem to be very clever at logic, Gowri.

Gowri: You taught me logic. Look at this syllogism for instance.

All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
∴ Socrates is mortal.

There you are! Exceptions can never bring forth conclusions.

Mr. Pra; (*laughing*) Brilliant, I should say. But here's a syllogism you'd like better.

All mortals marry.
Malini is a mortal.
∴ Malini must marry.

Gowri; That's topping! So you will try to fix up something soon for Malini, won't you?

Mr. Pra: Right oh! Of course it's a great blow to my pride to go about begging people to marry my daughter. With such a charming daughter I had thought the initiative would have come from the men themselves.

Gowri; Oh! that's not so easy when there are so many other charming girls waiting for husbands, and as for the men of decent social position, you know there are so few these days.

Mr. Pra: You have taught me some wisdom. I'll of course do as you wish.

Gowri: Thank you, dear. Do you remember that charming man who called on you the other day? I believe he has tons of money, and he is in the Civil Service too. It struck me what a fine match he would be. I should love to see Malini the wife of a rich man.

Mr. Pra: You mean Mr. Gopinath. Very well. I shall try to get at him. He is a great friend of Sankar's. I believe they were together at Oxford.

(*Enter servant*)

Servant: A gentleman come to see Master.

[*Mr. Viswanath, a young lawyer, enters behind the servant.*

Gowri sees the visitor and at once runs away peeping through door. Exit servant.]

Mr. Pra : Good Morning, Viswanath. I haven't seen you for ages. Don't you come to court?

Mr. Viswanath : Yes, very regularly, but I must say it has been a farce of late. Times are so bad,—I haven't had a brief for days.

Mr. Pra : That's sad. Of course it's a pretty bad time for lawyers.

Mr. Vis : I'm wondering now why I wasted such a lot of time and money reading those confounded law books and eating those dinners.

Mr. Pra ; Don't be disheartened. Times will change.

Mr Vis ; I hope so. But isn't it sickening? When you want to work, and no work comes in your way! My nerves are strung to such a pitch that I feel I could accept a brief even on a five Rupee fee. Well, Sir, I mustn't bore you any longer with my troubles. How is Sankar?

Mr. Pra : He is very well, thank you.

Mr. Vis ; I must be going. Good-bye Mr. Prabhakar.

Mr Pra ; Good-bye. Wish you luck.

Vis : Thank you.

(*Gowri who has been peeping comes out. Enter Malini also.*)

Gowri ; That you, Malini? Have you finished your music lesson?

Malini ; Yes, mother. Hullo, father! What's the matter with you? You look so out of sorts, and you were perfectly cheerful when I left you at breakfast.

Mr. Pra : My dear child, whatever my worries, I hope I shan't be anything but cheerful at breakfast. Why, it is shocking for the appetite to sulk when eating.

Malini : Surely something's wrong with you this morning, and you don't want to tell me. Never mind. By the way, what's the latest news of the Round Table Conference, is Gandhi going to America?

Gowri : Now look here, Malini. All this talk of the Conference doesn't interest me one little bit.

Malini : It ought to interest every man and woman in India, Mother.

Gowri : Well, it doesn't interest *me* any way. What I want to talk to you about is something really serious. I don't approve of this present fashion of late marriages and I am trying to arrange something for you.

Malini : Mother, I don't want to marry for a long time yet.

Gowri : What nonsense, child! Father and I will never have a peaceful life till we see you settle down. Our Sastras say, and very rightly too I think,—that if a father dies leaving a marriageable daughter unmarried he'll go to hell, and will never have a chance of a glimpse of Heaven.

Malini ; And if I marry, I suppose you both are sure to go straight to Heaven

Mr. Pra : Well not quite, you cheeky darling, but something of the sort *is* the idea.

Malini : And I am certain those ideas are false to the core.

Gowri : Don't argue, Malini. It's my wish that you should be married soon.

Malini : But, mother, supposing I don't like the man you choose for me.

Gowri : Are you going to choose for yourself, then? Don't be so conceited as to think that it's very easy to get a husband. Remember that these are not the days of "The Swayamvara" when a girl had so many suitors. Now it is hard to get one.

Malini ; Mother, aren't you ashamed to talk like this? Don't make girls too cheap by—

Gowri ; But the Sastras say—

Malini: Oh, for goodness' sake, don't

drag in the Sastras. People quote the Sastras to tell a girl she ought to be married at the age of eight. But if she becomes a widow—

Gowri ; Oh shut up, Malini.

Malini : Yes, you want me to shut up when I talk sense and reveal the fallacies of the Sastras. How cautious you people are. Aren't you? You quote the Sastras to suit your convenience? When I ask you how the Sastras allow a girl of eight to become a widow, you can't look me in the face and answer, because you yourself feel in your heart of hearts—though you won't own it for a second—that it is cruel for a girl of eight to become a widow. The Sastras may reiterate these rules but it's time we outgrew such silly old customs.

Gowri : Don't talk like a fool, Malini. You are seventeen and it is time you got married. (*to Prabhakar*) Look at the way you've brought up your daughter. She has no respect for her mother's wishes.

[*Mr. Prabhakar meanwhile is so disgusted that he walks up and down restlessly with the newspaper in his hand and does not answer.*]

Gowri : I can't stand any more of this nonsense, Malini. You are going to love the man we get for you. (*then laughingly*) That's a prophecy, not a threat.

Malini ; Very well, mother. Now let's talk of something else. Father, do you think I could get a pair of Swadesi Teninis Shoes?

Mr. Pra : I daresay you could, Malini, if we wrote to Bombay. Bombay is *the* place for all sorts of up-to-date Swadesi goods. I hear there is a huge Swadesi shop somewhere there and if ever a shop is run on modern lines, I believe it is that one. Why, they even sell Swadesi perfumes, lipsticks and whatnots; I'll write and ask them for the shoes if you give me the size.

Malini : That'll be topping, father. Thanks so much. I say! do you know if Gandhi has met Bernard Shaw? I should love them to meet and Oh!—I forgot—what is the latest news of the Minorities Committee?

Gowri: (*angrily*) : Will you stop all this nonsense, Malini? I hear such a lot these days about Federal Structure Committee, Minorities Committee, and the Depressed Classes. I am sick of it all! Nor have I the foggiest idea what they all stand for. Not that I care to know!

Malini : Mother, it's a pity you don't read the papers these days. They make notoriously good reading and I can't understand why you take a pride in saying that you don't know. I bet you know more than you profess to.

Gowri ; My dear child, I don't. Now I think you've talked enough. Will you call Sankar, and don't come and disturb us as we have something important to discuss.

Malini All right, Mother.

(*Exit Malini*).

Gowri : How lucky for us Sankar thought of taking leave! I'm sure he and Padmini will help us a lot to fix up the marriage.

(*Enter Sankar.*)

Sankar ; Hallo, mother. Anything important to tell me?

Gowri ; Yes, and it is very important.

Sankar (*sits down*): Well, fire away. I'm listening.

Gowri ; You never told me that nice young man who called on us the other day is a great friend of yours.

Sankar : Didn't I? I thought I had. Yes, we were together at Oxford.

Gowri ; I don't know why I'm never to be told anything. If I had known you were such friends, we could have fixed up things long ago. Now who knows, it is perhaps too late.

Sankar : What's the matter mother? What do you want with Gopinath?

Gowri : I was just wondering what a fine match it would be for Malini if—

Sankar : Oh, aren't you women clever?

Gowri : Well there's no harm, is there ?

Sankar : Nothing in the world, only I should ask Malini first and then go to Gopinath.

Gowri : You are just as bad as your father. Why should we ask Malini ? A little while ago the girl had the cheek to tell me that she'll choose for herself.

Mr. Pra : Now Gowri, Malini didn't say that. She just said she would marry only the man she loved.

Sankar : Very sensible of her, if you ask me.

Gowri : I tell you I shan't ask her consent. You wouldn't sympathize with me if I tell you what the modern mind is,—for you are modern yourself. You people are sceptical and critical and impatient. At my age we believe in certain traditional things, and you jeer at them. You are sentimental though you won't admit it ; shall I shock you very much if I say that you are just as sentimental as we ? Only you take the utmost pains to conceal it and pretend to be flippant. After all, you have the same passions and emotions. I can't see what you young people are about. That's why I shouldn't consult you youngsters even if it's something which personally affects you. Malini might want to marry and yet she mightn't be sure of her own mind, and put forth arguments such as Love, Mutual Understanding and similar rot.

Sankar : Look here, mother, you are always troubling yourself unnecessarily about our beliefs. We haven't got any beliefs, nor old people for that matter. At the moment society seems to be topsy-turvy, and nobody knows what to believe. Probably it's an age of scepticism and indifference. Perhaps something definite will come out of it all. But everything is uncertain now and you mustn't criticise anything that is uncertain.

Gowri : Don't take sides with the modern mind just because you are young. I say the whole structure of society—

Sankar : Oh hang the structure of society. Forgive me, mother, but what I mean is, you are a bit harsh on us. You mustn't blame the young people only. How can you possibly expect them to live the life that your great grand-mother lived ? Take for instance your grand-mother ; she married when she was a child and you say it was a very successful marriage—which I imagine was a sheer stroke of luck. You can't take that as an example and marry your daughter very young.

Gowri : Oh no. I don't approve of child marriage.

Sankar: There you are. Views change by themselves with the passing years. What was good enough for your grand-mother isn't good enough for you. What you think good may not be viewed through the same glass by Malini She may have different views on marriage and there is nothing unnatural about it, for views about most things are changing every day. What do you say, father ?

Mr. Prar : My boy, I agree with you.

Gowri : Well, we'll see if Malini won't do as I wish. I'm sure I'll succeed. If anything goes wrong, you and Sankar will be responsible. You are both spoiling the child by allowing her to have her own way too much

Mr. Pra. What can we do if these young girls take it into their heads to refuse to marry ? It's all very easy for you to make speeches about the modern mind—but it's not so easy to persuade them.

Gowri : It's because you don't try. Have you ever tried, and what do you mean by saying that I make speeches ? I know you always take a pleasure in pulling my leg. You are always sarcastic when I express an opinion.

In the old days, Professors used to dress like this—

And then like this—

And now———

Soon they will be like this—

And then perhaps like this—

And who knows like—

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MADRAS

Mr. Pra ; I have every respect for your opinion, Gowri. But I can't help saying that you made a lovely little speech a little while ago.

Gowri : There again you are making fun of me.

Mr. Pra : Not at all. You mustn't take little things so seriously. My dear woman, can't you appreciate a joke ?

Gowri : Will you remember that your jokes are apt to irritate me at times ?

Sankar : Mother, you seem to get offended at little things. You oughtn't to, you know. Especially now that you have a marriageable daughter. You must use all your tact.

Gowri : I know you always take your father's side. I don't know why everybody's against me.

Sankar : Now mother, remember we were discussing Malini's marriage.

Gowri ; So we were. I am sorry. I don't know why little things get on my nerves these days. Perhaps it's because I'm growing old. Now about Mr. Gopinath. Are you going to help me to get him ?

Sankar ; I shall certainly help you if Malini consents. As a matter of fact I'm keen on Malini marrying the boy.

Gowri ; And about Gopinath—are you so sure of him ?

Sankar : Oh well, I know he has a sneaking admiration for Malini. They haven't met yet but I believe Gopinath saw her at the Talkies the other day and he guessed that she was my sister. Gopinath wants to meet her very much.

Gowri : Please ask him here some time, soon. We'll talk the matter over together. Of course we won't straightaway ask him to marry Malini. Probably he'll guess.

Sankar : I don't mind asking Gopinath straightaway. There won't be any difficulty as far as he is concerned. Only Iam wondering how Malini will take it.

Gowri : Can't Padmini persuade her ?

Sankar : Padmini is no good. Well, I have an idea. I'll take Malini with me when I go to the Moffussil. I shall invite Gopinath too. When Malini gets to know him, I'm sure she'll like him.

Gowri : That'll be splendid. Thank you, Sankar.

Sankar : I say father our old friend Bhaskar is anxious to marry Malini.

Mr. Pra What ! I swear I'll never give my daughter to that man.

Sankar : Why he has got lots of money.

Mr. Pra : Give Malini to a man of that sort, with all his antiquated trumpery ! Phew !

Sankar : Well, mother wouldn't object to anyone as long as the fellow has money.

Gowri : Don't say that, Sankar. I don't only think of money. However we can keep Mr. Bhaskar in reserve.

Sankar ; What an idea ! I'll allow nothing of the kind.

Gowri : Of course I prefer your friend Mr. Gopinath.

Sankar : Prefer ! Don't you dare to couple Bhaskar's name with Gopinath's.

Gowri : I'll do anything you wish if Malini gets a husband. (Then looking at the clock) Good gracious ! It's nearly twelve and I promised the cook to help him make the Pulav. I must go to the kitchen and see what he is doing.

(*Exit Gowri.*)

Mr. Pra : Well, Sankar. Mother's a dear, isn't she ? She is so afraid Malini wouldn't get a husband if she had to wait another two years. Anyway I'm glad Malini is more than fourteen or we should have had to go to court according to the Sarda Act.

Sankar : Yes, I'm jolly glad she is seventeen. It would have been beastly to marry her on the sly and then be caught and taken to court.

Enter Servant.

Servant: A gentleman come to see Big Master.

Mr. Pra: Oh it must be a client. Come along Sankar.

(*Exeunt*)

Curtain.

ACT II

(*Sitting Room of Mr. Prabhakar's house. Servant tidying the room. Enter Mr. Sankar looking at his watch*)

Sankar; Gopinath hasn't come yet, has he?

Servant: No sir.

Sankar: I wonder what's happened. He is usually so punctual.

(*Takes up a paper to read. Exit servant and enters again*)

Servant: Master's friend Mr. Gopinath coming to see Master.

Sankar: That's good. Show him in.

(*Enter Gopinath*)

Gopinath: Hullo Sankar, Am I late? Fact is that beastly level-crossing was closed for nearly 6 minutes. Level-crossings are getting a nuisance these days. I wish they'll do something about it

Sankar: They could build over-bridges. They've built a few already.

Gopinath: Well they had better hurry up with the rest.

Sankar: Gopinath, Mother wants to see you. You don't mind having a talk with her?

Gopinath: Not at all. A pleasure. Is it anything important?

Sankar: Wait and see Whatever it is, don't make me a party to it. It is between you and mother and if there's a third person—Oh I must shut up.

Mr. Gopinath: What a humbug you are, Sankar! You gave the show away not ten seconds ago by that hint of yours I shall begin to guess directly. Is it a proposal?

Sankar: Take care. It comes from the mother, not the girl.

Gopinath: Oh that's understood. Besides I would be the last person to marry a girl who proposed to me.

Sankar (*teasingly*): Suppose Malini proposed to you, what would you say then?

Gopinath: I should simply say: "I'm your Prince Charming from this moment."

Sankar: I suppose so. Not that Malini is that sort of girl.

Gopinath: I'm sure not; but let's stop joking. Look here, have I any chance? I have no use for a mother's proposal.

Sankar: That's just what I've been trying to convince mother. Malini has got all sorts of notions in her head. If mother went to her and said she had fixed up a marriage for her she'd certainly refuse.

Gopinath: And I'd be the last person to marry her against her will.

Sankar: Precisely. So the best plan will be to take Malini with me to the mofussil for a month. You can blow in, casually. Don't let her suspect you've been picked and chosen by mother. You can pretend to be a Head Clerk of some office in the neighbourhood.

Gopinath: Good Gracious! You don't mean to say that Malini will fall in love with a clerk.

Sankar: I'm positive. You know she is quite young and inexperienced yet. She won't think of position when love enters her heart.

Gopinath: I doubt it, Sankar, and I don't blame her either, for she has every right to expect a certain social position. After reading all this romantic fiction, a girl may believe in 'Love in a cottage' and all that rot, but it is hardly fair to put her to such a test.

Sankar: We are planning all this just for some fun and also to see mother's wish fulfilled.

Gopinath : I hope she won't be furious when she knows everything eventually.

Sankar ; It'll be a great joke. Besides it will give my wife a chance to pull her leg now and then.

Gopinath : And supposing she doesn't marry me. I'll have to carry the remnants of my pride and go home.

Sankar : Oh I bet everthing will be O. K. Just take my advice.

Gopinath : Very well. I'll do as you wish, but it is such a tremendous risk, don't you think?

Enter servant.

Servant ; Mr. Bhaskar wanting to see you sir.

Sankar : Show him in.

Exit Servant.

Sankar : Dear me. That man of all others, coming to see me. He is such a bore, Gopinath. Always boasting of his wealth and the distinctions he won at College. He tells me he nearly got his colours in tennis, though judging from his play, goodness knows how he got anywhere near such an achievement.

Gopinath ; I shall be delighted to meet such a man. I wonder why one of us didn't try to get our tennis Blue. We played such a lot in England. We might have boasted too and for me it would have been an easier road in winning Malini ! for I know many girls who take a fancy to crack players.

Sankar ; You'd better buck up with your tennis, for Malini is very keen.

(Enter Mr. Bhaskar, a rich land owner of 35)

Sankar ; Hullo Mr. Bhaskar. I am glad to see you. This is my friend Mr. Gopinath who was with me at college.

Bhaskar ; I'm very pleased to meet you. I hear you play tennis very well.

Gopinath : I daresay I can play a fairly decent game.

Bhaskar ; You know I got my colours in tennis.

Gopinath ; So I've just heard.

Bhaskar : Sankar told you, did he ?

Gopinath ; Well, he told me you nearly got your colours.

Bhaskar ; What do you mean ? I was dead certain of getting my colours. All my friends said "Your style is superb. Bhaskar". But I missed it by a stroke of sheer bad luck.

Gopinath ; Ofcourse "there's many a slip'twixt the cup and the lip". Isn't there Mr. Bhaskar ?

Bhaskar ; I should think so Mr. Gopinath. But I've no regrets for I got a a first in the tripos.

Gopinath ; So I've just heard from Sankar.

Bhaskar ; There you are. Sankar knows all about me.

Gopinath : But Sankar can't possibly know of your doings at college for he was at Oxford with me.

Bhaskar ; What do you mean?. Do you doubt my word ?

Gopinath : Certainly not, only I was remarking that Sankar couldn't know of your career at college any more than I.

Bhaskar : But I told you we are old friends. Why if you don't believe me. I can show you my certificate.

Gopinath : That would be a waste of time. Besides we don't want to convince each other of our good points provided they are there.

Bhaskar : If you think I wanted to convince you Mr. Gopinath, you are mistaken. I don't care two curses what you think of me. I just talked casually about tennis and my career at college to provide conversation. After all one must say something when one meets a stranger.

Gopinath : Oh quite. But there is really no need to be violent, is there ?

Sankar: Now, now Gopinath let's not argue over little things. What about a friendly talk!

Bhaskar (*victoriously*): Exactly, certainly. I can't understand why people want to argue over small things.

Sankar (*determined that Gopinath should not seem to be defeated*) I'm afraid Gopinath is one of those people who are so interested in ideas that they can't understand the beauties of small talk.

Bhaskar (*surprised at the affront*) Heaven forbid that I should be accused of keeping the conversation to small talk. I should have thought being an old friend you would have understood me betters, Sankar.

Sankar (*anxious to make peace*) O! course I understand you, Bhaskar. I was, only joking, let's talk of something else.

Gopinath (*mischievously*) Why didn't you get into one of these colleges as a lecturer, Mr. Bhaskar?

Bhaskar: Well I have a big estate to manage and a man of my responsibilities, Mr. Gopinath, can't afford to waste time lecturing in a college.

Gopinath· Why do you think it a waste of time'

Bhaskar: I've no time to argue with you, Mr. Gopinath.

Gopinath: I didn't mean to argue. I only feel that since you had such a brilliant career it would have been quite the thing to take up such work.

Bhaskar: And who are you, sir, to dictate to me in this way? If only people would mind their own business the world would be ever so much better a place.

Sankar; Oh come. Don't let us quarrel.

Bhaskar: I want to have a private talk with you, Sankar. If you haven't the time now I'll call some other day.

Gopinath: Sankar, I'll just have a drive round in my car, and come back in ten minutes.

Sankar: Right O! Mind you come back.

Gopinath: Oh certainly.

(*Exit Gopinath*).

Bhaskar: What a conceited fellow your friend is. Let him dare to insult me like that again,—and I'll—.

Sankar: Bhaskar, I don't think he meant to insult you. He just showed an interest in your affairs. He is a very nice boy, but needs more knowing. I'm sure you'll get to like him then.

Bhaskar: I swear I'll never be friends with him Fancy his doubting my college career! As if I was a schoolboy telling fibs! Outrageous insult I call it.

Sankar: I'll ask him to apologise. Will that please you?

Bhaskar: I don't want to see the fellow again.

Sankar (*disgusted*) What was it you wanted to tell me? Hurry up, Gopinath will be here in a few minutes.

Bhaskar: You always think of Gopinath. Not a thought about me. Never mind. Now what I have to tell you is something very private. I am madly keen on marrying Malini and I want you to speak to your mother on my behalf.

Sankar: Why don't you tell mother yourself? I hate the business af arranging marriages.

Bhaskar: Can't you help me? You can even ask Malini for I'm sure she doesn't dislike me.

Sankar: That'll never do, Malini has no idea of marrying.

Bhaskar: I'm perfectly certain your mother will consent. She knows that I'm wealthy. I don't see why your sister should refuse if your mother wishes her to marry. These modern girls have silly ideas about love and marriage. Eventually they marry quite the wrong man and are miserable. Now for instance if she marries me nothing will mar her happiness. Any desire of hers in the

way of houses, clothes, jewels and so on could be satisfied.

Sankar: Thank you, Baskar. It's really an honour, but I'm afraid all this won't tempt Malini.

Baskar: Not even if you tried to persuade her?

Sankar: I don't believe in coercing girls.

Baskar: You needn't coerce her. Surely you can point out to her where her happiness lies.

Sankar: Not so easy when the girl is dead against marriage. Baskar, I heard you were going to marry the girl we met the other day at the Garden Party. Seems to be a nice sort of girl—quiet and un-assuming and all that sort of thing,—what's her name?

Baskar: You mean Vimila.

Sankar: That's right. Supposed to be brilliant at studies—I believe she is up-to-date as far as modern authors are concerned. I'm sure she'll make a very nice wife. What?

Baskar: Malini is the girl for me.

Sankar: My sister is too young and I don't see why you should wait.

Baskar: Why should your refusal be so final? Have you any idea of marrying her to that conceited friend of yours?

Sankar: I've no idea of marrying her to anybody.

Baskar: If you are not going to be frank with me, Baskar, I had better give you this warning. Don't give him hopes, as I stand a distinctly better chance of marrying your sister. His case will be like that of the man in the story who was disappointed by his lady-love and was described as "Love Riding away in a sports car."

Sankar: Good gracious! You don't mean to say that Gopinath will have to go away with unfulfilled love? Look here, Baskar, I don't want to insult you, but don't dare to talk like that about my friend. He'll be the last person to make a fool of himself. In his case if "Love rides away in a sports car"—it will be with the girl he loves.

Baskar: You seem pretty anxious to stand up for Gopinath. What about me? I 'm an old friend, too, am I not?

Sankar: I'm terribly sorry to hurt your feelings, Baskar. I say, old man, I'm anxious to see you happily married. Why don't you marry the girl I suggested a little while ago? She reads Bernard Shaw, Galsworthy, Aldous Huxley and the whole lot of them.

Baskar: Well, marriage isn't one whole stretch of reading standard books.

Sankar: Still I'd like a wife who read real stuff and not cheap six-penny novels. You see reading good books shows character.

Baskar: But it is Malini I want to marry. You'll ask your mother, won't you?

Sankar (anxious to get rid of the man): Very well. I'll speak to mother.

Baskar: Thank you (*getting up*) you won't forget, will you?

Sankar: No.

(*Knock at the door. Enter Gopinath.*)

Gopinath: Am I intruding?

Sankar: No.

Bhaskar: Good-bye (*moves towards door.*)

Sankar: Good-bye.

Bhaskar (stopping half way): Don't forget!

(*Exit Bhaskar.*)

Gopinath: Nice day for a drive. I came across a beautiful car, Sankar. I'll tell my future father-in-law—whoever the old man is—that I'll marry his daughter only if he buys me a car for a ten thousand.

Sankar: Indeed! You needn't enter this house with such an idea

You'll have to give us the ten thousand for giving you such a charming girl.

Gopinath : I'll willingly give you ten thousand. I see rocks ahead in this matter of winning Malini. By the way, where's your mother?

Sankar : Oh I forgot. I'll tell her you are here.

(*Exit Sankar. Gopinath walks about looking at pictures, books etc. Enter Gowri and Sankar.*)

Sankar : Mother, here's Gopinath.

Gowri : I'm very pleased to meet you.

Gopinath : The pleasure is entirely mine.

Gowri : You haven't met Sankar's wife, have you?

Sankar : No. But he is coming to stay with us soon. Padmini and Malini have gone to spend the day with Pad's mother.

Gopinath : That's good. Only the most awful necessity will drive me to meet a certain person now.

Sankar : Yes, all our plan will break into bits, if you did.

Gowri : (*eagerly*) What's your plan?

Sankar : We won't give it away yet, mother.

Gowri : But I should like to know, if it concerns Malini.

Sankar : How awful! But we can't tell you anything yet. You'll be glad to know Gopinath is just as keen as you are.

Gowri : Mr. Gopinath! We *are* lucky. You can't imagine what happiness it will give me to see the child married to a man whom Sankar thinks so much of——

Sankar : Don't talk in that strain, mother. Gopinath ought to thank us, if you ask me.

Gopinath : Oh, quite. I do see that—

Gowri : But it is so difficult for a girl to—

Sankar : Rot!

Gopinath : Sankar is right. You'll do me a great honour if you give me a chance of—

Gowri : I'd give you my daughter most happily.

Sankar : Not till she consents, though.

Gopinath : That's understood. Of course.

Gowri : She'll have to obey me.

(*Gopinath looking at his watch*): It's nearly twelve. I must be going.

Gowri : I wish you'd stay to lunch.

Gopinath : Thank you. Not today. Good-bye, Sankar, Good-bye Mrs. Prabhakar. Seeing you has cheered me up.

(*Exeunt severally.*)

Enter servant Ramaswamy.

Ramaswamy (*dusting chairs etc*): I wonder what Madam and Master and that young man were conspiring about. Sure there's a wedding coming.

(*Enter Maid.*)

Ramasawmy : Amirtham, there's a wedding in the house. I'll drink ten *lotas* of *payasam*.

Amirtham : What do you mean? Whose wedding is it? Yours?

Ramasawmy : Well, why not, if you'll have me? Haha! Oh, well, you silly girl can't you see Miss Malini is going to be married?

Amirtham : Miss Malini, indeed What rot! and how do you know, I wonder. As if madam would tell you first about it. She would surely tell me before she told any one.

Ramasawmy : No one told me. I just guessed.

Amirtham : And I'm sure you are wrong. I telling Miss Malini the other day, "Miss Malini I'll come with you when you are married," and Miss Malini getting angry and telling "Amirtham don't talk to me about being married. I'm not going to marry."

Ramasawmy: They all say that, my dear girl—but they dont mean it. There's a wedding coming. What'll you bet me if there isn't?

Amirtham: I'll give you ten *lotas* of *payasam* if there is.

Ramasawmy: That won't do. It's money I want. Arumugam the gardener says though there is a lot of picketting of toddy shops going on still, you can safely get drink without being caught by the picketers. You know they'll give you a lecture if they see you drunk.

Amirtham: But you can't get drunk on the wedding day.

Ramasawmy: Next day will do.

Amirtham: All right, I'll give you eight annas if there is a wedding, and you'll have to give a Rupee if there isn't.

Ramasawmy: I'll give you two Rupees. Now you leave me to my work. We mustn't be caught talking.

Exit Amirtham.

Curtain.

ACT: III.

Scene 1.

Sankar's house in the mofussil.
Scene: *Drawing room*;— *Sankar and Gopinath, seated.*

Sankar: I say Gopinath,—you are a jolly sport to come all the way from Madras to satisfy a whim of mine. Now that you are really here, I'm wondering why I planned things so foolishly. I wonder how the clerk business is going to work, out. You are going to pretend to be a Head clerk in some office in the neighbourhood, aren't you?

Gopinath: My being here proves it. I shouldn't have come here if I hadn't meant to stick it. When you first suggested it at Madras I was rather doubtful as to how Malini would take it. But on second thoughts, I think it's going to be rather fun, and after all, I don't see why I should marry Malini if she doesn't love me and if she does, she wouldn't care two curses about the clerkship.

Sankar: You're right. As I told you, Malini is a queer girl. If I thrust you on her and tell her that you are the man mother intends her to marry, she wouldn't look at you twice. This is a better plan.

Gopinath: Without the shadow of a doubt.

Sankar: And you won't find fault with me if things don't turn out as we expect?

Gopinath: Certainly not. Some of the blame would be mine, for I needn't have accepted your suggestion. Besides you've been inviting me here so often. I'm glad I came now, as I've six weeks' holiday to my credit. If your sister doesn't want some coaching in tennis, you'll take me to the men's club,—won't you?

Sankar: Of course I will, but Malini is so keen on tennis that I'm sure she'll ask you to play with her.

Gopinath: I hope she won't make a fuss.

Sankar: She's not a fussy girl, Gopinath.

Gopinath: You're sure?

Sankar: Perfectly certain. (*teasingly*) Don't be rude to my sister.

Gopinath: You needn't teach me manners, Sankar. I hope I know how to behave.

Sankar calls servant Manickam.

Enter Manickam.

Sankar: Will you call Madam?

Manickam: Very well sir. (*Exit.*)

Sankar: I'll ask my wife what our programme is for the afternoon.

Gopinath: Am I not playing tennis with your sister?

Sankar: Oh you dont want my wife and me to play? We are fairly useful at the game.

Enter Padmini

Sankar: Padmini, you haven't met Gopinath before, have you?

Padmini: No. How do you do, Mr. Gopinath? I have heard a great deal about you from my husband. I'm glad you made up your mind to come at last.

Sankar; Padmini, he hasn't come to see us. Ask him why he has come.

Gopinath: Now, now, Sankar, don't be absurd. I meant to come in any case to meet Mrs. Sankar.

Padmini: We are very glad to have you. There's nothing doing in this place, particularly. But I can promise you some very good tennis at the Club.

Sankar: Padmini, have you any idea what we are doing this afternoon?

Padmini; Well, you know I've promised to give away the prizes at the Club. So you'll have to come with me. Malini and Mr. Gopinath can come too.

Sankar: They had better stay at home and play tennis. Wouldn't you like that better, Gopinath?

Gopinath: I'd love some tennis if Malini is game.

Sankar (*to Padmini*): Where's Malini this morning?

Padmini: She has just got out of bed.

Sankar: I noticed that she wasn't down for breakfast.

Padmini: No. It was nearly one when we went to bed last night. So I told her not to bother to get up early. Mr. Gopinath, you haven't met her, have you? She'll be down presently.

Gopinath: I think I've seen here once, but of course we've never met.

Padmini: I should think not, *or* you would never have made all this silly game pretending to be a clerk and all that.

Sankar: Hush, Padmini! Malini might come in any moment.

Padmini; How thoughtless of me!

(*Enter Malini.*)

Sankar: Hullo Malini. You dont't believe in "Rising with the Lark" do you?

Malini: I don't know if there are larks in India. Besides itsn't a case of not believing. We were larking till pretty late last night.

Sankar: This is my friend Mr Gopinath. He is a very good tennis player.

Malini: How do you do? Padmini, I don't want to come to this afternoon's prize giving affair, though of course I'd love to see my sister-in-law give away the prizes. But no more boredom for me. Last night's show was enough to drive one mad.

Gopinath: Why I gathered that you had gone to see a nice play which lasted till one clock.

Malini: A very nice play indeed! There is nothing more disgusting than men taking the parts of women, when they can't act for nuts. Have you ever seen a woman hold a handkerchief in her hand and wipe her face every five seconds?

Sankar: Well I saw the heroine of the play do it pretty frequently last night. I don't see why you and Padmini shouldn't do it. It might come into fashion you know.

Malini: And the way that he—woman fidgetted with her saree! It looked so awkward.

Sankar: Now, now Malini. You mustn't be too critical. Remember it was a man wearing a saree probably for the first time.

Malini: Surely they'd have had rehearsals. At any rate men oughtn't to wear sarees if they can't manage them properly.

Sankar: Why blame a man? I've seen some of you women dress so badly.

Malini: That's a different question. Besides one goes to see a play to see perfection in an art.

Sankar: Perhaps from their point of view it *was* perfect.

Malini: Don't be silly. You just want to argue. That's all. Don't you agree with what I say, Mr. Gopinath?

Gopinath: Of course I do. Men oughtn't to wear sarees.

Malini: But honestly, I think we ought to reform a great deal in the direction of stage management and acting. Look how much ahead of us other countries are. Fancy the hero throwing away his sweetheart's letter after reading it. It is never done in real life.

Gopinath: You are right. If I were the hero, I would preserve the letter in lavender.

Padmini: I agree with Malini. They have no idea of stage-management. Didn't you notice the love scene in the forest, Malini?

Malini: Yes, I did. Could anything be more ridiculous than an up-to-date settee placed in the forest for the lovers to sit down on and make love? And the lovers ambled across to the settee as if everything had been arranged previously. You can't deny that it was all very unreal. It would have been far more realistic if the lovers had sat on a rock or a fallen tree.

Sankar: You'd have to have a storm or something for the lovers to come across fallen trees at convenient distances.

Malini: Not necessarily. How stupid you are! Surely you could find cosy places in a forest to sit down. Anything would be better than a settee.

Sankar: What else have you to criticise?

Malini: Lots more. The heroine went to bed in a most generous Benares saree, gold lace all over. And the men looked idiotic in their velvet coats, trousers, stockings and velvet slippers. And as for the music—it was a great disappointment. I think in the technique of production we have a great deal to learn. I feel that not a detail ought to be neglected, not a costume nor a colour nor a pose should be left unstudied.

Sankar: Why don't you act, Malini, and set an example? Gopinath and I will take parts too.

Malini: I shouldn't dare to take part in a performance until I had studied the art to the last detail. If I act at all, it will be when scenic art is so perfected that a moon will give a moon's light and dawn will creep in as gently and softly as in nature.

Sankar: You might be one of India's future actresses, who knows?

Malini: Don't talk rot. But probably I shall act when the art of acting has reached such a stage that it can depict life realistically.

Sankar: Well spoken, Malini. (*looking at his watch*) Ten to eleven, and I have an appointment at eleven, I must fly. Malini, would you rather stay at home and play tennis this afternoon?

Malini: Yes, if Mr. Gopinath doesn't mind putting up with my bad play.

Gopinath: It will be a pleasure.

Sankar: Right O!

Exit Sankar.

Padmini: Malini, I must run away and see the cook about dinner. You won't mind?

Malini: Oh no. I'm getting quite used to amusing myself while you are busy.

Padmini (*laughing*): Mr. Gopinath will amuse you.

Exit Padmini.

Malini: I'm having a very lazy time here. Padmini is busy almost all day. There's nothing to do but practice on my Veena.

Gopinath: You play the Veena beautifully, don't you?

Malini: Who told you that?

Gopinath: I thought I heard someone playing when I came.

Malini: It must have been sheer imagination. I never touched my Veena this morning.

Gopinath (disappointed): Oh!

Malini: You haven't taken to Swadeshi, evidently.

Gopinath: Of course I have. I'm every inch a Swadesi Man.

Malini: Are you?

Gopinath: You bet.

Malini: You surely don't mean to say that what you are wearing now is Swadesi.

Gopinath: I'll try to convince you. Shirting bought from Calico Mills, Suiting from Swadesi Emporium. You know that smart little shop in Mount Road—started by some of the smart Ladies of Madras. My beautiful silk tie from Indian Industrials, and as for my up-to-date shoes—why of course from the India Reptiles. Are you satisfied?

Malini: There isn't any satisfaction to be derived from that. After all I don't care what you wear.

Gopinath: You are making a mistake. When you are in earnest about Swadesi yourself, you ought to care about what your friends wear.

Malini: I can hardly call you my friend yet.

Gopinath: Don't say that. We are going to be great friends, aren't we? (*Mischievously*) We are going to play tennis this afternoon. Just You and I.

Malini: Does playing tennis constitute friendship.?

Gopinath: Well, not exactly.

Malini: On the other hand, playing tennis might break friendships?

Gopinath: How do you mean?

Malini: If I don't play well, you might dodge me the next time.

Gopinath: Oh, never.

Malini: You're sure!

Gopinath: Absolutely certain. I'm at your service whenever you want me to play.

Malini: That's extremely kind of you. Were you with my brother at Oxford?

Gopinath: Oh no. Never had the luck to study abroad.

Malini: I don't know why, but I thought you were in the Civil Service.

Gopinath: Perhaps because I am Sankar's friend. I am just a Head Clerk. As a matter of fact, I had taken leave and gone home. My leave isn't over yet but I came as Sankar asked me to spend a fortnight with him.

Malini: I see. I'm glad you came, as I'm looking forward to some tennis.

Enter Padmini.

Padmini: I hope Mr. Gopinath has told you some of his funny stories?

Malini: No. We've been having a serious talk about Swadesi.

Padmini: I see. And is Mr. Gopinath an ardent Swadesi man?

Gopinath: You know I am.

Padmini: I hope you are not saying it just to please Malini.

Gopinath: Certainly not. But I don't propose to burn my foreign clothes.

Malini: I hope you won't ever buy new foreign stuff and then for convenience say that it is old stock.

Gopinath: Do I look that sort of man?

Malini: I am no good at Physiognomy. But there are some people who can talk very conveniently about Swadesi and suddenly one day you see them in georgette or something and it's old stuff, they tell you.

Gopinath: I told you one can't burn old stuff.

Padmini : Quite so. Even ultra-swadesi people don't burn old stuff.

Enter servant.

Servant : A fortune teller has come wanting to see Master.

Padmini : Master is not at home. But I love fortune-telling. Ask him to come in, Manickam.

Exit Manickam.

Padmini : Malini, I'll ask him to tell your fortune.

Enter Manickam and Fortune Teller.

F. Teller : Lady—I can read your forehead. You have a long life.

Padmini : Can you tell this lady's fortune ?

Malini : Don't, Padmini. I tell you I don't believe in it.

Padmini : Oh come. It is great fun, listening.

F. Teller : Young lady not believing me, but when Fortune Teller tells her fortune, young lady will be convinced.

(*Goes to Malini and takes her hand and examines it.*

Malini tries to draw away her hand).

F. Teller : Be a little patient. I telling you every thing. Young lady has a long life and great future. Many men coming to marry her but she refusing all. But fortune teller telling one thing. Young lady will be married soon.

Malini : Quite wrong. It's all humbug.

F. Teller : Listen. Young lady thinking now she'll never marry. But soon a handsome man coming and young lady never refuse. Fortune Teller can swear.

Malini : Oh stop. You are on the wrong track.

Padmini : You better have a look at my hand. When shall *I* be married ?

F. Teller : Young lady can't deceive fortune-teller. You married already to a nice man.

Padmini : I say, that's jolly good.

F. Teller : Young lady's husband is very rich. Young lady will have long married life and ten children.

Padmini : Good gracious. You are wrong there. I'll never have ten children.

F. Teller : But the lord in Heaven has blessed young lady with ten children.

Padmini : It's certainly not a blessing. That'll do, Fortune Teller.

F. Teller : Does the young man sitting there not want to know his fortune ? I can read from his forehead. You are going to be great.

Gopinath : I can't see how I can be great unless greatness is thrust on me.

F. Teller : No, no fortune teller telling very correctly.

Gopinath : You can't tempt me, my man.

Padmini : Thank you, fortune teller. You better go and wait outside.

F. Teller : Salaam, Lady.

Exit Padmini.

Malini : Isn't that Sankar's voice ? Let's ask the fortune teller to read his hand.

Gopinath : Right O !

Exit Malini & Gopinath

Curtain.

(*SCENE* : 2.

Sitting Room At the right hand corner a book-shelf with a few books.)

Enter Gopinath and Malini with tennis racquets.

Gopinath : This is the end of a perfect day.

Malini : It hasn't been a perfect day for me, because I played so badly.

Gopinath : Nonsense. You played a jolly good game. By the way, I hope you weren't fishing for compliments ; if you were ? I wouldn't have said you played well.

Malini : Never fished in my life. However, that won't prevent me from saying that I'm not good enough to play with you.

Gopinath : Don't be disheartened. You have many years of play before you yet ; you might be a champion in a few years time, and as for me, I shall always be happy to help you.

Malini : But you don't live in Madras.

Gopinath : That doesn't matter. Wherever I am, my spirit will always hover round you.

Malini : What do you mean ?

Gopinath ; I mean just what I say.

Malini ; You've no business to say such things. After all I've known you for such a short time. Why we met only this morning.

Gopinath : That's no reason. Life is strange. You are drawn towards some people the very first time you see them. On the other hand there are others you can never get to like even if you live with them for a life-time. For me, you belong to the first category.

Malini ; I'm glad it's not mutual, for I don't think I like you. How can you possibly expect a girl to like a man who at the very first meeting talks of spirit hovering round her and all that sort of mawkish sentiment.

Gapinath : I might as well tell you that I am an optimist and feel certain that you'll grow to like me.

Malini ; No. I never shall.

Gopinath : Never mind. Don't let's discuss that. (*examining her racequet*) I say, you ought to get a new racquet. No wonder your play wasn't up to mark.

Malini : What, I got this racquet very recently. I can't afford one every other day. I should have to be a millionairess for that.

Gopinath : Would you very much like to be a millionairess ?

Malini : Oh I'd love to have pots of money and live in a palace-like sort of a place, with beautiful gardens, and own a house in town.

Gopinath ; You don't agree with Ruskin when he says "It's happier to live in a small house and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at."

Malini : I daresay there's soms sense in it. But I don't know my own mind. Sometimes I long to be very rich.

Gopinath ; Ah ! that's because you are young yet and don't know your own mind. When you grow older you'll realise that money alone doesn't constitute happiness. I don't for a moment wish to say that to have money isn't a great advantage. Even a genius is dreadfully handicapped if he is poor. Still money alone can't buy some of the best things we want in this world.

(*Sound of a car.*)

Malini : Padmini and Sankar are back. I didn't realise it was so late.

Gopinath : That's a good sign. I gather that you enjoyed my company.

Malini : Nonsense.

Enter Padmini and Sankar.

Padmini ; Sorry we are late. You two had better come for a drive in the car.

Malini : How did the prize giving go?

Padmini : Splendidly.

(*Exeuent*).

Curtain.

SCENE III.

Same Room.

(*Malini sees Gopinath coming and takes a book and pretends to read.*)

(*Enter Gopinath.*)

Gopinath: Hullo! You are here? That's good. Come let's sit down and read something together. What about literature?

Malini: Don't distrub me. I'm reading such an interesting story.

Gopinath: I'd love to hear, too. Why don't you read aloud?

Malini: I can't grasp anything that I read aloud.

Gopinath: Now that is not fair, you know. You are in a sense my hostess, and you ought to be nice to me.

(*Malini doesn't answer. Gopinath walks about the room and then goes to the book shelf. Takes a book.*)

Gopinath: Let's read something else for a change.

(*Malini puts down her book.*)

Gopinath: I just want to read to you Shelley's Love Philosophy.

Malini: Will you please put that down?

Gopinath· Here we are.

"Nothing in the world is single
All things by a law divine
In each others' beings mingle
Why not I with thine." ?

Malini: Oh, stop.

Gopinath: "And the sunbeams kiss the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me!"

(*Malini snatches the book from his hand and flings it away.*

Gopinath takes another book.)

Gopinath: Or would you like me to read an "Ode to a pig while his nose was being bored?"

"Pig, it's your master's pleasure, then be still,
And hold your nose to let the iron through.
Dare you resist—"

Malini: Will you be quiet?

Gopinath: Will you let me finish my love's philosophy?

Malini: No I won't.

Gopinath: Then I shall sit down and write an "Ode to a girl while her nose is being bored." You can be the girl if you like.

(*Takes up a pen*)

Malini (*snatches away the pen*): You've been insulting. I demand an apology.

Gopinath: Yes, yes, of course I'll apologise, Let me explain.

Malini: I don't want any explanation if you can't behave properly. I shan't be bullied any more.

Gopinath: I thought I was behaving very nicely to you. Making love, Oh! so tenderly.

Malini: Making love, indeed! How nicely you make love!

Gopinath: Well, at the moment this seems to be the only discreet way of making love without the risk of boring you. But do you want me to make love like the heroes of fiction? I am quite good at that sort of thing, too. How would you like this for a beginning? "You know my madness. You shall play with it no longer. Bid me stay, and I give up everything for you. If you are fooling me, beware. Love me; and I will throw away for you, honour, fame, life, what you will."

Malini: Oh, do be quiet!

Gopinath: No use asking me to be quiet when I've not finished. Will a Shakespearean Hero please you better "Oh that I were a glove upon that hand, That I might touch that cheek."

Malini: Will you leave the room?

Gopinath : Yes, if you'll come with me.

(*Enter Padmini.*)

Padmini : Oh Malini, you've been quarrelling with Mr. Gopinath ?

Gopinath (*confused*) : I'll explain. I was just reading the Pilgrim's Progress to your sister-in-law and she said she didn't want anything so serious. That's all. We haven't quarrelled—on the contrary—

Padmini : You needn't explain. I want you to come and see my parrots. I've got two beauties.

Exeunt.

Curtain.

SCENE IV.

Mr. Prabhakar's house.

Drawing Room.

Enter Malini and Gopinath.

Malini : I shouldn't ever speak to you.

Gopinath : Why not ?

Malini : You can answer that for yourself.

Gopinath : Malini, aren't you glad to see me ?

Malini : Why should I be? You know it was terribly unfair to deceive me about your being a clerk. A week ago I saw your name in the Gazette.

Gopinath : I am frightfully sorry. Can't you forget and forgive ? Malini, I'm mad about you. Won't you marry me ?

Malini ; Don't think that your position will make any difference to me.

Gopinath ; Malini, do be serious. You haven't answered my question.

Malini : I've nothing to answer. After all, what point was there in deceiving me ?

Gopinath : I am frightfully sorry for what has happened. I'll go down on my knees and ask your forgiveness.

Malini ; Will you admit that it was horrible of you to pretend to be a clerk ?

Gopinath : Yes.

Malini : And that Sankar and Padmini were in the game ?

Gopinath : Yes.

Malini : And that you are really and truly sorry ?

Gopinath : Yes.

Malini : Then perhaps, I———.

(*Gopinath goes closer to her.*)

Malini : Wait. What do you know of me, after all ? I had better warn you of my many short-comings, and in the meantime, get a list of yours ready. I should tell you I am very bad tempered.

Gopinath ; I love a girl with a temper. It gives me a chance to keep her in order.

Malini : If you think that you can keep me in order, you will be disillusioned. You'll have to give me perfect independence.

Gopinath ; If I keep you in order it will be done so gently that you'll not feel it.

Malini : I hope you are never in the habit of using bad language.

Gopinath : What do you mean ?

Malini ; Well for instance, I won't stand it, if you call me, a minx, a monkey or a pig.

Gopinath ; I'll call you by a thousand beautiful tender names. You wouldn't mind my calling you my precious, my pearl, and so on? Is 'goose' allowed ?

Malini : (*Laughing*) Very well.

(*Gopinath puts his arm round her.*)

Gopinath : And what of the rest of the contract ?

Malini ; I hear mother coming.

(*Gopinath draws his hand away.*)

Gopinath : I hate to make an exhibition of lovemaking, Malini. Sit in that corner and read *Punch.*

(*Goes to the other end.*)

I will sit here and read Tagore.

(*Enter Gowri. Both get up*).

Gopinath : Malini has done me the honour of accepting my proposal. We have decided to settle our differences by getting married.

Malini ; Mother, our happiness will be perfect if you give us your blessing.

Gowri : Of course I'll bless you, children. I'm so happy ! Let me call your father.

(*Exit Gowri.*

Enter Prabhakar, Gowri, Sankar and Padmini).

Prabhakar (*goes to Malini and puts his arm round her*): My dear child, I'm so happy (*blessing her*).

Sankar : Father, if you've finished giving your blessings, I've something very interesting to read to you.

Gowri : What is it ?

Sankar : A letter from Bhaskar. May I read it ?

Gowri : Yes.

(*Sankar reads*).

My dear Sankar,

It's nearly a month today since I called on you and expressed my wish to marry your sister. Though of course it was clear you refused then, I ask you to reconsider my proposal. Probably you haven't spoken to your mother yet.

I took your advice and called on Miss Vimala. What do you think she was doing ? Reading as usual, one of the latest books called "Round the World Single Handed", and she said she had no time to waste as she had to hurry up with the book and then read another by what's that author's name—Oh yes, Sheriff, the author who became famous by writing "The Journey's End". I of course hinted my wish to her but she said that Hymen's lamps weren't going to light up yet for her.

Sankar : That's sounds very Shakespearean.

Gopinath : Probably he crammed Shakespeare at College.

Sankar : Let me finish—

Anyway I don't like that girl and I don't think I'll propose to her. Please speak to your mother on my behalf.

Yours sincerely,
Bhasker.

Sankar : What a queer pompous little man he is ! Well Mr. Bhaskar, it will have to be "Love riding away in a sports car for you."

Gowri : What do you mean ?

Sankar : I've no time to explain. Why, I haven't even blessed my little sister ! And Gopinath, congrats. old boy. I told you everything would be O. K.,

Malini : Why ? was it all planned before-hand ?

Padmini : Of course, my child. Didn't the clerkship enlighten you ?

Malini : I'm still furious about that. If I had known previous plans had been made I'd have refused (*then looking at Gopinath with a mischevious twinkle in her eyes*). Now of course it's too late, but I tell you, Sir, you havent heard the last about it yet !

CURTAIN.

Mathematics and Religion.

(*Continued from previous issue.*)

By Rao Bahadur P. V. Seshu Aiyar, I. E. S., (Retd.)

In the previous article, it has been shown how mathematics and religion have some concepts in common and how infinity is defined as such that when infinity is subtracted from it, the remainder is still infinite. Next we pass on to the consideration of different types of infinity.

We have in Purushasuktham which describes the Purusha (the Ultimate or the Absolute) different kinds of infinity, as it were, hinted at. This Purusha is described as

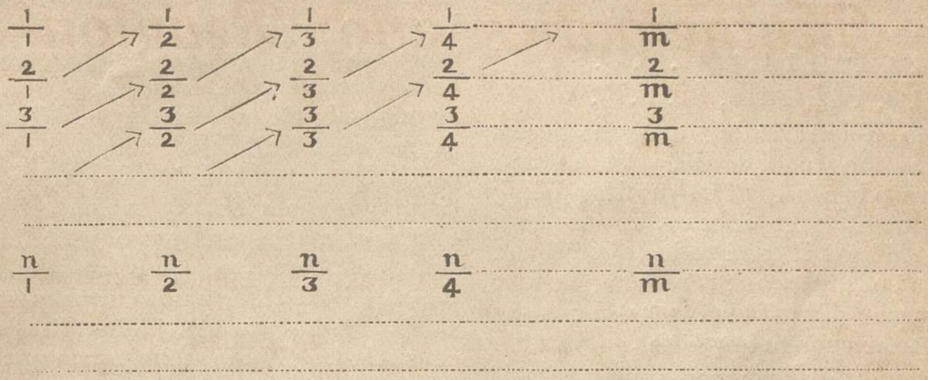
സഹസ്ര ശീർഷാ പുരുഷഃ
സഹസ്രാക്ഷഃ സഹസ്രപാത്
സഭൂമിം വിശ്വതോ വൃത്വാ
അത്യതിഷ്ഠത് ദശാംഗുലം
പുരുഷ ഏവേദം സർവ്വം
യത്ഭൂതം യച്ചഭവ്യം
ഏതാവാനസ്യ മഹിമാ
അതോ ജ്യായാംശ്ച പൂരുഷഃ
പാദോസ്യ വിശ്വാഭൂതാനി
ത്രിപാദസ്യാമൃതം ദിവി.

Here Purusha or God is described as an infinite being transcending all space and all time, which are themselves infinite. Ordinary people who do not know anything of infinite or different types of infinity, are likely to consider the above description of Purusha as purely imaginary or mystic. But a mathematician who has studied about transfinite numbers or different types of such numbers can easily give a meaning to such descriptions. What I maintain is that whether our ancients understood such different types of infinites or not, we, having the ideas of transfinite numbers, can assign a meaning to such expressions as

അതോജ്യായാംശ്ച പൂരുഷഃ
or പാദ്യോസ്യ വിശ്വാഭൂതാനി
ത്രിപാദസ്യാ മൃതംദിവി.

I shall explain how it can be done. We have all seen the infinity of integral numbers; we shall call that infinite cardinal number a. Let us next consider the positive rational numbers. Every such member is of the form p/q where p and q are positive integers. They are also infinite in number and they appear to be tremendously more infinite in number than the integral numbers. For, between any two rational numbers, however close they may be, there are an infinite number of rational numbers. [If a and b are rational numbers, $a < b$, the number $a + \frac{1}{n}(b - a)$ lies between a and b for every value of n (an integer) and you can give an infinite number of values to n]. Though the rational numbers when arranged in order are so closely packed, the infinity of rational members is of the same kind as the infinity of integers. This can be easily shown thus:—

Every positive rational number is of the form p/q where p and q are positive integers and so we can arrange the rational numbers in the form given below.



Every positive rational number is included in this double series consisting of infinite rows and infinite columns. The rational number r/s for instance is the sth term in the rth row. Of course there are repetitions. Now, if we take the numbers diagonally one after another as shown in the figure, we will be reaching every positive rational number which any one may mention. We can thus assign a rank to every rational number, excluding all repetitions ; in other words, the group of rational numbers and the group of integers can be put into one-to-one correspondence with one another. Therefore the infinity of rational numbers is of the same type as the infinity of integers. Such an infinity is called a countable or enumerable infinity and the infinity of rational numbers is of that type, *i.e.*, belongs to the type we have denoted by a. [Incidentally we have also shown that $a+a=a$ and $na=a$; also that $a\times a=a$ or $a^2=a \therefore a^3=a$ and $a^n=a$. Then this infinity a has these peculiar properties]

Now take the case of the group of real numbers consisting of the rational numbers above described and irrational numbers such as $\sqrt{2}$, $\sqrt{3}$, π, e, *etc*. It is shown in mathematics books that they form an infinity of a different type altogether. This infinity is denoted by c, the first letter of the word 'continuum'. There are still higher types. In short we have in mathematics transfinite numbers called 'aleph' numbers and it is shown that given any 'aleph' number we can find an 'aleph' number higher than that.

Thus if Purusha is described as transcending the universe of space and time, one who knows something of these transfinite numbers can try to understand it and can say that such descriptions are not altogether imaginary or illusory.

Again in religion we have apparently paradoxical statements made about God or the Absolute One. One such is

സൂക്ഷ്മത്വാത്തദവിജ്ഞേയം

ദൂരസ്ഥം ചാന്തികേചതത്.

"On account of subtlety, the Absolute is unknowable. It is very near and yet far away." We have illustrations of such subtlety in mathematics. For instance take any irrational number, say $\sqrt{2}$. $\sqrt{2}$ is that number which when multiplied by itself gives 2 for the product. From the various steps in the ordinary process of the extraction of the squre root, we can see that $\sqrt{2}$ lies between 1 and 2 again that it lies between 1·4 and 1·5 or again between 1·41 and 1·42 and so on, Thus you can locate it as being between two decimals which differ from one another by as small a fraction as you please. Yet you can never express it exactly as a terminating or recurring decimal. Of course it is not a vulgar fraction. Thus $\sqrt{2}$ which appears to be quite definite and

definitely situated between the two series of numbers

1, 1·4, 1·41, 1·414, . . .

and 2, 1·5, 1·42, 1·415, . . .

which go on approaching one another as closely as one would desire, yet evades an exact grasp because of its subtlety being a mere point. It appears to be near enough and yet if tried to be approached by means of a decimal, it recedes farther and farther. Thus it is (ദൂരസ്ഥം) far away though near enough (അന്തികേ).

I have given above some instances of similarity of 'contents' between mathematics and religion. Now I shall pass on to give an instance of similarity of methods between them. You must have often heard it said that mathematics is an abstract science. Yes! it is so. For instance, we have the natural numbers or the number concept. This is abstracted from the observation of groups (or classes) of concrete objects or things, and from a comparison of such groups in respect of quantity by means of 'correspondence.' If two groups have an one-to-one correspondence between their elements, we say that they are similar or have *the same number*. 'Number' is thus the common characteristic of all '*similar*' *groups i. e.*, groups which have an one-to-one correspondence between their elements. If one asks 'what is that common characteristic?' we can only say that whatever common you can find between such similar groups is that common characteristic. Not being able to define that common characteristic in any other manner, mathematicians have defined 'number' as a class of similar classes, just as the best definition of 'man' is given out to be 'the class of men.' Thus 'number' is an abstract concept derived from a comparison of concrete groups of objects. In religion too, we have such abstraction. From the observation of the universe, we find that all things are changing and are being transformed, they are transient, lasting only for a short time. Yet man cannot regard all these things as having come from 'nothing.' He thinks that there must be a Reality which exists for ever *i. e.*, eternal and out of which all the things of the universe have come and into which all the things lapse or are absorbed at Pralayam or deluge. This 'Reality' he calls God. God is thus a concept abstracted from the observation and experience of the universe. If asked to define it, we can only say that It is *That* which exists for ever, which undergoes no change, out of which all the things of the universe have come and into which they merge on destruction. If driven still further to give its exact nature, one only says that It is നിൎഗ്ഗുണം having no attributes and It is not to be known by the senses or by the mind

യതോവാചോനിവൎത്തന്തെ

അപ്രാപ്യമനസാസഹ

or we may define It as (വിശ്വം) the universe. In fact the first name in Vishnu Sahasranamam is വിശ്വം. This is quite on a par with the definition of 'number' as 'class of similar classes.' In other words, just as 'number' is a concept abstracted from 'classes', similarly God is a concept abstracted from the 'Universe.'

Thus even in method, mathematics and religion have much in common between them. From the instances and illustrations given above, one could see how a student of mathematics can bring to bear his knowledge of mathematics and mathematical methods to the study and understanding of religious concepts and religious principles.

ഭാരതബാലൻതൻ കർമ്മശുദ്ധി.

ഭാരതവർഷത്തിന്നോജസ്സു ചേർക്കുവാൻ
വീരന്മാരെത്ര ഭൂജാതരായി?
റോജപ്പൂവാടുന്നു; വെന്നാലതിന്നുള്ള
സൗരഭ്യം നില്ക്കുന്നു സൗഖ്യദമായ്.
ഉത്തമഭാരത പുത്രചരിത്രങ്ങ-
ളെത്രയും ചിത്രംപവിത്രമത്രെ!
സംസ്കൃതസാഹിത്യവാനത്തിൽ മേവുന്ന
സംസ്കൃതരത്നം പ്രഭാകരന്താൻ.
ഭാരതഭൂമിതൻ ഭാവവിശുദ്ധിയെ
ഭാസുരമാക്കിയ ഭവ്യദീപം;
ഭാരതവർഷത്തിൻ ഭൂതകാലാഭ്രത്തിൽ
ഭൂരിദ്യുതിപൂണ്ട ഭാനുബിംബം;
നിന്ദയാൽ നിന്ദിതജീവിതക്ലേശത്തെ
മന്ദതകൂടാതുപേക്ഷിച്ചവൻ;
കാലസമുദ്രത്തിലോടി പ്രശോഭിക്കും
മാലൊന്നുമേൽക്കാത്തകപ്പലവൻ;
ബുദ്ധിമാനായ പ്രഭാകരബാലന്ന-
ബദ്ധമധികമായ് പററുകില്ല.
വിദ്യയെ നേടുവാനുദ്ദേശിച്ചങ്ങവൻ
സേവിച്ചു; വിദ്യാസരിത്തിലാണ്ട
പണ്ഡിതമണ്ഡലാഖണ്ഡലനായുള്ളോ-
രാചാര്യവര്യനെ ഭക്തിപൂർവ്വം.
"എന്നുടെശിഷ്യൻ പ്രഭാകരബാലനും
വന്ദ്യനായ്ത്തീരണം പാരിടത്തിൽ."
ഈവിധം ചിന്തപൂണ്ടാചാര്യനന്നേരം
മേവിനാൻ പാരിച്ചമോദമോടെ.
ക്രൗര്യമായീടുന്നപാൽത്താൽ പ്രേമത്തെ
ധീരതയോടെ വരിഞ്ഞുകെട്ടി.

"എന്തയ്യോ ശിക്ഷകൾ വയ്യാതെയേല്ക്കുന്നു
ഹന്ത, ഞാൻകേവലം ബാലനല്ലേ?
ബാല്യസുമംഹന്ത! ശിക്ഷകളേൽക്കയാൽ
വല്ലാതെവാടിക്കരിഞ്ഞിതല്ലോ!
ബാല്യമേ, ഹാ കഷ്ടം, ബാല്യമേ, യൗവന-
സോപാനമാർഗ്ഗമേ, ഹിംസിതം നീ!
അക്കൻവരുണനെ പ്രാപിക്കുംനേരത്തി
ലെൻഗുരുകാലന്തിർ പൂകിടട്ടെ!"
എന്തുനാം കേൾക്കുന്നു? ബാലൻപ്രഭാകരൻ
ഹന്ത! ഗുരുവിനെക്കൊല്ലുകെന്നോ?
ഭാരതഭൂമിതൻ ധർമ്മപതാകയിൽ
പങ്കംപുരളുമോ? ദൈവമന്നാൾ
നേരെവഴിക്കു നടക്കുന്നബാലനെ
പാരിച്ചമുൾക്കാട്ടിൽ തള്ളിവിട്ടോ?

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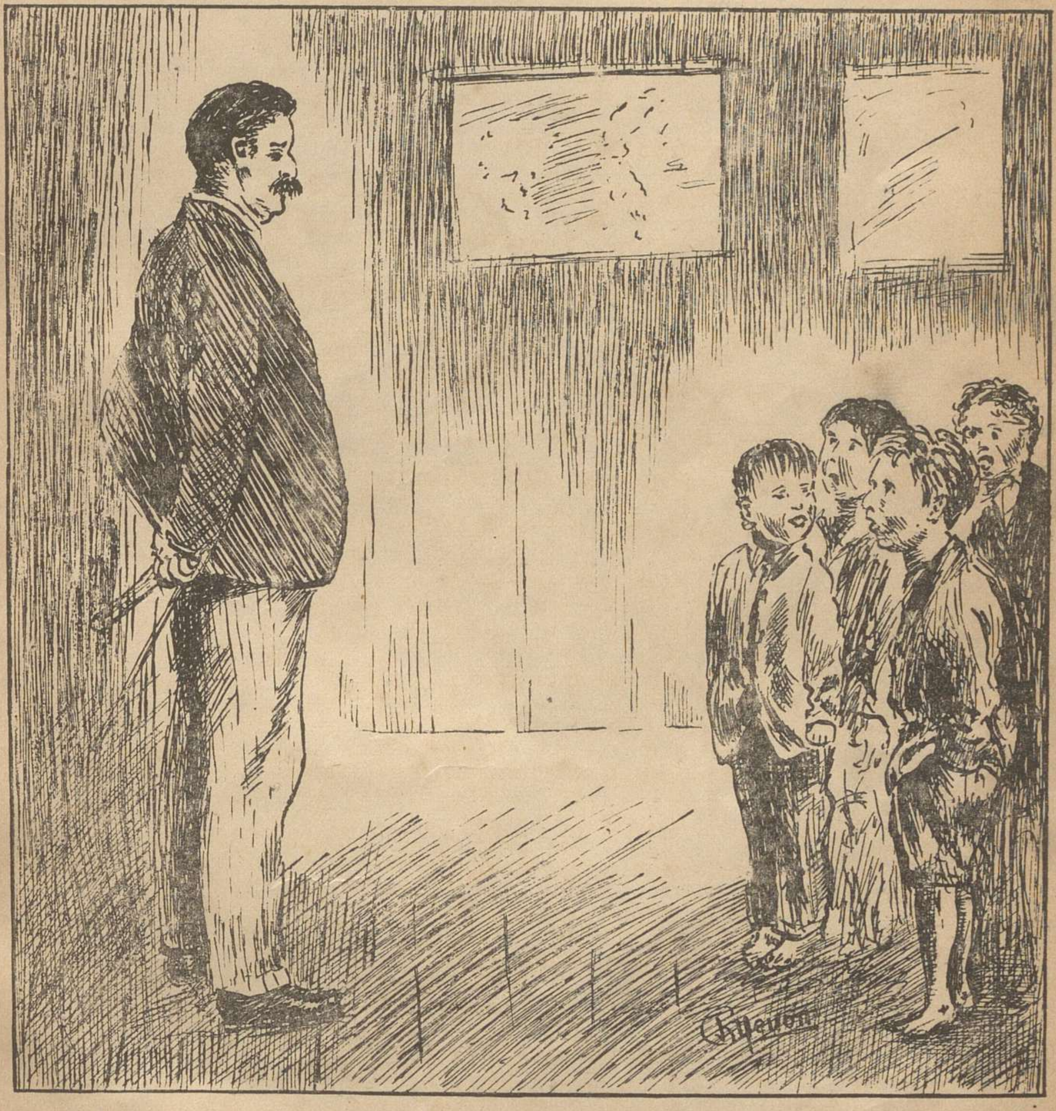
നേരവുംരാത്രിയായ്; ലോകവുംമെല്ലവെ
പാരംധരിച്ചു കറുത്തവസ്ത്രം;
സാഹസംകാണ്മതിനുത്സാഹശൂന്യനായ്
ചന്ദ്രനുദിച്ചതുമില്ലവാനിൽ;
ഭീകരമാക്കിയാരാത്രിയെത്താരങ്ങൾ
കാർമുകിൽക്കൂട്ടത്തിൽചെന്നൊളിച്ചു.
ആയ്യഗുരുവരൻ ശയ്യാതലത്തിനെ
പ്രാപിക്കുംനേരം പ്രഭാകരന്താൻ
ഭീമശിലയാലെറിഞ്ഞങ്ങുകൊല്ലുവാൻ
നേരവും പാർത്തിരിക്കുന്നുകഷ്ടം!
തൽക്ഷണമാര്യനാമാചാര്യവാക്കുകൾ
കേൾക്കായി രാത്രിതൻ ശാന്തതയിൽ:
"ഞാനെൻെറ ശിഷ്യൻ പ്രഭാകരബാലനെ
നന്നായി 'ശിക്ഷണം'ചെയ്തിതല്ലോ;
അപ്പുമാൻ 'മാതാവിൻ'കീർത്തിയെസ്സർവ്വത്ര
വിശ്രുതനായിപ്പരത്തിടട്ടെ!



Teacher : "Can any one tell me where matches are made ?"

Pupil : "I have heard Papa say they are made in Heaven, and sometimes in *Hell* !"

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MADRAS

സാഹിത്യലക്ഷ്മിതൻ മോഹനകണ്ഠത്തിൽ
കാമ്യമാംഹാരത്തെ ചേർത്തിടട്ടെ!
സാഹിത്യാരാമത്തിൽ കോകിലമായങ്ങു
ഗീതാമൃതം മുദാതൂകിടട്ടെ!
ഭാരതഭൂമിതന്നന്ധതമിസ്രത്തിൽ
പാരംപ്രഭയെപ്പരത്തിടട്ടെ!
ഭാരതഭൂമിതൻ കീർത്തിപതാകയെ
ധീരനായ് ദീർഘമുയർത്തിടട്ടെ!
ഞാനിനി ശിക്ഷണംചെയ്യില്ലീബാലനെ
ന്യൂനം മനുജർതൻ നേതാവിനെ!
ആയവനേററിടും ശിക്ഷതൻവേദന
യെന്നിൽ പ്രതിഫലിക്കുന്നുവല്ലോ;''
ഹാ, ഹാ, പ്രഭാകരൻ മോഹിച്ചുവീണുപോയ്:
ആഹന്ത, നിന്ദ്യനായിയ്ത്തീർന്നുവോ താൻ?

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ആരുതാൻ നില്ക്കുന്നുവേവ്വമുമിത്തിയ്യിൽ
വീരനാംബാലൻപ്രഭാകരനോ?
ധർമ്മമേ, സത്യമേ, ഭഗ്നാശരാകേണ്ട
കർമ്മവിശുദ്ധിയടങ്ങീട്ടില്ല!
വന്ദ്യഗുരുവിനെ നിന്ദനംചെയ്കയാൽ
നിന്ദിതമായിത്തൻ ജീവയാത്ര!
ഭാരതമാതാവിന്നോമനക്കുഞ്ഞതാ!
വീരമരണമടഞ്ഞീടുന്നു!
പെട്ടെന്നുകാണായി കൃഷ്ണൻെറവിഗ്രഹം
നിർമ്മലതന്മനോദർപ്പണത്തിൽ;
ആകൃഷ്ടചിത്തനായ് 'കൃഷ്ണവിലാസത്തെ'
കാവ്യകുസുമത്തെ—കാഴ്ചവെച്ചു.
സാഹിത്യവസ്ത്രത്തിൽ ചേർക്കുവാനായുള്ള
കാവ്യമാം പട്ടുനൂൽനെയ്തുണ്ടാക്കി;
അപ്പട്ടുനൂലിനോടേച്ചു ചേർത്തീടുവാ-
നേതൊരു 'പട്ടുനൂൽ' ജാതമാകും?

ക്രൂരനാംവഹ്നിപിടിച്ചുഗളനാളം
ഭാരതത്തിൻദുരവസ്ഥ വന്നു:
വന്ദ്യനബ്ബാലൻ, തൻഭൗതികദേഹത്തെ
ധീരതയോടെ വെടിഞ്ഞുപോയി!
താരകമായിട്ടസ്സാഹിത്യവാനത്തിൽ
വീരൻപ്രഭാകരൻ പ്രോജ്ജ്വലിപ്പൂ!
ഭാരതമാതാവിൻ വീരചരിതത്തിൽ
വേറിട്ടൊരദ്ധ്യായം കൂട്ടിച്ചേർത്തു!
വീരചരിതങ്ങൾ ഘോഷിക്കുമാറായി
ഭാരതബാലൻ തൻകർമ്മശുദ്ധി!

കെ. യം. (സീനിയർ വിദ്യാർത്ഥി)

എന്റെ വിവാഹം.

എന്റെ വിവാഹം ഒരു പ്രേമവിവാഹമായിരുന്നു. അതിന്റെ കഥയാണ് ഞാൻ നിങ്ങളോടു പറയുവാൻ ഭാവിക്കുന്നതു്. നിങ്ങളൊക്കെ നല്ല ചെറുപ്പക്കാർ; വലിയ പണക്കാർ. ഈ വയസ്സനെ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടിക്കണമെന്നു വിചാരിക്കുന്നതു വലിയ കഷ്ടമാണ്. എങ്കിലും എന്റെ പ്രണയകഥ ഞാൻ പറയാം.

എനിക്ക് ഇരുപത്തഞ്ചു വയസ്സാണ്. ഒരുദിവസം കാര്യ്യവശാൽ എനിക്കു ചുനങ്ങാട്ട് പോകേണ്ടിവന്നു. അന്നു വൈകുന്നേരം ഞാൻ ഒന്നു നടന്നുവരട്ടെ എന്നു വിചാരിച്ചു പുറത്തിറങ്ങി.

നാട്ടുപുറങ്ങളിലെ കഥയൊന്നും "പട്ടണ"വാസികളായ നിങ്ങൾ അറിയുകയില്ലല്ലോ. നാട്ടുനിറച്ചു ഇടവഴികളാണ്. ഞാൻ ഒന്നിൽക്കൂടി നടന്നു. ഞാൻ ഇടവും വലവും തിരിയാതെ നടന്നെത്തിയതു ഒരു മരുഭൂമിപോലെയുള്ള പാടത്താണ്. ഒരു തലക്കൽനിന്നു നോക്കിയാൽ മറേറത്തല കാണുകയില്ല. വിളഞ്ഞ നെല്ല് സന്ധ്യാസമയത്തെ മന്ദമാരുതനേററു എനിക്കു സ്വാഗതം അരുളുന്നതുപോലെ തലകുനിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. ആ തണുത്ത കാറേററു ഞാനും ആനന്ദപരവശനായി വരമ്പിന്മേൽ ചാഞ്ഞുനില്ക്കുന്ന കതിരുകളെ ചവുട്ടി മെതിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു സാവധാനത്തിൽ നടന്നു.

സുഖം ദുഃഖത്തിന്റെ നിഴലാണെന്നു വിദ്വാന്മാർ പറയുന്നതു എത്രയോ വാസ്തവം. ഞാൻ ഇങ്ങിനെ നടക്കുമ്പോൾ ഒരു ദയനീയസ്വരം—എന്നെ ആനന്ദിപ്പിച്ച ആ തെന്നൽതന്നെയാണ് ഈ സ്വരവും കൊണ്ടുവന്നതെന്നു നിങ്ങൾ മറക്കരുതു്—എന്റെ ശ്രദ്ധയെ ആകർഷിച്ചു.

അപ്പോൾ സൂര്യ്യൻ അസ്തമിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. എങ്കിലും ആകാശത്തിലെ ചുകപ്പുനിറം തീരെ അപ്രത്യക്ഷമായിട്ടില്ല. ചില വെളുത്ത മേഘശകലങ്ങൾ ആകാശത്തിൽ അങ്ങിങ്ങായി ഓടിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. ചില നക്ഷത്രങ്ങളുംരംഗത്തെത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഒരു മങ്ങായ ഇരുട്ട് ലോകത്തെ ആവരണംചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നു.

"അയ്യോ!" ആ ശബ്ദം എന്റെ ചെവിട്ടിൽ വന്നടിച്ചു. അതു കുറെ ദൂരത്തുനിന്നായിരുന്നു എന്നു എനിക്കു മനസ്സിലായി. എന്തെങ്കിലുമാവട്ടെ, ഒരു സമജീവിയെ രക്ഷിക്കണമെന്ന വിചാരത്താൽ ഞാൻ മുന്നോട്ടു കുതിച്ചു. എന്റെ കൈയിൽ ആറു വെടിപൊട്ടുന്ന ഒരു കൈത്തോക്കും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഞാൻ അതു സജ്ജമാക്കി വെച്ചു.

"അയ്യോ!" ആ ശബ്ദം ഞാൻ വളരെ അടുത്തായി പിന്നേയുംകേട്ടു. അതു് സ്ത്രീശബ്ദമായിരുന്നു എന്നു മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ എനിക്ക് വളരെ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുണ്ടായില്ല. അപ്പോൾത്തന്നെ എന്റെ ഇടത്തുഭാഗത്തുനിന്നു് തെല്ലിളകുന്ന ശബ്ദംകേട്ടു. ഞാൻ

അവിടേക്ക നോക്കി ഒന്നും കണ്ടില്ല. ഞാൻ ഇടത്തോട്ട് തിരിഞ്ഞുനടന്നു. നന്ന അടുത്തുനിന്ന് "അയ്യോ!" എന്ന ശബ്ദം ഒന്നുകൂടി പുറപ്പെട്ടു.

"ആരാത്?" എന്നു ഞാൻ വിളിച്ചു ചോദിച്ചു—ഉത്തരമുണ്ടായില്ല. കുറച്ചു നേരം നിലനിന്ന നിശ്ശബ്ദവേളയിൽ ഞാൻ നാലുപുറവും നോക്കിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. പെട്ടെന്ന് ഒരു സ്വരൂപം എൻെറ മുമ്പിൽ ആവിർഭവിച്ചു. ആ മങ്ങിയ ഇരുട്ടിൽ ഒരു കറുത്ത ദേഹത്തെ എനിക്ക കാണുവാൻ സാധിച്ചു. അതിൻെറ കയ്യിൽ ഒരു വലിയ വടിയുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

"നീയാർ?" എന്നു ഞാൻ ചോദിച്ചു. എൻെറ കൈയിൽ തോക്കുണ്ടായിരുന്നതിനാൽ എനിക്ക തീരെ ഭയമില്ലായിരുന്നു. "നീ ആരെയാണ് ഉപദ്രവിക്കുന്നത്?"

"ഹ!" അവൻ നിന്ദാസ്വരത്തിൽ ഉരച്ചു. "ജീവനിൽ കൊതിയില്ലാത്ത ജന്തു! ഇമ്പിച്ചനോട്ട പൊരുതുവാൻ വിചാരിക്കുന്നുവോ?"

"ഇമ്പിച്ചൻ"എന്ന പേർ കേട്ടപ്പോൾ ഞാനൊന്നു ഞെട്ടി. അവൻെറ വത്തമാനമെല്ലാംഎന്നോട്ട് ഞാൻ താമസിച്ചിരുന്ന വീട്ടിൻെറ ഉടമസ്ഥൻ പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. അവൻ ഒരു വലിയ കവച്ചക്കാരനായിരുന്നു. അനവധി ആളുകളെ കൊന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. പോലീസ്സിന്ന് അവനെ പിടിക്കാൻ സാധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. അങ്ങിനെയുള്ള ഒരു "ഗജപോക്കിരി"യുടെമുമ്പിലാണ് അകപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നതെന്നറിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ഞാൻ ഞെട്ടിയതിൽ അത്ഭുതപ്പെടുവാനില്ലല്ലോ.

എൻെറ ധൈയ്യം തിരിച്ചുവന്നു. ഒന്നും പറയാതെ ഞാൻ തോക്കെടുത്ത് അവൻെറ കാലിനു വെടിവെച്ചു. അത് തുടക്കാണു് കൊണ്ടത്. വേദന സഹിക്കാതെ അവൻ മേൽപ്പോട്ടു ചാടി ബോധരഹിതനായി വയലിൽ പതിച്ചു. അതോടുകൂടി അവൻെറ പിടുത്തംവിട്ട് ആ ദണ്ഡ് എൻെറ തലക്കുകൊണ്ട്, ഞാനും ബോധരഹിതനായി ഭൂദേവിയെ ആശ്ലേഷിച്ചു.

കിളികളുടെ കളകളനിനദം ശ്രവിച്ചു ഞാൻ ഉണന്നു. ഉദയഗിരി ചുകന്നിട്ടേ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നുള്ളൂ. ചന്ദ്രൻെറ കാന്തി മിക്കവാറും നശിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഒരു തണുത്ത കാററ് വീശുന്നുണ്ട്. പക്ഷികൾ ആ കാശത്തുകൂടി ഇരതിരഞ്ഞു് പറന്നുതുടങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. ഞാൻ കണ്ണുതുറന്നു നോക്കിയപ്പോൾ എൻെറ തലക്കൽ ഞാൻ കണ്ടതു് ഇന്നും മറക്കാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നില്ല. ചന്ദ്രബിംബം മാൻകുട്ടിയെ അന്വേഷിക്കാൻ വേണ്ടി കീഴ്പോട്ടു പോന്നതാണോ എന്നു ഞാൻ സംശയിച്ചു. എനിക്ക വേറൊരു സംശയവുംകൂടി ഉണ്ടായി. അതെന്താണെന്നറിയാമോ? സൂൎയ്യഭഗവാൻെറ എഴുന്നള്ളത്തിനു മുമ്പ് ലോകം മുഴുവനും അടിച്ചു തളിച്ച് വൃത്തിയാക്കാൻ പുറപ്പെട്ട പ്രഭാതദേവി ഒരു സാധു മനുഷ്യൻ ബോധരഹിതനായി കിടക്കുന്നതു കണ്ടിട്ട് ദയാൎദ്രഹൃദയയായി എന്നെ ശുശ്രൂഷിക്കുവാൻ വന്നതാണോ എന്നുംകൂടി എനിക്ക് തോന്നി.

ഞാൻ എണീററ് നല്ലവണ്ണം നോക്കി. അതൊരു സ്ത്രീയായിരുന്നു. എനിക്ക വി

ശ്വാസം വന്നില്ല. ഞാൻ രണ്ടു കൈകൊണ്ടും കണ്ണുതിരുമ്മി നല്ലവണ്ണം നോക്കി. അതെ സ്ത്രീതന്നെ സംശയമില്ല, എന്നു തീച്ചപ്പെടുത്തി. എന്നാൽ സൂര്യോദയത്തിനു മുമ്പായി സ്ത്രീകൾ പുറത്തിറങ്ങാൻ വഴിയില്ലല്ലോ എന്ന് ഞാൻ സംശയിച്ചു. തിരുവാതിരക്കാലവുംകൂടി അല്ല. വല്ലയക്ഷിയുമാണോ എന്ന് ഞാൻ ഭയന്നു.

"അങ്ങ് ഭയപ്പെടേണ്ട" അവൾ പറഞ്ഞു "ഞാൻ മനുഷ്യൻതന്നെയാണ്. ഇന്നലെ രാത്രി—"

"ഓ!" എന്നൊരു ശബ്ദം എൻെറ വായിൽനിന്നു പുറപ്പെട്ടു. ഞാൻ അതു തീരെ മറന്നിരുന്നു. "ഭവതി ആരാണ്?" എന്നു കുറച്ചു നേരത്തിന്നുശേഷം ഞാൻ ചോദിച്ചു.

"അങ്ങ് ഇന്നലെ ആ ദുഷ്ടനിൽനിന്നു രക്ഷിച്ച സാധുസ്ത്രീ."

"അവനെവിടെ?"

"കാണ്മാനില്ല."

ഞാൻ എണീററ് നാലുപുറവും നോക്കി. ചോര ഒലിച്ചിരുന്ന പാടുനോക്കി ഞാൻ ചരിച്ചു. ഒടുവിൽ അവൻ അവസാനമായി കിടന്ന സ്ഥലത്ത് ഞാൻ എത്തി. ഇമ്പിച്ചൻ മരിച്ചിരുന്നു. ദുഷ്ടനെയായാലും നരഹത്യചെയ്തല്ലോ എന്ന ഭാരതീയബുദ്ധിയോടുകൂടി ഞാൻ തലക്കടിച്ചു. തലേദിവസം അടികൊണ്ട ഭാഗത്ത് എനിക്ക് വല്ലാത്ത വേദനയുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഞാൻ മടങ്ങിവന്നപ്പോൾ ആ സ്ത്രീയെ അവിടെ കണ്ടില്ല. എനിക്കു വല്ലാത്ത വ്യസനമുണ്ടായി. ഞാൻ താമസസ്ഥലത്തെത്തി എണ്ണതേച്ചു കുളിച്ചു സ്വല്പമായുറങ്ങി. എൻെറ സുഖക്കേടും തീരെമാറി. എന്നാലും അവളെക്കാണണം എന്ന വിചാരം എൻെറ ഉള്ളിൽനിന്നു വിട്ടുപോയില്ല.

ഇമ്പിച്ചൻെറ മരണവൃത്താന്തം നാടുമുഴുവനും കാട്ടുതീപോലെ പരന്നു. നാട്ടുകാർ സന്തോഷത്തോടെ നടന്നുതുടങ്ങി. ഞാൻ പുറത്തിറങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ എന്നെ ആളുകൾ അനവധി പ്രാവശ്യം അഭിനന്ദിച്ചു. ഒരുവിധം ജനാവലിയുടെ പിടിച്ചുവലിയിൽനിന്നു രക്ഷ പ്രാപിച്ചു ഞാൻ ആ വയലിൽ ഒരിക്കൽകൂടി എത്തിച്ചേൎന്നു. ദൂരത്തുനിന്നുവരുന്ന ഒരു ആളെ എനിക്കു വേഗം മനസ്സിലായി. ഞങ്ങൾ അടുത്തെത്തി. കണ്ണുകൾ തമ്മിലിടഞ്ഞു. അവൾ തലതാഴ്ത്തി.

"സ്ത്രീകളുടെ കൃതഘ്നത" എന്നു ഞാൻ താണ സ്വരത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞു.

"ക്ഷമിക്കണം" അവൾ ഗദ്ഗദമായി വാദിച്ചു. "ഞാൻ അങ്ങയെ ഒന്നു കളിപ്പിക്കാൻ മാറിയിരുന്നതാണ്."

"ഭവതിയുടെ പേർ?

"ഭാമ" അവൾ എൻെറ അടുത്തുവന്നു നിന്നു. അവളുടെ കൈകൾ എന്നെ സ്പർശിച്ചു. അപ്പോൾ ഞാൻ ഇതുവരെ അനുഭവിക്കാത്ത വികാരം എൻെറ ഹൃദയത്തിൽ ഉദിച്ചു. ഞാൻ അവളുടെ കൈകൾ ഗ്രസിച്ചു, മുഖത്തേക്കു നോക്കി. അവൾ തൻെറ ശിരസ്സ് എൻെറ ചുമലിൽ അർപ്പിച്ചു.

"വീട്ടിലേക്കു വരുന്നുവോ? ഭാമ മന്ദസ്വരത്തിൽ മനോഹരമാംവണ്ണം എന്നോടു ചോദ്യംചെയ്തു. അവളുടെ രൂപാമൃതപാനം ചെയ്തിരുന്ന ഞാൻ ആ ചോദ്യം കേട്ടില്ല. അവളുടെ ആ നിറം. ഹാ! അതൊന്നു പോരെ അവളെ അമരതുല്യയാക്കുവാൻ.

"എന്താ, ചെവിടു കേൾക്കുകയില്ലേ?" എന്ന അവളുടെ രണ്ടാമത്തെ ചോദ്യം കേട്ടു ഞാൻ മനോരാജ്യത്തിലെ സഞ്ചാരം നിറുത്തി, "എന്താ പറഞ്ഞതു്?" എന്നു ചോദിച്ചു.

"വീട്ടിലേക്കു വരുന്നുവോ?"

"വരാം"

ഞങ്ങൾ രണ്ടുപേരുംകൂടി അവളുടെ വീട്ടിലേക്കു നടന്നു. അതു ആ വയലിന്റെ മറുകരയിലായിരുന്നു. ഒരു വലിയ വീടു്. ഞങ്ങൾ അവിടെ എത്തിയപ്പോഴക്കു സൂര്യൻ അസ്തമിച്ചിരുന്നു.

"ആരാതു്?" എന്നൊരാൾ ഉമ്മറത്ത് നിന്നു വിളിച്ചുചോദിച്ചു.

"ഞാനാണു്" ഭാമമെല്ലെ മറുപടി പറഞ്ഞു.

"പിന്നെ?"

"ഇന്നലെ എന്നെ—"

"എന്തു്? ആ ദുഷ്ടനോ? അപ്പോൾ അവൻ മരിച്ചിട്ടില്ല, അല്ലേ?"

"അവനല്ല എന്നെ രക്ഷിച്ചയാളു്."

അപ്പോഴക്കു ഞങ്ങൾ ഉമ്മറത്തെത്തി. അവൾ അകത്തേക്കു പോയി. ഒരു കസാലയിൽ ഞാനും ആസനസ്ഥനായി.

പടിയിന്മേൽ ഒരു ഭയങ്കരസത്വം ഇരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. കരിക്കട്ടയെക്കൂടി നാണിപ്പിക്കുന്ന വണ്ണമാണു് ആയാളുടേതു്. വയസ്സ് ഏകദേശം അറുപതോളം കാണും. ആയാൾ നരച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടോ എന്നറിവാൻ മാറിലെ രോമങ്ങൾ നോക്കണം. രോമത്തെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം തല ഒരു നാസ്തികനാണു്. പിന്നെ നെററിയുടെ കാര്യം പറയേണ്ടതില്ലല്ലോ. കണ്ണുകണ്ടാൽ കുട്ടികൾ എല്ലാം ഭയപ്പെടും. വലിയ ചെമ്പരത്തിപ്പൂപോലെ ചുവന്ന കണ്ണുകൾ. ഒരു ക്രൂരസ്വഭാവം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഉയരം 6½ അടിയുണ്ടു് എന്നു ഞാൻ പറയാൻ മറന്നു.

ആയാളെ കണ്ടപ്പോൾത്തന്നെ എന്തോ ഒരു വല്ലായ്മ എന്നെ ബാധിച്ചു. ഞാനും ഭാമയുമായുള്ള ബന്ധത്തിനു ഇയാൾ അന്തം വരുത്തുമോ എന്ന ഭയം എന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ സ്ഥലംപിടിച്ചു.

"നിങ്ങളുടെ പേർ?" ആയാൾ ചോദിച്ചു. വായിൽനിന്നു തുപ്പൽ ധാരാളം തെറിച്ചിരുന്നു. ജന്മാന്തരസുകൃതംകൊണ്ടു എന്റെ മേൽ ആയില്ല.

"കുമാരൻനായർ" എന്നു ഞാൻ പറഞ്ഞു. വാസ്തവം അതല്ലെന്നു നിങ്ങൾക്കൊക്കെ അറിയാവുന്നതാണല്ലോ.

"നിങ്ങൾ എന്തിന്നു ഇവിടെ വന്നു?"

"നിങ്ങളുടെ മകളോ മരുമകളോ ആയ ആ കുട്ടിയെ കൊണ്ടുവന്നാക്കാൻ".

"ഏ! ചെളുക്കെ, പെണ്ണുങ്ങളുടെ പിന്നാലെ നടക്കുകയാണോ പണി? കടക്കു് പടിപ്പുറത്തു്." ആയാൾ പടിക്കലേക്കു ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിച്ചു.

"ഇന്നലെ രാത്രിയാണെങ്കിൽ—"ഞാൻ പിറുപിറുത്തുകൊണ്ടു മുററത്തേക്കിറങ്ങി. എനിക്കയാളെ കണ്ടപ്പോഴുണ്ടായ വിചാരം ശരിപ്പെട്ടു. ഇളിഭ്യനായ ഞാൻ മോച്ചപോയ കുരവനെപ്പോലെ നടന്നു.

കുറച്ചുദൂരം ചെന്നു. പെട്ടെന്നു എൻെറ ചുമലിൽ ആരോ കൈവെച്ചു. ഞാൻ തിരിഞ്ഞുനോക്കിയപ്പോൾ ഭാമയുണ്ടു കിതച്ചുംകൊണ്ടു് എൻെറ അരികത്തു നില്ക്കുന്നു.

"പ്രിയേ!" ഞാൻ മെല്ലെവിളിച്ചു. അവൾ എൻെറ കൈകൾ പിടിച്ചുപറഞ്ഞു.

"പ്രാണനാഥാ, എനിക്കു് അങ്ങയോടു ചില വത്മാനങ്ങൾ പറവാനുണ്ടു്. ഈ വഴിക്കൽനിന്നാൽ ആരെങ്കിലും കേട്ടുകൊണ്ടുവരും. നമുക്കു് കുറച്ചു തെററി നില്ക്കുക."

അവൾ എൻെറ കൈപിടിച്ചുനടന്നു. ഞാനും ഒരു യന്ത്രംപോലെ അവളെ പിന്തുടന്നു. കുറച്ചുദൂരം ചെന്നശേഷം ഞങ്ങൾ ഒരിടത്തിരുന്നു. അവൾ തൻെറ കഥ പറവാൻ തുടങ്ങി.

"എൻെറ പേർ സത്യഭാമ എന്നാണു്. ഭാമ എന്നാണു് വിളിക്കാറുള്ളതു്. എനിക്കു മൂന്നു വയസ്സു പ്രായമായപ്പോൾ മാതാപിതാക്കന്മാർ ഒരേ ദിവസം കാലഗതി പ്രാപിച്ചു. നിങ്ങൾ ഈ വീട്ടിൽ കണ്ട മനുഷ്യനാണു് എന്നെ പിന്നെ രക്ഷിച്ചുവന്നതു്. ഞാൻ അന്നുതന്നെ വീട്ടുവിട്ടുപോരുവാൻ പ്രേരിതയായി. ഞങ്ങൾ ഇവിടെ താമസമാക്കി. ആയാളെ ഞാൻ മുമ്പു കണ്ടിട്ടുതന്നെയില്ല. ആൾ മഹാദുഷ്ടനാണു്. അവിടെ ഒരു സ്ത്രീ കൂടി ഉണ്ടു്. അവർ ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ ആയാൾ എന്നെ തച്ചുകൊല്ലുമായിരുന്നു. എൻെറ ഭാഗ്യാതിരേകംകൊണ്ടാണു് ഞാൻ അങ്ങയെ കണ്ടതു. ഇനി—"

അവൾ ഇത്രയും പറഞ്ഞു എൻെറ മുഖത്തേക്കു നോക്കി. ഒരു ദീർഘശ്വാസമിട്ടുംകൊണ്ടു് ഞാൻ പറഞ്ഞു. "പ്രിയേ, ഭവതി ഒന്നുകൊണ്ടും പേടിക്കേണ്ട. എൻെറകൂടെ പോരു. നമുക്കു സുഖമായി താമസിക്കാം. ഭവതിയുടെ അച്ഛൻെറ പേരെന്തായിരുന്നു?

"കുമാരൻനായർ".

"ഇപ്പോൾ കാര്യം മനസ്സിലായി. ഞാൻ പേരു കുമാരൻനായർ എന്നാണെന്നു പറഞ്ഞപ്പോഴാണു് കിഴവനു ശുണ്ഠിവന്നതു്. ആട്ടെ. അമ്മയുടേയോ?

"ജാനകി അമ്മ"

"പ്രിയേ, ഞാൻ ആരാണെന്നു നിനക്കു മനസ്സിലായോ? ഒരു സുകുമാരേട്ടനെ ഓമ്മയുണ്ടോ? നിന്നെ കളിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു നടന്നിരുന്നില്ലെ?"

"ഇല്ല. എനിക്കോമ്മയില്ല."

നീ എൻെറ അമ്മാമൻെറ മകൾ. അവർ രണ്ടാളും ഒരു ദിവസം തന്നെയാണു് മരിച്ചതു്. തലേത്തട്ടിയായിരുന്നു ദീനം. എൻെറ പേർ സുകുമാരൻ എന്നാണു്."

"പ്രിയതമാ, ഞാൻ അങ്ങയുടെകൂടെ പോരാം. അതിന്നു മുമ്പു ഇതൊന്നു നോക്കു. "അവൾ എൻെറ കൈയ്യിൽ ഒരു

ഴുത്തു തന്നു. ഒരു വൈദ്യുതദീപത്തിന്റെ സഹായത്താൽ ഞാൻ അതിങ്ങിനെ വായിച്ചു.

ഒററപ്പാലം,
10—6—1883.

"പ്രിയ സേർ,

എല്ലാം ശരിയാക്കീട്ടുണ്ട്. എനിക്കതു ചെയ്വാൻ സാധിക്കയില്ല. നിങ്ങൾ തന്നെ വരണം. തള്ളയെ കൊല്ലുന്നതു കഷ്ടമാണ്. 3 വയസ്സായ ഒരു കുട്ടികൂടി ഉണ്ട്? സത്യഭാമ എന്നാണ് പേര്. എന്നു വേലുനായക്ക് തമ്പുച്ചെട്ടി."

എഴുത്തു വായിച്ചുകഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ഞാൻ ചോദിച്ചു. "ഇതെവിടുന്നു കിട്ടി?"

"ആ ദുഷ്ടന്റെ പെട്ടിയിൽനിന്നു്."

"അതെവിടെയാണ് ഇരിക്കുന്നത്?"

"ആയാളുടെ കിടപ്പറക്കു തൊട്ട മുറിയിൽ."

"ഇന്നൊന്നു പരിശോധിക്കണം."

ഭാമയും അതു സമ്മതിച്ചു. ഞങ്ങൾ അവളുടെ വീട്ടിലേക്കു മടങ്ങി. എല്ലാവരും ഉറക്കമായിട്ടില്ല. വാതിൽ തുറന്നു അവൾ അകത്തുകടന്നു. ഞാൻ ഉമ്മറത്തു കാവലിരുന്നു.

കുറെ കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ വതിൽ തുറന്നു അവൾ എന്നെ അകത്തേക്കു വിളിച്ചു. അവൾ എന്നെ ആ മുറിയിൽ കൊണ്ടുപോയാക്കി. ശബ്ദംകൂടാതെ പെട്ടിതുറന്നു. അതിലെ സാധനമെല്ലാം പരിശോധിച്ചു. ഒടുവിൽ ഭാമയുടെ അച്ഛന്റെ ഒരു ഒസ്യത്ത് കണ്ടുകിട്ടി. "ഇതു മതി" എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു ഞാൻ അവളേയുംകൂട്ടി അന്നുതന്നെ അവിടുന്നു പോന്നു. ഞാൻ ഉടനേതന്നെ ഒററപ്പാലത്തേക്കു ചെന്നു ഇൻസ്പെക്ടരെ കണ്ടു. ഞാൻ വിവരം പറഞ്ഞു എഴുത്തു കാണിച്ചപ്പോൾ ആയാൾ വളരെ സന്തുഷ്ടനായി. ആ രാത്രിതന്നെ തമ്പുച്ചെട്ടിയുടെ വീട്ടിൽച്ചെന്നു അവനെ ഉണൎത്തി. ഇൻസ്പെക്ടരെ കണ്ടപ്പോൾ അവൻ ഭയപ്പെട്ടു പുറത്തുവന്നു.

ഇൻ—ഈ എഴുത്താരെഴുതിയതാണ്?

തമ്പു - ഞാൻതന്നെ, യജമാനനെ.

ഇൻ—ആൎക്കു്?

തമ്പു—കയ്പുറത്തു കുമാരൻനായരേയും ഭാൎയ്യയേയും കൊല്ലുവാൻവേണ്ടി ആയാൾ കുറച്ചു വിഷം ഉണ്ടാക്കണമെന്നു എന്നോടു പറഞ്ഞു. ഞാൻ ഉണ്ടാക്കി വിവരം അറിയിച്ചതാണു ആ കത്ത്.

ഇൻ—നടക്ക്.

തമ്പുച്ചെട്ടി അനുസരിച്ചു. ഞാനും അവരുടെ പിന്നാലെ ചെന്നു. ഇൻസ്പെക്ടർ നാലു പോലീസ്സുകാരെ വിളിച്ചു. വേലുനായരുടെ വീടു പരിശോധിച്ചു, ആയാളെ അറസ്റ്റ്ചെയ്തു കൊണ്ടുവരുവാൻ പറഞ്ഞു. അവർ ഉടനെതന്നെ പോയി.

പ്രഭാതമായപ്പോഴക്കും അവർ വേലുനായരേ അറസ്റ്റ്ചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടുവന്നു. വലിയ ഭേദ്യമൊന്നും കൂടാതെ ആയാൾ കുററം സമ്മതിച്ചു. അയാൾ പറഞ്ഞതു ഞാൻ പറയാം. ഞാനും കുമാരൻനായരും തമ്മിൽ വലിയ ലോഗ്യമായിരുന്നു. ഞാൻ പറഞ്ഞതിലപ്പുറം ആയാൾ നടക്കില്ല എന്നായിത്തീൎന്നു. ഞാൻ അയാളെക്കൊണ്ടു് ഒരു ഒസ്യത്തെഴുതിച്ചു. അത

യാളുടെ സ്വത്തെല്ലാം എനിക്കായി ഒഴിഞ്ഞുതന്നിരിക്കുന്നതായിരുന്നു. ആയാളുടെ സൂത്രമാണിതെന്നു ഞാൻ നിശ്ചയിച്ചു ആയാളേയും ഭാൎയ്യയേയും വിഷം കൊടുത്തു കൊന്നു. എന്നാൽ ആയാൾ അതിന്നു മുമ്പുതന്നെ വേറൊന്നെഴുതി വെച്ചിരുന്നു. എങ്കിലും അതെൻെറ കൈയിൽകിട്ടി. ഞാൻ കുട്ടിയേയും എടുത്തു വീട്ടിൽചെന്നു.'' ആയാളേയും തമ്പുച്ചെട്ടിയേയും തൂക്കുവാൻതന്നെ വിധിച്ചു.

ഞാൻ ഭാമയേയുംകൂട്ടി നാട്ടിലേക്കു മടങ്ങി. ഞാനും ഒരു സ്ത്രീയുംകൂടി പടികടക്കുന്നതു കണ്ടിട്ട് എല്ലാവരും അത്ഭുതപ്പെട്ടുപോയി. അമ്മ എൻെറ അടുത്തേക്കു വന്നു. ''അമ്മേ! ഞാൻ അമ്മക്ക് ഒരു മകളെ സമ്പാദിച്ചു'' എന്ന് ചിരിച്ചുംകൊണ്ട് പറഞ്ഞു.

''അതു നന്നായി ഇവളേതാ?''

''കുമാരമാമയുടെ മകൾ സത്യഭാമ.''

അമ്മ പെട്ടെന്ന് അവളെ കെട്ടിപ്പിടിച്ച് അനവധി പ്രാവശ്യം ചുംബിച്ചു. എനിക്കുകൂടി അസൂയ തോന്നി. ''കുട്ടാ ഇവൾ നിണക്കുതന്നെയിരിക്കട്ടെ.'' എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു അമ്മ അവളുടെ കൈ എൻെറ കൈയിൽ തന്നു. ഞങ്ങളുടെ പാണിഗ്രഹണവും കഴിഞ്ഞു.

ഒരാഴ്ചക്കിടയിൽ ഞങ്ങളുടെ വിവാഹം വളരെ ആഘോഷത്തോടെ വീട്ടിൽവെച്ചു നടത്തപ്പെട്ടു. ഞങ്ങൾക്കുകിട്ടിയ സമ്മാനങ്ങൾക്കു സംഖ്യ നിശ്ചയിപ്പാൻ ശേഷനുംകൂടി ശേഷിപോരാ.

കഥകഴിഞ്ഞു. നന്നായിട്ടുണ്ടോ? എന്നു ഞാൻ ചോദിച്ചു.

''വളരെ, വളരെ, വളരെ'' എന്നെല്ലാവരുംകൂടി പറഞ്ഞു. അവർ വടക്കോട്ടും ഞാൻ തെക്കോട്ടും യാത്ര തുടൎന്നു.

പി. കുട്ടിശ്ശങ്കരപ്പണിക്കർ.

ജൂനിയർ വിദ്യാൎത്ഥി.

ശിവൻെറ ശിരസ്സിലെ ഗംഗയോട്.

(നവീനകവിത.)

1. കുടിലമതിയണിഞ്ഞ വാമദേവൻ
പട്ടുകൊടിപോലെ വളത്ത്ത്തുകാട്ടുക്രൂട്ടും
ജടമുടിയിലൊളിഞ്ഞടങ്ങിവാഴും
തടിനി! നിനക്കൊരുസൗഖ്യമില്ല പാത്താൽ.

2. കൊടിയവിഷമെഴുന്ന ഭോഗിവൎഗ്ഗം
വടിവിലണഞ്ഞു വളഞ്ഞിടുന്നുനിന്നേ
കുടിലനൊരുവനുണ്ടു കാൎയ്യമില്ലാൻ
തടവിൽനിനക്കു സുഖം വരുന്നതാണോ?

3. സ്മരനവിടെ വരുന്നതല്ലതൃക്ക-
ണ്ണരികിലെരിഞ്ഞു വിളങ്ങിടുന്നുനിത്യം;
പരകഥപരിചിൽ സ്മരിക്കവേണ്ടാ
ദുരിതമശേഷവുമില്ല പാക്കിലിപ്പോൾ.

4. ദ്വിജനൊരു കുടിലൻ നിനക്കുബന്ധു
നിജവിധികൊണ്ടു സുഖിച്ചുമേവിടുന്നു.
പ്രജകളിലൊരുകാംക്ഷയില്ല പാത്താൽ
സുജനനിയെന്നൊരു പേരുമാത്രമുണ്ടു.

5. കൃത്തിണമതിനു തുല്യമായിനിയ്യും,
പിതൃജനതപ്പ്ണമാരു ചെയ്തിടുന്നു?
നവലഹരിയിലാണ്ടു താപമെല്ലാ
മിവനു കളഞ്ഞിടുവാൻ തരംലഭിക്കാ.

6. ഹരനുടെജടയിൽത്തെളിഞ്ഞുമേവും
സുരതടിനിക്കഘമോചനം കൊടുപ്പാൻ
ഒരുവഴിയുമതില്ല; കഷ്ടലോകാ
നൊരുവനുമില്ല ഭഗീരഥനുതുല്യം.

7. സ്വജനഗുണമഹോ നിനച്ചുനിത്യം
ഭജനമിരുന്നു ഭഗീരഥൻെറ മട്ടിൽ

നിജസുഖമഖിലം കളഞ്ഞു കഷ്ടം!
വിജനവിനോദനമാരു ചെയ്തിടുന്നു.

8. പെരിയൊരുഗുണമിങ്ങു കിട്ടിയെന്നാൽ
ദുരിതമതിന്നൊരു ദുഃഖമാകയില്ല.
ദുരിതസുഖമതിന്നു വേണ്ടിയാരും
ചരിതമശേഷമശുദ്ധമാക്കയില്ല.

9. ഗിരിസുതശിവനണ്ടു പിന്നെ "ഞാനും
ഗിരിസുത"യെന്നു പറഞ്ഞുപോയതെന്തേ
ഇരുകുടിയൊരുവന്നു വന്നുവെങ്കിൽ
പെരുവഴിതന്നെയവൾക്കു വീടുപോലും.

10. സാപത്ന്യമെന്നപകടത്തിനുപോയിയെന്നാ-
ലാപത്തനേകമൊരുപോലെവരുന്നകാണാം
ശാപത്തിനാൽ വിമതിയായൊരു നാരിയാണി
ത്താപത്തിലാണ്ടു ഗതികെട്ടു നശിപ്പതെന്നും.

കോങ്ങോട്ടേ കൃഷ്ണൻനായർ.

In an Ideal World———,

THE Wife would say to her Husband, "You look so bored, darling. I do wish you will go to that agreeable club of yours and sample all the new cocktails they stock. After which, perhaps, you will take out Mrs. Nair, our beautiful neighbour, and give yourself and her a good time. I am rather shy of mentioning it, but the poor dear girl has been simply pining for you these six months. You men will never understand".........

The High Officer would say to his subordinates ;—"All this talk of financial stringency is just rot. I am going to double your salaries in a week, even if I have to fight the whole Empire for it".

The Lawyer would say to his client: "Your case is really quite weak, in fact and in law. Calcutta, Madras, Allahabad, and all the other High Courts have given adverse decisions on identical issues. The Privy Council has been equally positive. I really don't wish to take up a dishonest business like this. Besides, I don't study my briefs carefully. My presentation of cases is usually weak. *Here is your money.*"

The Doctor would remark to his Patient: "I really don't know if you have enteric or rheumatoid arthritis. Also, perhaps, it may interest you to know that though my treatement has always been successful, my patients have invariably collapsed. No, thank you, I never charge my patients any fees, for after all my work is humanitarian. Good morning".

The shopkeeper would say to his customer: "You have offered me two Rupees for this cloth. I really cannot accept it. I paid only two annas for it".

The lender would say to the borrower: "Well, my dear chap, how you do blush and stammer! It isn't as if I have ever refused you before! Is it only a fiver, or anything bigger? Two thousand? That's right. Pass me the cheque book, will you? And mind, you are never to fuss about repayment. Security?—That be hanged!"

The Bus-man would say to his fare; "Please don't get in, Sir. There are six other buses plying your way, and they start earlier and are more comfortable. We don't go for eight or nine hours yet. We usually have engine trouble and tyre trouble. Our brakes are weak, our seats are dirty, and our roof leaks. And we may decide to stop half-way over".

The Priest would say to the devotee: "Brother, I know no more of God than you do. These rituals are really idiotic. Giving me money won't help you in the least. Go your ways in peace, brother"!

The Beggar would say to the Householder: "Thy need is perhaps greater than mine. Don't bother to give me anything".

Papa would say to his son: "My dear boy, I am really distressed at the way you stint yourself. Here is a blank cheque, fill it in as it suits you, buy yourself the best car you can get, and all the clothes and thingummies you want. And if you really must marry that Dancing Girl friend of yours, why I suppose you must. I dare say she will make a good wife, and if she doesn't, why, there are plenty of other dancing girls in the world".

The Secretary, proposing the customary Vote of Thanks to the Lecturer, would say: "We have all listened with intense disgust to the ignorant and foolish remarks made by the Lecturer. We all feel that he is the biggest of all the bores who have spoken at our meetings. Still it is our duty to express our gratitude to him. Let us thank God he did not lecture longer than he did."

The Teacher would say to his pupils: "My dear boys, I think I know something of the difficulties of schoolboys. I know you can't always come early or regularly to school. You don't get enough time to read your lessons or do your exercises. It is natural you should be mischievous and noisy,—monkeyish. I am too broad-minded to resent such small things".

The pupils would reply: "Sir, you are ugly, violent, disagreeable, and ignorant; you are a bore. It is not, however, your fault, but God's. He might have made you differently. We forgive Him, and adore and reverence you".

The Principal would say to the lecturer: "Dear Mr. Sadasiva, how hard you've been working! In the High School Classes, too, which you (very properly) detest. God will reward you,—(no one else will). Do let me give you a month or two of leave,—you really mustn't refuse. You might go out shooting, you know. Papers to value? I shall look through them for you myself while you are away"!

The aspirant for a Municipal Councillorship would address his Constituents: "Dear Ratepayers and Votegivers, you are quite right when you say that our Municipality is in a bad way. The roads are bad, sanitation is worse, the Council is busy hanging pictures and delivering orations on politics in the abstract, instead of doing real work. I should tell you I shall do nothing to mend these matters, beyond putting up a new lamp in front of my own house, but I want your votes, all the same."

H. E. the Viceroy would write to the President, All-India Universal Liberty Association:

"Dear Mr. Jabberlal,

I am in entire agreement with all the views you have expressed. I quite see that in the land of Ahimsa armed forces are, in addition to being tremendously expensive, an unpardonable anachronism. I am writing to the Honourable Mr. Yesjee Nojee the Home Member to take early steps towards the abolition of the Police. I am addressing a similar demand to H. E. the Commander-in-Chief in respect of the total disbandment of the army. I am also requesting the Law Member to expedite the repeal of the Arms Act. I sincerely believe it is high time we gave adequate encouragement to Indian trade and industry. The importers of fire-arms and the bomb-manufacturing chemists of this country should now have their chance. After all, the National bodies may be trusted to rule the country adequately through Moral Suasion."

The Houses of Parliament would rush through the third reading of some such Bill as this:—"That in the opinion of these Houses, the administration of India is getting to be too much of a nuisance, and should be definitely made over to the Gunmen of that Country"—

Mahatmajee would shout:—"Waiter, another steak, please, and two more bottles of beer! It is no joke fighting for these Harijans"!

Dean Inge would say to the world in general: "Cheerio! Chuck, Chuck!"

The Political Institutions of the Nambutiris.

(*By K. V. Krishna Ayyar, M. A., L. T.*)

THE Nambutiris claim to have been once both the owners and rulers of Kerala. This claim is advanced on no better authority than that of legends. According to the *Keralolpatti* (the legendary history of Kerala) Kerala was reclaimed from the sea by Parasurama and he gave it to the Brahmins of Ahichattra. He settled them in sixty-four villages, thirty-two in the Tulu-speaking and thirty-two in the Malayalam-speaking tracts. To protect the land so miraculously recovered from the sea he chose ten-and-a-half villages (പത്തരഗ്രാമം) from among the sixty-four and gave them the privilege of bearing arms. Then he brought *Sudras* from beyond the Ghats, caused them to adopt the law of succession through the mother (മാതൃപാരമ്പര്യം) and commanded them to look upon the Brahmins as their patrons and protectors.

After some time, for the better administration of the country, the land was divided into four provinces or *Kazhakams* (കഴകം), each of which was placed in charge of a village chosen from among the ten-and-a-half villages. These four villages were Perinchellur, Panniyur, Parappur and Chenganniyur. This arrangement did not prove satisfactory, and the powers of these villages were entrusted to *Rakshapurushas* or protectors appointed for a period of three years. But the government of these three-yearly *Rakshapurushas* was not better than that of the villages, and it was resolved to appoint a *Perumal* for twelve years. But the villages could not agree in the choice of the *Perumal*, and as a way out of the difficulty the Brahmins decided to request the neighbouring kings to send a *Perumal* for twelve years.

In this way the first *Perumal* was brought from Keyapuram in 216 A. D. Before he was formally invested, the Brahmins made an agreement with him that if he did not govern well they would resume the government from him and he would have to go back. The *Perumals*, who governed Kerala under this contract, were Chola, Pandi, Bana, Tulubha, Indra, Arya, Kunna, Kotti, Mata, Ezhi, Komba, Vijaya, Valabha, Harischandra and Kulasekhara, who died in 333 A. D. For some reason the Nambutiris failed to bring a *Perumal* after Kulasekhara's death, and the land became a prey to anarchy and confusion. So, after a century, they appealed to Krishna Raya of Anagundi. He sent Cheraman Perumal, who came to Kerala on the day of the chronogram *Swargasandehamprapya*, *i. e.*, 428 A. D.

Cheraman proved himself so good a ruler that the Brahmins did not like to part with him at the end of the stipulated twelve years. Krishna Raya became so wroth at what he conceived to be the rebellion of his deputy, Cheraman, that he invaded the country. But he was repulsed by Karipat Utayavarman and two Eradis named Manicchan and Vikraman. After ruling the country for 36 years he divided it among his *Samantas* and relatives, and became a monk, or, according to another version, went to Mecca. (It would appear from this that by the disposition thus made by the Perumal for the government of the land, the Nambutiris came to lose their ancient political overlordship.)

It is admitted on all hands that the *Keralolpatti* cannot be regarded as a sober historical narrative or reliable independent source of history. A superficial glance through its pages is enough to convince us of its utter worthlessness as an historical document. Kulasekhara Perumal, a contemporary of Kumarila Bhatta who lived in the 8th century A. D., is represented as having died in 333

A. D., and Krishna Deva, who came to the throne of Anagundi in 1509 A. D., is made to send Cheraman Perumal in 428 A. D. ! !

No evidence has yet been discovered to show that monarchical government in Kerala arose as the result of a contract, as is alleged by the *Keralolpatti*, between the Nambutiris and the *Perumal*. On the other hand, all available evidence tends to show that long before the institution of the *Perumals* according to the *Keralolpatti* kingship had been established in Kerala. The Tamil poem, *Padirrupattu*, gives us the names of a number of Chera kings, none of whom is represented as having obtained his authority from the Nambutiris. Further, Senguttuvan Sera, who was ruling at Vanchi or Cranganore from 90 to 145 A. D., had himself been preceeded by six kings, whose reigns in all covered a period of more than a century and a half. Again, Roman writers like Ptolemy (121—161 A. D.), the author of the *Periplus* (circa 80 A. D.) and Pliny (circa 70 A. D.) tell us that Vanchi was in their time ruled by a king under the title of *Keralaputras*. Asoka Maurya, who was the emperor of Magadha from 274 to 232 B. C., mentions the country of the *Keralaputras* among the countries in which he established hospitals for man and beast. From these evidences it is clear that Kerala had been ruled by kings as far back as 274 B. C., that is some five hundred years before the date of the first *Perumal*.

From the records of a much later period we can form some idea, albeit vague, of the institutions of the Nambutiris. As in other parts and among other peoples of India, the village or *Gramam* or *Ur* was the smallest political unit. It was a miniature republic in itself. It had its own council or assembly, consisting of the heads of the families who resided in it, and appointed its own officials called *Uralar*. One of the most important functions of the assembly and *Uralar* would be to provide for and supervise the management of the affairs of the village-temple. (In those days every village had its own temple and there was no village without a temple of its own.) When gifts were made to the temple they were generally made to the *Ur* or the village assembly and *Poduval*, whose duty it was to provide everything necessary for worship, such as, flowers, fruits, rice, etc. The *Uralars* had never been regarded as the owners of the temple. In the grants of the Travancore kings (*vide* the Travancore Archaeological Series, Vol. V.) we find the *Uralars* distinguished from the *Tirukoyiludayars* (തിരുക്കോയിലുടയാർ) or owners of the temple. The functions of the *Uralar* were political and not proprietary, and *Uraiyma* (ഊരായ്മ) belongs like *Koyma* (കോയ്മ) to the category of political terms and should never be confounded with *Udama* (ഉടമ) or possession. In course of time, when the importance of the village council declined, the *Uralars* became hereditary, and during the many political convulsions which Kerala had passed through they succeeded in transforming their trusteeship into perpetual proprietorship.

In some places, the temple had a separate committee, distinguished from the *Uralars*, to look after its affairs. It was called the *Gana* or *Samudayam*. Thus the temple of Tirukkadittanam in Travancore had a *Gana* of its own, which along with the *Santikkar* supervised its affairs. It had a special committee called *Uttira-Ganattar* (ഉത്തിരകണത്താർ) to conduct the annual *Uttira* festival. The *Gana* of Tiruvanvandur, also in Travancore, consisted of five members (അഞ്ചുകണത്താർ). In the temple of Peruneydal the yearly festival was conducted by the *Tirunal-Ganattar* (തിരുനാൾകണത്താർ).

These villages and *Devaswams* must have originally been independent. The territory within which they exercised their sovereign authority was called their *Sanketam* (സങ്കേതം). The most powerful of these *Sanketams* in historical times was that of Elangunnappuzha. According to

the *Keralapazhama*, the Cochin Rajah was able to escape from the pursuit of the Zamorin only by taking refuge in this *Sanketam*, which even the most powerful of the Kerala princes in those days dared not violate. Within its *Sanketam* the village or *Devaswam* levied taxes, administered justice and punished offenders even to the extent of confiscating their lands and putting them to death. A Tiruvelunnur record of 839 M. E. (1665 A. D.) shows that its *Samudayam* confiscated the property of a fisherman for breaking into the house of a Muhammadan. An entry in the account books of the Zamorin for 900 M. E. (1725 A. D.) says that the roof of Amat Chattu's house was ordered to be destroyed by the elephant for killing one Sekharan within the precincts of Calicut Tali.

By the eleventh century most of these villages and temples—even those like Vatakkunnathan (വടക്കുന്നാഥൻ), Kudalmanikam (കൂടൽമാണിക്കം) and Sri Padmanabhaswami (ശ്രീപത്മനാഭസ്വാമി)—seem to have lost their independence. For we find that for default the defaulters were made to pay a fine not to the *Uralar* or *Urar* but to the *Koviladhikari* (കോവിലധികാരികൾ) who was generally the king, or the king himself called *Perumanadigal* (പെരുമാനടികൾ) in the records, the governor of the district called *Naduvazhumavar* (നാട്ടുവാഴുമവർ) and the officer immediately in charge of the village called *Vazhkai-Vazhumavar* (വാഴ്കൈവാഴുമവർ).

In all the big temples of Kerala we meet with such dignities as *Melkoyma* (മേൽക്കോയ്മ), *Pura-koyma* (പുറക്കോയ്മ) and *Aka-Koyma* (അകക്കോയ്മ), who are generally one or the other of the Rajahs and *Swarupis* who ruled the country after the Perumals. It should be mentioned, however, to the eternal credit of these Rajahs that they came to exercise these rights not by any process of usurpation or encroachment on their part. On the other hand, the Nambutiries themselves sought their interference and offered them these rights—which were accepted, in some cases only reluctantly, as a duty to oblige the Brahmins.

Side by side with the village and *Devaswam* we come across the *Tali*. *Tali* originally meant a temple, and in all probability the temple must have come into existence before the Brahmins settled round it. One of the most important *Talis* of Kerala was Calicut Tali, which had its own *Sanketam*. The word has come to be used in other senses also and has developed a political meaning of its own. In the *Keralolpatti* it is used to denote the residences of the commissioners appointed by the four *Kazhakams*, the commissioners being called *Taliyatirimar* (തളിയാതിരിമാർ). These *Talis* are referred to in Vira Raghava Chakravarti's grant to Iravikortan, who was allowed to collect customs 'in particular between the four *Talis* and the village near it' (വിശേഷാൽ നാല്ല തളിയും തളിക്കടുത്ത കിരാമമൊത്തിടയിൽ). In the grants of the Travancore Rajah, Kulasekhara Koviladhikarikai, the the word denotes the officers or represantatives (whoever these might be) of the four *Talis*. He made his grant to the village of Neydal in the presence of the four *Talis* and Tirukunrappuzha from Nediyatali hall (നാല്തളിയെയുന്തിരുക്കുന്റപ്പുഴൈയും കൂട്ടിക്കൊണ്ടു നെടിയതളി ഇരുന്നരുളി). In his Kollam grant of M. E. 278 *i. e.*, 1104 A. D., he makes the gift in the presence of the four *Talis*, the One Thousand, the Six Hundred, the governor of the *nad* named Vikraman and other *Samantas* (നാൻകു തളിയുമായി (രംന്ത) വന്തറുവരും (ഇൻ) നാട്ടുവാഴ്കയാൻ വിക്കിരമനാന്. * * * കൻ മുതലായുള്ള ശാമന്തരും തിരുവൈക്കലൊഴക്കൂടിയിരിക്ക തിരുവൈക്ക നമ്മൈനൊള്ളുതളിയാവതു.

We do not know why the four *Talis* were summoned. Did they come there as advisers or attestors or owners of the temples to which the grants were made? They cannot be regarded as the representatives of the Nambutiri community; for in the grant of Vira Raghava Chakravarti it is not the four *Talis* that are spoken of as attestors but the villages of Chovaram and Panniyur. In the present state of our

evidence we can only raise a difficulty without attempting to solve it.

Parisha is again another word which has a number of meanings. It is used to denote 'people', as in മുമ്പിൽ സർപ്പഭീതി ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുപോയ പരിഷ (the people who had formerly fled on account of the fear of snakes). It means also persons or castes entrusted with certain dutiesas in അകത്തൂട്ടുപരിഷ (servants of the household). The arms-bearing Nambutiris were called *Uril-Parisha* (ഊരിൽ പരിഷ). It is used to denote also the assemblies of the communities below the Nayars in the social scale.

Another institution of the Nambutiris was the *Gana* of each of the eighteen *Samghas* of the warrior Brahmins known as *Chatirar* (ചാത്തിരർ), a corruption of the Sanskrit *Kshatriya* From the very obscure and confused account of a *Gana* meeting given in the *Keralolpatti* we may gather the following facts about it:— (1) Each *Samgha* had its own *Gana*; (2) none but a member of the *Samgha* could attend its *Gana*; (3) the meeting must be held in a temple belonging to the *Gana*; (4) it was convened and presided over by the *Rakshapurusha*; (5) those who were not qualified to take any part in the *Samgha* play or dine with or cook for the other Nambutiris (അരങ്ങും അടുക്കളയും സംശയമുള്ളവർ) could not be present; (6) information was given by the head of the *Samgha* (സംഘമൂന്നടെയ യജമാനൻ) of the date and place of meeting; (7) on the previous night the members assembled near the temple fixed as the venue of the *Gana*; (8) next morning they proceeded in state to the temple; (9) after offering worship to the deity the members seated themselves round a lighted lamp and the proceedings were formally begun with the worship of Ganapati; (10) the *Gana* discussed the ways and means for the protection of the country, for the maintenance of religion and *dharma*, and enquired into and redressed grievances; (11) the members had to observe *Diksha* in all its rigour as long as the meeting lasted; (12) but they were allowed to divert themselves by the practice of arms.

This cursory survey of the institutions of the Nambutiris will not be complete without a reference to the dynasties like Tirumanasseri, Chittur, Idappalli and Chembakasseri. We do not know how and when these Brahmin dynasties came into existence. Tirumanasseri originally belonged to Panniyur. When this village became accursed he shifted his residence to Ponnani and claimed to exercise whatever rights had belonged to Panniyur village. He sided with the Zamorin in his wars with the Vellatri and obtained important privileges at the *Mamamkam*. Chittur and Idappalli were also the allies of the Calicut king. The rights which they are accorded now when they visit the Zamorin are but the shadowy relics of the intimate relation that had subsisted between them in a not very remote epoch.

രാധയുടെ മുക്തി.

താമരക്കണ്ണൻ—മട്ട്.

1. ആഴിയിലന്നംവീണപോകവെ-
യ്യൂഴിനായകനാദിത്യൻ;

2. മന്ദസ്മിതവുംചെയ്തു പൂന്തിങ്കൾ
മന്ദം മന്ദമുദിക്കവെ;

3. പാര'മുല്ലപ്പൂരും' മോദമിയററും
'താരാഹാര' മണിയിച്ചും;

4. മന്നിനെ സ്വർഗ്ഗതുല്യമാക്കുവാ-
നന്നു പ്രകൃതിയത്നിക്കെ;

5. രാധ—യാസ്സാധ്വി, ഗോപികാരത്നം
മാധവവധു, സാധ്വിയാൾ

6. രണ്ടുനാളായി കണ്ണനെക്കാണാ-
ഞ്ഞുണ്ടായിവന്നൊരിണ്ടലാൽ

7. മേവുന്നു പലചിന്തയിൽപെട്ടു
വേവുമുള്ളത്തോടേകയായ്.

8. പൂങ്കുഴൽക്കെട്ടഴിഞ്ഞു രാധത-
ന്നങ്കത്തിലതാ ചിന്നുന്നു

9. തങ്കവളകളൂരി വീണതാ
മങ്കതൻചാരേ മിന്നുന്നു

10. പങ്കജാക്ഷനെക്കാണാഞ്ഞിട്ടതാ
കൊങ്കകളഹോ തുള്ളുന്നു.

11. പൂങ്കവിൾത്തടം തന്നിലായതാ
തങ്ങുന്നുവെള്ളമുത്തെന്നു

12. ശങ്കിക്കു മശ്രുബിന്ദുക്കളുടൻ
പൊങ്കരേണ തുടക്കുന്നു.

13. ചഞ്ചലാക്ഷിതൻചെഞ്ചൊടിയിണ
ചഞ്ചലിക്കുന്നു ചെഞ്ചമ്മെ.

14. "ഭൂലോകമിതു വെൺകരങ്ങളാൽ
താലോലിക്കുന്ന തിങ്കളേ!

15. കണ്ടുവോ നീയെൻകണ്ണനെ ചിരി
പൂണ്ടുകൊണ്ടെന്തു നോക്കുന്നു?

16. കഷ്ടമങ്ങേച്ചസ്ഥാനമാന്നോക്കു
ലോഷ്ടമായെല്ലാം തോന്നീടാം.

17. അച്യുത! ശ്രിതവത്സല! കൃഷ്ണ!
സച്ചിദാനന്ദ! ഗോവിന്ദ!

18. വേവുന്നുമനമാധിയാൽ മമ
മഞ്ജുളാകൃതേ! മാധവ!

19. കാണിനേരവുമെങ്ങിനെയിവൾ
കാണാതേ കാലംപോക്കുന്നു?

20. എന്തൊരത്ഭുതമെല്ലോളം പ്രേമ-
മന്തരംഗത്തിലില്ലെന്നോ?

21. രാധയെയിന്നിദാരങ്ങളായി-
ട്ടാദരിക്കുകയില്ലെന്നോ?

22. ആധിയോടേവമോതിയാരാധ
ബോധരഹിതയായിതാ

23. വീഴുന്നുപരമാതപഃമററു
വാടിക്കുഴഞ്ഞതാളുപോൽ.

24 "രാധേ ഞാനിതാവന്നുപോയ്, നീയു
മാധിയാകവേ നീക്കുക

25. ഇത്രയുണ്ടുനിന്നാധിയെന്നു ഞാ-
നൾത്താരിലാദ്യമോർത്തീല.
26. കണ്ണനെയിത്ര കാര്യമാണെന്നും
നണ്ണിയതില്ലയാദ്യമേ.
27. കണ്ണനിലെത്ര പ്രേമമുണ്ടെന്നും
നിർണ്ണയിക്കുവാൻ വേണ്ടിഞാൻ
28. കാലേക്കൂട്ടിത്താൻനിശ്ചയിച്ചോരു
ജാലവിദ്യയിതോമനേ!''
29. ഇത്ഥമാശ്വാസവാക്യവുമോതി
പ്പാർത്ഥസഖിയങ്ങെത്തവെ,
38. കോമളക്കരം കൊണ്ടുരാധതൻ
പൂമേനിയും തലോടവേ,
31. ആനനമതിലായിരക്കണ
ക്കാനന്ദമുദ്ര ചേർക്കവേ,
32. രാധയോതുന്നു, ''മാധവ!യിവ-
ളാധിയകന്നു മുക്തയായ്.''

എം. എസ്സ്. സീനിയർ വിദ്യാർത്ഥി.

ഭാഷാകവിത.

നമ്മുടെ വിദ്യാലയങ്ങളിൽ ആംഗ്ലേയ ഭാഷക്കു അത്യധികം പ്രാധാന്യം കൊടുക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടും, നാട്ടുഭാഷാഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളെക്കാൾ ഉത്തമഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ ആംഗ്ലേയഭാഷയിൽ ഉള്ളതിനാൽ വിദ്യാൎത്ഥികളിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷവും ഭാഷാപുസ്തകങ്ങളെ വിഗണിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടും കൈരളിക്കു തട്ടിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഉടവു അവൎണ്ണനീയമാകുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഭാരതത്തിൽ ദേശാഭിമാനം വേരൂന്നി വളൎന്നതോടുകൂടി ആധുനികപൗരന്മാരിൽ ഭാഷാഭിമാനവും അല്പാല്പം ഉണ്ടായിത്തുടങ്ങീട്ടുണ്ട്. ജനങ്ങളിൽ പരക്കെ ഈ ഭാഷാഭിമാനം വളൎന്നുവരേണമെങ്കിൽ കുറെക്കാലം കഴിയേണമെന്നു പറയേണ്ടതില്ലല്ലൊ.

ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ വിദ്യാൎത്ഥികളുടെ സ്ഥിതി ആലോചിച്ചു നോക്കുക. ആംഗ്ലേയഭാഷയിൽ നല്ല പരിജ്ഞാനമില്ലെങ്കിൽ അവൎക്കു ഗണിതശാസ്ത്രം, പ്രകൃതിശാസ്ത്രം, രസതന്ത്രശാസ്ത്രം എന്നീ വിഷയങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാൻ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടു നേരിടുന്നു. അതുകൊണ്ടു ഓരോ വിദ്യാൎത്ഥിയും തൻെറ ഒഴിവുസമയത്തെ ആംഗ്ലേയഭാഷാപരിജ്ഞാനത്തിന്നായി വിനിയോഗിക്കുന്നു. അഥവാ അവർ ഭാഷാപുസ്തകങ്ങൾ വായിക്കുകയാണെങ്കിൽത്തന്നെ, അവ നോവലുകളോ ചെറുകഥകളൊ ആയിരിക്കും. അവൎക്കു കവിത വായിച്ചാസ്വദിക്കാൻ സമയവും സന്തോഷവും ഉള്ളതായി കാണുന്നില്ല.

തമിഴഭാഷയുടെ ഗൎഭത്തിൽ ജനിച്ചു അല്പകാലം ശൈശവാവസ്ഥയിൽ വിഹരിച്ചശേഷം സംസ്കൃതസാഹിത്യമാകുന്ന വരനോടു ചേൎന്നു ദാമ്പത്യസുഖം അനുഭവിക്കുന്ന കേരളഭാഷാവനിതക്കു അപ്പോഴപ്പോഴായി പല ആഭരണങ്ങളും ധരിക്കുവാൻ സംഗതിയായിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇവയിൽ കവിതാരൂപികളായ ഭൂഷണങ്ങളെപ്പററിമാത്രം അല്പംവിചിന്തനം ചെയ്യാം.

ഭാഷാകവിതകളേ മൂന്നു പ്രധാനഭാഗങ്ങളാക്കി തരം തിരിക്കാം. 1. പ്രാചീനകൃതികൾ, 2. അൎവ്വാചീനകൃതികൾ, 3. ആധുനികകൃതികൾ.

<u>പ്രാചീനകൃതികൾ</u>:— ഌത്തച്ഛനുമുമ്പുണ്ടാക്കപ്പെട്ട സകല കൃതികളും ഇതിലുൾപ്പെടും. ഇവയേപ്പററി നമുക്കു പൂൎണ്ണപരിജ്ഞാനം സിദ്ധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. ഏററവും പ്രാചീനകൃതികൾ എന്നു നാം വിശ്വസിച്ചുപോരുന്ന കണ്ണശ്ശരാമായണം, ഉണ്ണുനീലീസന്ദേശം, കൃഷ്ണപ്പാട്ട്, സുഭഗസന്ദേശം മുതലായവൎക്ക് മുമ്പും ഭാഷയിൽ കവിതകൾ ഉണ്ടായിരിപ്പാൻ വഴിയുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ അവ മറവിലിരിക്കുന്ന സ്ഥിതിക്കു ഇവയെത്തന്നെ പ്രാചീനകൃതികളായോൎത്തു ഇവയുടെ സാമാന്യമായ ഒരറിവു സിദ്ധിക്കുവാൻ നോക്കുക.

കവികൾ:— പ്രാചീനഭാഷാകവികളിൽ പ്രാധാന്യം അർഹിക്കുന്നവർ ക്രി. പി. 13-ം 14-ം ശതകങ്ങളിൽ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്ന മാധവപ്പണിക്കർ, ശങ്കരപ്പണിക്കർ, രാമപ്പണിക്കർ (കണ്ണശ്ശപ്പണിക്കർ) ഉണ്ണുനീലീസന്ദേശകർത്താവായ അജ്ഞാതനാമാ, ചെറുശ്ശേരി നമ്പൂരി എന്നിവരായിരുന്നു. ഇവരെക്കൂടാതെ പല മഹാകവികളും അക്കാലത്തു ജീവിച്ചു വന്നിരുന്നു എന്നു ചരിത്രം മുഖേനയും ഐതിഹ്യങ്ങൾ വഴിക്കും നമുക്കു അറിവാനിടയായിട്ടുണ്ട്. എങ്കിലും അവരുടെ കവിതകൾക്കു ഇന്നും അധികം പ്രചാരം സിദ്ധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല.

കവിതകൾ:—ഇക്കാലത്തെ പ്രധാനകൃതികൾ മാധവപ്പണിക്കരുടെ ഭഗവൽഗീതാഭാഷാന്തരം, ശങ്കരപ്പണിക്കരുടെ ഭാരതമാല, രാമപ്പണിക്കരുടെ ബാല്യകൃതിയായ രാമായണം, ശിവരാത്രിമഹാത്മ്യം അന്ത്യവും അപൂർണ്ണവുമായ ഭാരതം എന്നിവയാകുന്നു. ശ്രീമൽഭഗവൽഗീത സംസ്കൃതത്തിൽ നിന്നു ഒന്നാമതായി ഒരന്യഭാഷയിലേക്കു വിവർത്തനം ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടതു മലയാളത്തിലാണെന്നും മേൽപറഞ്ഞ മാധവപ്പണിക്കരുടെ കൃതിയാണതെന്നും പണ്ഡിതശിഖാമണിയായ മഹാകവി ഉള്ളൂർ പരമേശ്വരയ്യർ അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നു. കണ്ണശ്ശരാമായണം മുതലായ പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെട്ട കവിതകൾ മാന്യവായനക്കാർ വായിച്ചാസ്വദിക്കേണ്ടതു തന്നെയാണ്.

ഭാഷാരീതി:—ഈ കൃതികളിലെ ഭാഷാരീതി സരളവും തമിഴിനോടധികം സാമീപ്യമുള്ളതുമാകുന്നു. സംസ്കൃതപദങ്ങളെയെല്ലാം തത്ഭവങ്ങളായിട്ടാണ് ഇവയിൽ കാണുന്നതു്. ആധുനികകവിതകൾ വായിച്ചു ശീലിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഒരാൾക്കു ഇവ, പ്രഥമദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ ദുർഗ്രഹങ്ങളായി തോന്നുമെങ്കിലും സശ്രദ്ധം വായിക്കുകയാണെങ്കിൽ ഒരു മാതിരി നല്ലവണ്ണം മനസ്സിലാക്കാം. എല്ലാം മാത്രാവൃത്തങ്ങളായ പാട്ടുകളാണ്.

എന്നാൽ ഉണ്ണുനീലീസന്ദേശത്തിന്റെ ഭാഷ വ്യത്യസ്തരീതിയിലാണ്. സംസ്കൃതപദങ്ങളും വിഭക്തിരൂപങ്ങളും അങ്ങിനെതന്നെ ഉപയോഗിച്ചു കാണുന്നു. തത്ഭവങ്ങളും ധാരാളമായി കാണാം. ഇതിലേ സരളമായ പ്രതിപാദനരീതിയും ആശയവൈശിഷ്ട്യവും ശബ്ദഭംഗിയും കാണിക്കാൻ ഒരു ശ്ലോകം ഉദ്ധരിക്കാം:—

കാളംപോലെ കുസുമധനുഷോ
നല്ലപൂങ്കോഴിതൂകീ
ച്ചോളംപോലെ ച്ചിതറിവിളറീ ഹന്ത!
താരങ്ങളെല്ലാം
താളംപോലെപ്പുലരിവനിതയ്ക്കാ
ഗതൌ ചന്ദ്രസൂര്യൌ
നാളംപോലെ നളിനകുഹരാ
ന്മൂൽഗതാഭൃംഗരാജി:

അർവ്വാചീന കൃതികളിലാണ് കേരളസാഹിത്യം പരിശോഭിക്കുന്നതു്. കൈരളിപ്പെണ്ണിന്റെ ഭമ്മഭൂഷണങ്ങളാണ് അർവ്വാചീനകൃതികൾ. കൈരളീദേവിയെ ഭൂഷിതയാക്കുവാൻ ഓരോ അർവ്വാചീനസാഹിത്യകാരനും നല്ലവണ്ണം പരിശ്രമിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. മലയാളസാഹിത്യവാസരത്തിന്റെ

മദ്ധ്യാഹ്നമായി, മദ്ധ്യകാലത്തേ നമുക്കു ഗണിക്കാം. നമ്മുടെ ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ പുതുപ്രസ്ഥാനംകൊണ്ടു അതിലും ഉച്ചസ്ഥിതിയിൽ കേരളകവിതാസാഹിത്യം എത്തിച്ചേരുമൊ എന്നു കണ്ടറിയേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

തുഞ്ചത്തെഴുത്തച്ഛൻെറ കാലമായ കൊല്ലവഷം 9-ാംശതകത്തിന്നും ഭാഷാമഹാകാവ്യങ്ങൾ പലതും വെളിക്കുവന്ന 11-ാം ശതകത്തിൻെറ അന്ത്യഘട്ടത്തിന്നും ഇടക്കുള്ള കാലത്തേയാണ് ഞാൻ അവ്വാചീനകാലമെന്നു വിവക്ഷിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതു്. ഇതിനെ രണ്ടു പ്രധാനഭാഗമാക്കിത്തിരിക്കാം. 1. പൂവ്വഭാഗം 2. ഉത്തരഭാഗം.

പൂവ്വഭാഗം. തുഞ്ചൻകൃതികൾ:—തുഞ്ചത്താചാൎയ്യൻെറ, സരളവും സാരഗർഭവും ആയ ഭാഷാരീതിയും, സാഹിത്യരസവും, കലൎന്നു ഭക്തിപ്രധാനങ്ങളായി വിലസുന്ന അദ്ധ്യാത്മരാമായണം, മഹാഭാരതം, ഇരുപത്തുനാലുവൃത്തം മുതലായ കൃതികൾ ഇന്നു കേരളത്തിൽ പ്രചുരപ്രചാരത്തിലിരിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടു അവയെപ്പററി ഇവിടെ അധികം പ്രസ്താവിക്കേണ്ടതില്ല.

കുഞ്ചൻകൃതികൾ:- നമ്പ്യാരുടെ തുള്ളലുകൾ, പഞ്ചതന്ത്രം, ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണചരിതം മുതലായവ വായിച്ചു രസിക്കാത്ത ഭാഷാപ്രണയികൾ അധികം ഉണ്ടെന്നുതോന്നുന്നില്ല.

ഉത്തരഭാഗം. തൎജ്ജിമകൾ:—വശ്യവചസ്സായ കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂർ കുഞ്ഞിക്കുട്ടൻ തമ്പുരാൻെറ മഹാഭാരതം വൃത്താനുവൃത്തം തൎജ്ജിമ, കെ. സി. കേശവപ്പിള്ളയുടെ നാരായണീയം തൎജ്ജിമ ഇവയെല്ലാം ഇതിലുൾപ്പെടും. ഇവക്കുടാതെ, പല ശ്രേഷ്ഠകവികളും സംസ്കൃതനാടകങ്ങളും കാവ്യങ്ങളും ഭാഷയിൽ തൎജ്ജിമ ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ടു്.

ഖണ്ഡകൃതികളും മഹാകാവ്യങ്ങളും:—ജനങ്ങൾക്കു കവിതാഭ്രാന്തു മുഴുത്ത സമയമായിരുന്നു ഇതു്. എഴുത്തുകുത്തുകളും പുസ്തകാഭിപ്രായങ്ങളും വൃത്താന്തവിതരണങ്ങളും എല്ലാം കവിതയിൽത്തന്നെ. കോട്ടയത്തു നിന്നു പുറപ്പെടുന്ന മലയാളമനോരമ, കവിതക്കുതന്നെ ഒരു ഭാഗം ഒഴിച്ചുവിട്ടിരുന്നു. പലേ മാന്യകവികളുടേയും തൂലികകൾ ഇതിൽ യഥേഷ്ടം കളിയാടിത്തുടങ്ങി.

അങ്ങിനെയിരിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് 1081 ലോ മററൊ സുപ്രസിദ്ധകവിയായ പന്തളത്തു കേരളവൎമ്മത്തമ്പുരാൻെറ കീഴിൽ "കവനകൌമുദി" എന്ന പാക്ഷികപത്രം (Fortnightly) പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തിത്തുടങ്ങിയതു്.

നടുവത്തച്ഛൻ നമ്പൂതിരി, മഹൻ നമ്പൂതിരി, കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂർ കുഞ്ഞിക്കുട്ടൻ തമ്പുരാൻ, കൊച്ചുണ്ണിത്തമ്പുരാൻ, ഉള്ളൂർ പരമേശ്വരയ്യർ, വള്ളത്തോൾ, കണ്ടൂർ, തുടങ്ങിയുള്ള "കവിതാരസാലക്കൊമ്പത്തു മിന്നിയ" കോകിലങ്ങൾ തങ്ങളുടെ കവനകദംബങ്ങളാൽ കേരളഭാഷയെ ഭൂഷിതയാക്കി.

ഇതായിരുന്നു മലയാളമഹാകാവ്യങ്ങളുടെ ആവിർഭാവസമയവും. ഉമാകേരളം, കേശവീയം, പാണ്ഡവോദയം, ആംഗല

സാമ്രാജ്യം (തർജ്ജിമ), രുഗ്മാംഗദചരിതം, ചിത്രയോഗം മുതലായ കാവ്യങ്ങളെപ്പററി ഇവിടെ വിവരിക്കേണ്ട ആവശ്യകതയുണ്ടെന്നു തോന്നുന്നില്ല.

ഏതാണ്ടിക്കാലത്താണ് ഭാഷാചമ്പുക്കൾ, സന്ദേശകാവ്യങ്ങൾ, നാടകങ്ങൾ, രൂപകങ്ങൾ എന്നിവ വെളിക്കു വന്നതു. ലേഖനദൈർഘ്യത്തേ ഭയന്നു ഇവയെപ്പററി അധികം വിവരിക്കുന്നില്ല.

ആധുനിക കൃതികൾ പ്രായേണ ഖണ്ഡകൃതികളാണ്. ഇവയെ സംസ്കൃതവൃത്തങ്ങളിലുള്ളവ, ദ്രാവിഡ വൃത്തങ്ങളിലുള്ളവ എന്നു 2 പ്രധാന ഭാഗങ്ങളാക്കിത്തിരിക്കാം.

ഒന്നാംഭാഗത്തിന്നുദാഹരണമായി ചിന്താവിഷ്ടയായ സീത, അനിരുദ്ധൻ, മാലതീ, മംഗളമഞ്ജരി, ഗണപതി തുടങ്ങി എണ്ണിയാൽ തീരാത്ത അനേകം കവനങ്ങളേയും രണ്ടാംഭാഗത്തിന്നുദാഹരണമായി, കർണ്ണഭൂഷണം, പിംഗള, മദലനമറിയം, ചണ്ഡാലഭിക്ഷുകി മുതലായ നിരവധി കവനങ്ങളേയും എടുക്കാം.

രഘുവംശം തർജ്ജിമചെയ്ത കവിശിഖാമണി കുണ്ടൂർ നാരായണമേനോൻ അവർകൾ പച്ചമലയാളത്തിൽ കവിത എഴുതുക എന്നൊരു പുതിയ പന്ഥാവു നിർമ്മിച്ചു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻെറ നാലുഭാഷാകാവ്യങ്ങൾ, ഭാഷാകവിതയിലെ നാലു അനർഘരത്നങ്ങളാണ്. ഉള്ളൂർ പരമേശ്വരയ്യരും "നേച്ച്", "കമ്മാരൻനായർ" എന്ന രണ്ടു ഭാഷാകൃതികൾ (പച്ചമലയാളത്തിൽ) ഉണ്ടാക്കീട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ പന്ഥാവിൽക്കൂടി ആധുനിക കവികൾ സഞ്ചരിക്കാത്തതു വ്യസനകരമാണ്.

വള്ളത്തോളിൻെറ സാഹിത്യമഞ്ജരി (7 ഭാഗങ്ങൾ;) യുവകവിയായ വിദ്വാൻ ജി. ശങ്കരക്കുറുപ്പിൻെറ "സാഹിത്യകൌതുകം", ഉള്ളൂരിൻെറ 'താരാഹാരം,' 'തരംഗിണീ', 'കിരണാവലി', മുതലായ ഖണ്ഡകവനസമാഹാരങ്ങൾ വായിച്ചാസ്വദിക്കാത്ത സഹൃദയന്മാർ അധികം ഉണ്ടാകുമെന്നു തോന്നുന്നില്ല.

ഭാവികൃതികൾ. ഭൂലോകത്തിലേ സകലഭാഷകളും പ്രതിദിനം അഭിവൃദ്ധിപ്രാപിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണ് വരുന്നതു്. എന്നാൽ ഭാഷാകവിതയേ സംബന്ധിച്ചേടത്തോളം അതു ദിനംപ്രതി അധോഗതിപ്രാപിച്ചു കൊണ്ടു വരുന്നതായിട്ടാണ് കാണുന്നതു്. ഇതുമാറി ഉന്നതി വരേണമെങ്കിൽ, അനുകരണപ്രധാനമായ പുതുപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തേ കുരുന്നിൽത്തന്നെ നുള്ളിക്കളയണം. നവീന കവിതാരീതിയെ ഒന്നുടച്ചുവാർക്കണം. സർവ്വത്ര പകർന്നിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ "പാട്ടു"രോഗത്തേ സിദ്ധൌഷധംകൊണ്ടു മാററണം.

ഇത്രയും പറഞ്ഞതുകൊണ്ടു ഭാഷയിൽ പുതിയതായൊരു കവനരീതിയും കൊണ്ടു വരരുതെന്നാണെൻെറ പക്ഷമെന്നു ആരും തെററിദ്ധരിക്കരുതു്. ഭാഷയിൽ പുതിയരീതി അവശ്യം ആവശ്യമായതാണ് എന്നാൽ അതു അനുകരണമായിരിക്കരുതു്. ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ "Sonnet"കൾ ഉള്ളതുകൊണ്ടു മലയാളത്തിൽ "ലഘുപദികൾ" വേണമെന്നെന്തിനാണ് ശഠിക്കുന്ന

ത്തു്? നവീനാശയത്തെ സരളവും മനോഹ രവും ആയ വാചകത്തിൽ ശബ്ദഭംഗി യോടുകൂടി പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനെന്താണ് വിരോധം? ശ്ലോകങ്ങൾ പാടില്ല പാട്ടുക ൾതന്നെ വേണമെന്നെന്തിനാണ് വാശി പിടിക്കുന്നതു്? സ്വഭാഷാഭിമാനമോ? സ്വഭാഷാഭിമാനമുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ,

"പുത്തൻ പുരാതനമിവററയിലേക ഭാവ-
മൊത്തമ്പുമുള്ളിനൊടു രണ്ടിലുമുള്ള തത്വം"

സമമായെടുത്തു ഈ ഭാഷയേ നന്നാക്കിത്തീർക്കുകയല്ലേ വേണ്ടതു്?

എന്തായാലും കേരളഭാഷാകവിതക്കു് ഒരു ശോഭനമായ ഭാവിയേ നൽകുവാൻ ദൈവത്തോടു പ്രാൎത്ഥിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു വിരമിക്കുന്നു.

പി. ടി. വി. പൂൎവ്വവിദ്യാൎത്ഥി.

മരിച്ച മന്നവൻെറ മടക്കം.

രാത്രി, ധരിത്രിയെ തൻെറ നൃത്തരംഗമാക്കിക്കഴിഞ്ഞു. ഘോരരൂപിണിയായ നിശാചരിയെപ്പോലുള്ള നിശയുടെ നയനങ്ങൾക്കു മുമ്പാകെ നടക്കാറുള്ള കഠോര നാടകാഭിനയങ്ങൾ ധരാതലത്തിലെങ്ങും പരന്നു. അല്ലയോ രാത്രി,—എത്ര ഉത്തമമർത്ത്യർ നീ സാക്ഷിയാകെ വഞ്ചിതരായി ധരിത്രിയെവെടിയുന്നു? എത്ര ക്രൂരകൃത്യങ്ങളെ നീ ദിനംപ്രതി ദർശിക്കുന്നു? ശിഷ്ടരെ കഷ്ടപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന എത്ര ദുഷ്ടർക്ക് നീ അഭയം നൽകുന്നു? അഹോ! നീ പാപിഷ്ഠതന്നെ, സംശയമില്ല.

ആ ദിനം അഷ്ടമിയായിരുന്നു. അമൃതകിരണൻ അംബരതടത്തിൽ അർദ്ധരാത്രിയുടെ ആഗമനത്തെ അറിയിച്ചുംകൊണ്ട് അസ്തമിക്കാറായി. അരാവലിമലയുടെ അഗ്രഭാഗംശശിയുടെ ശുഭ്രകരങ്ങൾ തട്ടി ശോഭിക്കുന്നു. അദ്രിയുടെ അടിവാരത്തിൽ അത്യന്തം തിങ്ങിനില്ക്കുന്ന വൃക്ഷസമൂഹങ്ങളാലാവൃതമായ അടവി അന്ധകാരത്തിൽ ആണ്ടുകഴിഞ്ഞു. അതിന്നരികിൽ നിദ്രയുടെ നികേതനമായി ചമഞ്ഞിരുന്ന രജപുത്രനഗരം അസ്പഷ്ടമായി കാണപ്പെടുന്നു. പ്രജകൾക്കു കല്പകവും മുഗിളർക്കു മൃത്യുവുമായി രാജ്യംഭരിച്ചു പാർത്ഥലത്തിൽ കീർത്തിപരത്തിയ വിശാലമനസ്കനും, ദയാലുവും, ധൈര്യത്തിൻെറ അവതാരവും, യോധപുരഭൂപാലനുമായ പൃഥ്വിസിംഹൻെറ ദുർഗ്ഗം അംബരമാർഗ്ഗത്തെ ചുംബനംചെയ്യുവാൻ ആശിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നു തോന്നിക്കത്തക്ക മതിലുകളോടും അതിലും അധികം ഉയരത്തിൽ സ്ഥാപിതമായ ഗോപുരത്തോടുംകൂടി ആകമാനം ഒരു അദ്രിയാണെന്നേ ആ അർദ്ധരാത്രിയിൽ കുറെ അകലെനിന്നു വീക്ഷിച്ചാൽ ഏവനും തോന്നുകയുള്ളു. ഉറയിൽനിന്നൂരിയ വാളുകളോടുകൂടി കോട്ടമതിലിന്മേൽ അങ്ങുമിങ്ങും നടക്കുന്ന രണ്ടു കാവല്ക്കാരല്ലാതെ ആ യോധപുരത്തിൽ ഒരാളേയും എങ്ങും കാണ്മാനില്ല. നിശയുടെ നിസ്സബ്ദത ആ നഗരത്തിൽ നിശ്ശേഷം നിരന്നിരിക്കുന്നു.

ഉടനെ അസ്തമിക്കാറായ ശശിയെ ഒരു ഉന്നത ഘനാഘനംമറച്ചു. പ്രകൃതി എന്തോ ഒരു കഠോരകൃത്യത്തെക്കാണ്മാനൊരുങ്ങുന്നപോലെ അത്യന്തം രൂക്ഷയായിഭവിച്ചു. അതാ ആ യോധപുരമന്നവദുർഗ്ഗത്തിൽനിന്ന് ഒരു യുവഭടൻ ഇറങ്ങിവരുന്നു. കാവൽക്കാർ കവാടം തുറന്ന് കൈകൂപ്പി നില്ക്കുന്നു. യൗവനം കളിയാടുന്ന ദേഹകാന്തിയോടുകൂടിയ ആ ഭടൻ യുദ്ധസന്നദ്ധനായ ആയുധമണിഞ്ഞു് അസിലതപോലുള്ള ഖഡ്ഗത്തെ ഉറയിൽനിന്നൂരി കരതലത്തിൽ പിടിച്ച് അനുചരരാരുമില്ലാതെ ആ അരാവലിയുടെ അരികിലുള്ള അരണ്യപ്രദേശത്തേക്ക് ആഗമിപ്പാനുള്ള കാരണമെന്തായിരിക്കാം?

അത്രനേരം അതിശീഘ്രമായി നടന്ന് അടവിയുടെ അരികിൽ അണഞ്ഞആ

യുവയോധൻ അവിടെ വൃക്ഷങ്ങളുടെ ഇട യിൽനിന്നു നയനങ്ങളെ നാലുപാടും നി നാദത്തിൻെറ കാരണമറിയുവാൻ നയി ച്ചു.

ഉടനെ ഒരു ഘോരാരവം കേൾക്കാറാ യി. ഒരുകൂട്ടം നരർ ഒരുമിച്ച് അട്ടഹ സിച്ചാലുണ്ടാവുംവിധം ഒരു ശബ്ദം നമ്മു ടെ ഭടൻെറ കർണ്ണപുടങ്ങളിൽ പതിച്ചു. അരനിമിഷത്തിന്നുള്ളിൽ അടവിമദ്ധ്യ ത്തിൽനിന്ന് അനവധി ആളുകൾ യുവ യോധനെ വളഞ്ഞു.

ആഗതർ — എടാ മാനുഷകീടമായ യോ ധപുരഭൂപാലക! നിൻെറ ഗളനാള ത്തിൽ വാൾ പതിപ്പിപ്പാൻ അവസ രം ഇപ്പോഴെ ലഭിച്ചുള്ളു. മുഗിളരുടെ ജന്മശത്രുക്കളെ അവർ വെറുതെ വിട്ട യക്കുമോ?

ആഗതർ ആയുധങ്ങളെ പ്രയോഗിച്ചു. ആരവം അധികമായി-ഇരുപതു മുഗിളർ ഏകാകിയായ യോധപുരഭൂപാലകനെ എതിർത്തു. പൃഥ്വിസിംഹൻെറ ഖഡ്ഗം മിന്നൽ പിണർപോലെ മുഹമ്മദീയരു ടെ മാറിൽപതിഞ്ഞു. കരചരണാദി കൾ കരവാളിൻെറ പ്രഭവശത്താൽ അ റവുവീണു. നിണകണങ്ങൾ രണധരണി യിൽ നിറഞ്ഞു.

പതിനഞ്ചു മുഗിളർ പാരിടത്തിൽ പ തിച്ചു. അതിൽ അഞ്ചുപേർ അരചൻെറ അരവാളേററു അപ്പോൾത്തന്നെ അന്ത കൻെറ അരികിലെത്തി ബാക്കി അഞ്ചു ഭടർ മരണത്തിൻെറ മുഖത്തെത്തിയിരു ന്ന മന്നവനെ എതിർത്തുപൊരുതി.

കുറെ അകലെ കുതിരകളുടെ കുളമ്പടി ശബ്ദം കേൾക്കുന്നു. അത് ക്ഷത്രിയക്ഷോ ണീന്ദ്രൻെറ അനുചരരായിരിക്കാം. അ ഥവാ അരികളായ മുഹമ്മദീയരായിരി ക്കാം. രജപുത്രരാണെങ്കിൽ അവർ അടു ത്തെത്തുന്നതുവരെ അരചൻ അടർനില ത്തിൽ പതിക്കാതിരുന്നാൽ ആ വീരപുരു ഷൻെറ വിലയേറിയ ജീവനെ രക്ഷിക്കാം. അശ്വഭടർ അരികളാണെങ്കിൽ ധരാ പതിയുടെ മരണം സംഭവിക്കാതിരിക്കുക യില്ല; തീർച്ചതന്നെ.

തുരഗങ്ങളുടെ ചരണാരവം ധരണീന്ദ്ര ൻ ശ്രവിച്ചു. മുഗിളർവിറച്ചു. രണാരവം വർദ്ധിച്ചു. അഞ്ചുനിമിഷത്തിനകം അ ശ്വാരൂഢരായ അമ്പതു മുഗിളയോദ്ധാ ക്കൾ അടർനിലത്തെ അണഞ്ഞു. അ വിടെ പാണികളും പാദങ്ങളും മറവും ശിരസ്സുകളില്ലാതേയും ശിഥിലമായിക്കിട ന്നിരുന്ന കബന്ധങ്ങളെയാണ് ആഗതർ കണ്ടത്. ഭയാനകമായ ആ കാഴ്ച ആ രുടെ ഹൃത്തടത്തിലാണ് ഭീതിയെ ജനി പ്പിക്കാത്തത്?

മുഗിളർ മൃതശരീരങ്ങളെ ശ്രദ്ധയോടെ നോക്കി. അതിൽ ഒരു ശിരസ്സററ രൂ പം രജപുത്രവേഷധാരിയായി കിടക്കുന്ന തുകണ്ടു. മുഗിളയോധർ സന്തോഷിച്ചു. ആ ഉടൽ പൃഥ്വിസിംഹൻെറതാണെന്നു അവർ തീർച്ചയാക്കി. അതിനേയും എടു ത്ത് ജയഘോഷത്തോടെ മടങ്ങി............
....

ദിനങ്ങൾ രണ്ടു കഴിഞ്ഞു. പൃഥ്വി സിംഹനെ എവിടേയും കാണ്മാനില്ല. പാരിടപാലനെ പാർത്തലത്തിലെങ്ങും പ്ര ജകൾ തിരയുവാൻ തുടങ്ങി. യാതൊരു ഫലവുമുണ്ടായില്ല.

അന്നു മദ്ധ്യാഹ്നത്തിൽ മന്നവനററതെ ന്നു മുഗിളരാൽ ധരിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന യോധ പുരദുർഗ്ഗത്തെ മുഹമ്മദീയസൈന്യം വള

ഞ്ഞു. ദുർഗ്ഗവാസികളും രജപുത്രയോദ്ധാക്കളും നായകരില്ലാതെ ഉഴന്നുതുടങ്ങി. നാലു നാഴിക കഴിയുന്നതിനു മുമ്പു നാടു മുഴവൻ മുഗിളർ കൊള്ള ചെയ്യുമെന്നുള്ള ഭീതി, ധരാപതിയിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഭയമെന്തെന്നറിയാതിരുന്ന നാട്ടുകാരുടെ മനസ്സിൽ അങ്കുരിച്ചു.

ദുർഗ്ഗത്തിൽ ഒരിടത്തു കത്തിജ്വലിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരഗ്നികുണ്ഡം കാണപ്പെടുന്നു. അതെന്തെന്നു നമുക്കു നോക്കാം.

പതി പിതൃപതിയെ പ്രാപിക്കയാൽ പ്രതിവ്രതയായ, പാൎത്ഥിവേന്ദ്രപട്ടമഹിഷി അരികളെപ്പേടിച്ചിരുന്ന പട്ടണത്തിലെ പത്മാക്ഷികളോടുകൂടി പാവകനിൽ പതിച്ച് പരലോകം പ്രാപിക്കുവാൻ തുനിയുകയായിരുന്നു.

ഉടനെ ദുർഗ്ഗത്തിന്റെ പുറത്തായി ഒരു ഭേരീരവം മുഴങ്ങി. പലേ കാഹളശബ്ദങ്ങളും പാൎത്ഥലത്തിൽ മാറെറാലിക്കൊണ്ടു. അതിനെപ്പിൻതുടൎന്നു ആശ്ചൎയ്യത്തേയും ഭയത്തേയും സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നതായ ഒരു ഇടറിയ ശബ്ദം മുഗിളസൈന്യത്തിന്നിടയിൽനിന്നു കേൾക്കാറായി. രജപുത്രയോദ്ധാക്കളുടെ "ജയജയഭൂപാലപൃഥ്വിസിംഹ" എന്ന ജയഘോഷം കേട്ടുതുടങ്ങി. കോട്ടക്കു പുറത്തായി രണദേവത നൃത്തമാടി. മരിച്ചു മന്നവൻ മടങ്ങിയെത്തിയെന്ന വൎത്തമാനം അടവിയിലെ അനലനെപ്പോൽ നാടെങ്ങും പരന്നു. പ്രജകൾ സന്തോഷിച്ചു. തരുണികൾ ദേവദേവനെത്തൊഴുതു. രാജ്ഞി ഉടന്തടിയേററത്തെ നിൎത്തിവെച്ചു. ക്ഷത്രിയർ പതിന്മടങ്ങു വൎദ്ധിച്ച കോപത്തോടും ശൗൎയ്യത്തോടും മുഗിളസേനയെ എതിൎത്തു. മുഗിളർ പരാജിതരായി. അവരുടെ അത്യാഗ്രഹം ആ രജപുത്രകോപാനലനാൽ ആസ്വദിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. മുഹമ്മദീയരുടെ അവസ്ഥ അത്യന്തം ശോചനീയമായി. കാരാഗൃഹവാസം മുസൽമാൻമാൎക്കുറച്ചു. രജപുത്രനഗരം സന്തോഷസാഗരത്തിൽ മുഴുകി.

ഇനി മരിച്ചുപോയെന്നു വിശ്വസിക്കപ്പെട്ട ധരിത്രീപതി എവിടെയായിരുന്നുവെന്നു നോക്കാം. ഇരുപതു മുഹമ്മദീയഭടരെയും കൊന്നതിന്നു ശേഷം ക്ഷീണഹൃദയനായിത്തീൎന്ന യോധപുരമന്നവൻ തന്റെ വസ്ത്രങ്ങളെ ശിരസ്സററ ഒരു മുഹമ്മദീയഭടനേ ധരിപ്പിച്ച് താൻ മുഹമ്മദീയയോദ്ധാവിന്റെ വേഷം ധരിച്ച് ആ കാനനത്തിൽ അശ്വാരൂഢരായ ഭടരുടെ ആഗമനത്തെക്കാത്ത് ഒളിവിലിരിക്കയായിരുന്നു. അവർ അരികളാണെന്നറിഞ്ഞും അവൎക്കു പററിയ വിഡ്ഢിത്തത്തെ നോക്കിയുംകൊണ്ട് പൃഥ്വിസിംഹൻ, അടുത്തു ഒരായോധനമുണ്ടായേക്കാമെന്നൂഹിച്ച് തന്റെ സൈന്യങ്ങളെയെല്ലാം ശേഖരിച്ച് ആ കാട്ടിൽത്തന്നെ ഗൂഢമായി പാൎത്തു. അതിനാലാണ് ആശ്ചൎയ്യജനകമാംവിധം മുഹമ്മദീയസേനാമദ്ധ്യത്തിൽ യുദ്ധദിവസം യോധപുരമന്നവൻ യോദ്ധാക്കളുമായി എത്തി അവരെ നിശ്ശേഷം നശിപ്പിച്ചത്.

ഇങ്ങിനേ മാനുഷൎക്കൊരു മാതൃകയായി പൃഥ്വിസിംഹൻ ചിരകാലം രാജ്യം വാണു.

പി. പി. അനന്തനാരായണൻ,
സീനിയർ വിദ്യാൎത്ഥി.

പാന്ഥൻ.

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(ടി. വി. പരമേശ്വരയ്യർ, പൂർവ്വവിദ്യാർത്ഥി)

(മഞ്ജരി)

I

എങ്ങിനേ പോകേണ്ടു മുന്നോട്ടു ഞാനിപ്പോൾ
തിങ്ങിക്കിടക്കുമിക്കാട്ടിലൂടേ?
ഈ വനം മുറ്റുമേ ഹിംസ്രജന്തുക്കളാൽ
ആവൃതം; എങ്ങിനെ ഞാൻ കടക്കും?
യാതൊരു മാർഗ്ഗവും കണ്ടിടുന്നില്ല, ഹാ!
ഏതുവിധത്തിൽ ഞാൻ പോയീടേണ്ടു?

  കൂർത്തുകൂർത്തുള്ളതാം മുൾച്ചെടിയിൽ തട്ടി-
  പ്പെത്തുമെൻ നിർമ്മല വസ്ത്രാഞ്ചലം
  കീറിപ്പറിഞ്ഞീടുന്നുണ്ടതു ഞാനിപ്പോൾ
  നേരെയാക്കീടുവതേതുമട്ടിൽ?

കണ്ടു ചിലേടത്തു; മേടുമറ്റൊരേടം;
കണ്ടിപ്പൂ കാൽകളേ കണ്ടകങ്ങൾ —
മുക്തവിഹംഗത്തേപ്പോലവേ ഞാനെന്നു
ശക്തനാം വാനിൽ ചുറ്റിപ്പറക്കാൻ
പക്ഷങ്ങളെങ്ങു നിന്നാനയിക്കേണ്ടു ഞാ-
നിക്ഷണമൂർദ്ധ്വഗതിക്കു വേണ്ടി?

II

പക്ഷങ്ങളെന്തിന്നോ? പാദങ്ങൾ രണ്ടില്ലേ,
അക്ഷീണമെൻപുരോയാനത്തിന്നായ്?
എന്തുവാൻ കാരണം സംശയിപ്പാൻ? മുന്നോ-
ട്ടെന്തുകൊണ്ടിപ്പോഴേ പോയിക്കൂടാ?

  വസ്ത്രാഞ്ചലം മാത്രമല്ല, സുദൃഢമാം
  ഗാത്രവും കണ്ടകം വേധിച്ചോട്ടേ
  ഇമ്മട്ടു നൂറുനൂറായിരം പ്രാവശ്യം
  സമ്മദാൽ കണ്ടക വിദ്ധനായി
  അന്ത്യക്ഷണത്തിങ്കൽ ആയതിൻ സൽഫലം
  ഹസ്തഗതമാക്കിച്ചെയ്തീടും ഞാൻ.

കുന്നുംകുഴികളും നൽപന്ഥാവെനിക്കേ-
കുന്നതിന്നാണിങ്ങു മേവുന്നതും!
ഇന്നൊരു നൂതനമാർഗ്ഗം രചിക്കട്ടേ
എന്നുടേ വിസ്തൃത കാൽപ്പാടുകൾ
വന്നുവന്നോട്ടേ; ചെന്നു ചെല്ലട്ടേ;
എന്നുടേപന്ഥാവു ഞാൻ തുടരാം!!

———

The Girl I wish to Marry.

(NOT MEANT FOR OLD OR MARRIED PEOPLE.)

[A young gentleman of the Senior Intermediate Class recently suggested this subject for a symposium. The Editor was frankly nervous about possible criticism, but finally decided it was too tempting to refuse. It has not been possible to print all that was sent in,—a few sentences here and there were all we could find space for. Our readers will agree that these very young wife-seekers know what they are about.]

MR. P. S. NARAYANAN :—

The hunt for an ideal wife is a perfect obsession with most men. I include here, my own good self, (all I know about the ideal wife is from friends), and all of you dashing young philanderers. But some of you do go on a fool's errand sometimes, as for instance, spending long hours on the edge of a river with little prospect of saving a lady from the deep waters. And even if you do save the lady, you find she is far from being ideal. Some of you waste a life-time making experiments with brillantine, cosmetics, and cinemas. The boldest among you will, perhaps, waylay a charming girl on her way home and if met with failure write her a heart-rending letter, until at last the police pull you up, and you are exposed. Now, if you take my word, don't run after a lady unless you feel certain that she is ideal in some respects. And once you meet this ideal queen, set yourself up to make her yours, even if you must go to the end of the world.

Now I write about what I believe to be the ideal wife, hoping it may help to increase your ways and means of winning the girl you want. The other day I met, up in the city, a lady whom I readily put down as ideal, ideal from top to toe, ideal in cut, and ideal in finish. Well, the thought occurred to me that she must be hungering for the ideal MAN, and in that case why I must not commend her to one of you aspirants. Well, I did commend her to a friend of mine. I knew he would be delighted to run after this girl, though he was well aware of his own uncouth, goat-looking features, entirely out-of-tune with the thing he sought. After an eventful week, he wrote me an epic, in which he described his feelings, how he climbed the mountains and crossed the rivers, and tried to improve his figure by walking on his hand. And just when he thought he had won, the girl changed her mind and called the police.

Now this 'ideal' of his was a sort of beauty-queen, an Indian beauty, not Japanese or Negro beauty—quite unlike Johnson's Titty. He could see very well that she was no ornamented dummy at all. Dummies, everybody detests (by the way, keep yourself a bachelor rather than marry a grandma older than you) for, they are an unpleasant, unsociable lot, who merely exist to worship their husbands. There are many village wives who look upon their husbands with great awe and worship them as demi-gods. I believe that the wife, to be a wife, must know and do at least seventy five per cent of what the husband knows or does. She must talk, but not back-chat. And the husband should consider himself a brute if he offended her in the least.

To resume the description of my friend's 'Ideal,' she well impressed him as an educated, dainty, tender girl. By 'educated' he, of course, meant educated in English, as the world has no liking or need for girls who postgraduate in Biology or Logic or Sanskrit. His 'Ideal'

surely was intelligent, knew arithmetic and hyigene and had abundant commonsense. A little education *may be* dangerous, but there was nothing 'dangerous' in this blushing lass of his. To be on the safe side, he told me he disliked her foisting upon him the result of her superfluous education. He knew, for instance, some of the methods employed by recalcitrant wives to gain their objects. Hunger-strike is a popular weapon, but he knew that the temptation for food could not be resisted for long. There are also several husbands who resort to this weapon when fighting their wives, but modern wives are adamant and they sneer openly at their husbands. His 'Ideal' was the last woman to stage a hunger-strike or to commit any outrage of such magnitude.

Some wives take all the liberty for themselves and over-rule even the ordinary customs to which their husbands are entitled. It is good that Eve likes fashion. But it is sickening if she insists upon buying every *de-luxe* costume in the bazaar purposely ignoring the poor lean purse of the husband. "Your duty," she tells her hubby, "is to earn, and my business to spend as I like." But fashionable wives are no less anxious to keep their lords in tidy, attractive condition. I heartily applaud this change in their mentality. But I woefully lament their outlook in some other matters. While I have no objection to her pondering her face—is there a modern girl who does not do that?—she ought to exempt me from that unpleasant ordeal ; to me it is most hateful. Here, let me caution bachelors : Think twice before you marry the girl you want, in case she is *more* educated than yourself. There is a rich friend of mine from the country, whose bushy hair and sapphire earrings were the envy of the whole village before he married. He writes to say that his 'highly educated' wife has forced him not only to remove the earrings, but also to wear an 'Oxford Crop.' His wife is now busy teaching him manners, modes, fashions, advantages of going to the pictures and attending public functions and what not. Many young orthodox Brahmins and Nairs have come to grief through their Flapper wives. The wives transform the husbands in accordance with their sense of fashion and humour. Some of these husbands had to sacrifice their tufts and forego their caste-mark as a penalty for marrying the flapper. The Ideal wife can have no such cruel desire to stultify her husband. Of course, every husband should welcome her advice to make him handsomer, but he should stoutly resist any attempt to make him what he is not. As for example, simply to add to his smartness, he must protest against the wife asking him to wear false spectacles like Harold Lloyd or false moustache like "Charlie." And he must have sense enough not to be an H. P. H. himself throughout his married life, or to carry out the lady's tips regarding behaviour or fashion.

Civilization is practically woman's civilization ; in her realm there are ocean-fliers and channel-swimmers, and tennis 'stars' and screen 'stars' and what not. Can a husband expect his Ideal to play Wills-Moody or Amy Johnson or Mary Pickford while he sits obscure among a million spectators ? Impossible. But he will be delighted beyond measure if she attends a beauty contest and is elected "Miss India 1933," and in that case he will be cheered, for the world always cheers the husbands of famous wives and *not* the wives of famous husbands like Carnera or Roosevelt.

That gives a fair and honest assessment of the Ideal wife, as I see her, helpful, witty, educated yet reserved, and with no awful or irksome behaviour either to rouse other peoples' suspicions or to serve her husband as an eternal pest. When you meet the really Ideal Wife, be sure not to struggle for an auspicious day, but marry her on the spot, lest you should lose your chance on the morrow.

And to every young man I say, "be uxorious rather than hard-hearted, give your wife a large amount of your kindness and blame yourself if you find her irksome. Deal carefully with her, for she is nearly always sensitive and she will do something very desperate if you tease her too much."

Some months have rolled by, and enraged by his own sad plight, my henpecked friend urged his uncle—a Round Tabler—to express the desire for establishing Divorce Courts throughout India while giving evidence before the Select Committee. But as we all know, the uncle has returned without ever daring to introduce the subject in his evidence. Had he done so, most probably, we could have gathered in the near future the funniest collection of men who will be exposed by their wives as being "cruel, tipple, insane, or with no ostensible means of livelihood."

MR. K. S. KASI NARAYANAN.

The first and most important thing is that my bride should be the only daughter of a millionaire. Then I can have a good bungalow and motor cars. She will get me a gramaphone and I can enjoy the music of celebrated singers. The girl's father will give me plenty of money and we will travel throughout India and tour through Europe—......... Another thing is that the girl must not be educated in the modern way. If she is not educated in the modern form, she can entertain me with her delicious music, which is in most instances difficult for the modern woman. She will implicitly obey me and there will be perfect harmony between us.

Preference will be given to those ladies who are well versed in the Hindu Sastras and principles. This is a very important factor. Coming to her physical features; I should like her to be as fat as possible. My wife will then be hunted by camera men and praised by many persons. She will be famous for her monstrously big size and the newspapers will pay tributes to her, saying that she is Mrs. Such a one. All the people will envy my fortune and happiness. My wife will have an army of admirers and loyal friends. At every place we shall be honoured, people will pay special honour to her fatness. Fatness certainly means merriment.

MR. M. C. KRISHNANUNNI NAIR.

First of all I should like to marry a girl with the name of Bhama..................... Her voice should not be coarse and her height must not exceed five feet four inches, I myself being only five and a half feet tall and I have no hope that God will lengthen me a little more.................... She must submit herself (during these times of evergrowing clamour for equality) to my eccentric ways without murmur or grudge (at least to my knowledge). It would be a jolly life if I could get a girl who could talk unceasingly and humorously—not so far as to bore—on a variety of subjects.......................... I should be very glad if she could sing fairly well to lessen my anxieties with an occasional *Anand Bhairavi*. I am suspicious by nature and so the girl should not speak unnecessarily to young men except to my very close friends and members of my own house. But this is no reason why she should be so shy as to disregard my own orders to come out whenever I should wish to exhibit her in a sincerely innocent way to my friends. My only prayer is that God should not punish me with a school mistress who would be dragging me along the road of life behind her. It would be a blessing if the girl, in all her long life—would give birth to only one child.......................

She should not be clamouring for liberty as understood by those extremists who want to westernise India. She would not be allowed to attend all the meetings held under the auspices of the Congress or any such organisation. But she could attend those held under the auspices of the *Mahila Sangham*. I have the greatest

objection to her taking any "office" under the Sangham. I pray God that she would not be so sluggish and sleepy as to go to bed at seven. I like sweets and I hope that she would be expert in preparing delicious eatables.

Mr. S. K. Subramaniyan.

Some of you would crave for a girl, beautiful and blooming, exquisite and enchanting, but I don't. An extremely beautiful girl is a Circe, and for the same reason dangerous; danger increases directly with beauty ! Ergo,I would prefer a girl good looking, gay and modest. Her complexion must be bright and bronzy, not European-white for such skin rather appears to be terribly diseased. Her features must be well-cut, delicate and good. Her eyes must be of a strong vivid black, full of fire and intelligence and conveying a humorous expression. But I greatly abhor eyes casting roguish side glances from their corners No preference to spectacles—wearing girls! She must be sufficiently educated to understand and appreciate the world. But never should your wedded partner be more educated than you. If so, she will have time only to attend such and such a party, and that meeting and this conference, and you can remain peacefully in your house, cleaning the pots and cooking the food, washing and feeding the children, Nature's entertainment tax on love, and be ready to serve the mother of your children with everything when she returns home after a busy day. She should not be a Dame Van Winkle, neither need she be a Seelavathy, the former too termagant and tyrannous a shrew—the latter too gentle and cringing a slave. She must be modest and generous, well-behaved and well-disposed and smart and clever.

Mr. V. Sarvotham.

The maid should be of noble birth which would certainly save me the trouble of moulding her character. Her horoscope should be one of the best and should tally with mine (let me here inform dear readers that I am a stern believer in the extra-ordinary influence of stars on mankind)..........................

Mr. M. Bharathan.

Some women have a tendency to grow fat after marriage. I am a very lean person and it will be disgusting to have an inordinately fat wife. I am at a loss to know how I can detect the existence of any such tendency in my wife.

Mr. M. Appukuttan Nayar.

Women are born mischief-makers. Their beauty attracts men who for a while set at nought all ties of friendship and relationship. These troubles won't arise if one's wife were ugly. Ugliness repels attention. She will worship her husband as a god, will sacrifice all her possessions for the pleasure of her lord and master, will advise him in moments of necessity. Therefore I prefer an ugly, repellant woman to a beautiful attractive maiden.

Mr. Nobody.

The girl I like to marry must not be of a family better off than myself for she would dominate me and I should be henpecked. At the same time she must be of a good and respectable family. She should be well-educated (not enough to trouble her husband with her learning but to help him in conducting household business). As to the personal appearance, I don't care much, but she should not be too ugly.

Mr. P. R. Sitaraman.

An idiotic paper brought me news that Mary Pickford was thinking of divorcing Douglas Fairbanks ; I cursed the correspondent that brought the news. Douglas Fairbanks is one of the brightest stars in the firmament of the cinema and "If", thought I, "such a person cannot keep warm the love of a foolish lady, what are poor people like me to expect ?"...........

Mr. K. C. Kunhianujan Raja.

.............She should be of a wealthy family—a family which possesses at least

a few lakhs of rupees. I should like her the more for it. I am not avaricious as some of you may think, but merely making an honest practical suggestion.

Mr. C. Mohamed.

The next thing is that she must be educated a little, enough to read and write. Though the world is roaring for higher education for women, I am bold enough to say that my coming wife must not have higher education. To obtain such a girl as my wife I pray to God day and night; I also request my young friends to pray at least a minute for me, this greedy beauty-worshipper, this ugly fool.

Mr. T. G. Arunachalam.

She should never be a very beautiful girl for it is likely to make us bitter enemies. She should be of moderate beauty. She should never be a girl who wishes to rule over her husband. Ah! my friends, can you imagine such a pitiful state? Why do you marry such a girl and lose your envied liberty? Why do you wish to subject yourselves to two governments? She should have some education. You won't feel the difficulty until you take her to the cinema. She would want you to tell the story the whole time and as soon as she returns home she would require an explanation as to how the show is conducted. You will be put in a pitiful state...............

Mr. M. Narayanan Nayar.

I hate selfishness in women. But I wish to marry an economical, thrifty girl who could help me to make my fortune. If I am permitted to marry when young, when I am still at the university, I wish to take a daughter of a lecturer or professor. That may be helpful in getting question papers before the examination.

Mr. P. C. Damodaran Nair.

The most important agent that makes life a success in wealth, for which men are ready to sacrifice anything. Therefore to a reasonable man it will be a great blessing when he gets a girl, the daughter of a millionaire. I should be all the more pleased if my wife has a job. It is a matter of fact that men are ready to marry any ugly girl for the sake of money. She should be dressed in the style befitting educated ladies and have a pair of spectacles not because she is short sighted, but it is as you know a fashion.... Another factor which I think worth mentioning is that our wives should not be more highly educated than us. Then we need not fear her disregarding us. The second great horror of education is that she will be inclined to walk here and there along the road. I don't wish the girl destined to be my consort to walk along the public road because then there is the danger of her meeting another gentleman more handsome, the result of which is too fatal for me to mention. Again there is the danger that any and every passer by will at least cast a glance at her beautiful face, a privilege which I alone should enjoy. You may blame me for being selfish, but I am ready to fight you for the sake of my lady love.

The Path of Duty.

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS.

By C. P. K. Taragan B A., *(Hons.)*

PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

Madhavi }
Balan } Husband and Wife

Ammukutty, aged eight, their girl.

Ithaman Nair, aged father of Madhavi.

Chimmukutty, mother of Madhavi.

A little Baby boy, not old enough to do aught except cry at stated periods.

Time :—The Present time.

Scene :—An old Tarvad House in Malabar.

ACT I.

Time.—Morning.

Scene—The Portico of an old Tarvad house. A few benches, a good deal battered and broken, are thrown about carelessly. Two pillars in the foreground and two at the back give it the appearance of its genre. It has two side exits and a door directly opposite in the centre of the wall. Bamboo screens a good deal torn and tattered protect it on either side from wind and weather. The floor is polished and jet-black and uncarpeted. Stone steps lead up to it from the court yard.

As the curtain rises Ammukutty is seen seated on a bench reading her school text-tbook. She is dressed in a pale green jacket and 'mundu', has solemn dark eyes, glossy curls, old gold complexion. and a very pretty and demure look.)

Ammu.—(*Reads*) "Man is the only animal that cooks the food he eats."

(*From the door Madhu puts in as she enters.*)

Madhu.—Wrong! Woman is the only animal that cooks the food she eats.

(*Madhu is a full-blown matron looking rather tired and dull-eyed but not devoid of a certain indefinable super-sensuous charm. She wears a tight fitting bodice slightly soot-stained and has thrown an apron-like cloth over shoulders. She is coming straight from the kitchen.*

Ammu —(*Continues to read without noticing the interruption*). Wrong! Woman is the only animal that cooks the food she eats." (*Her eyes twinkle with merriment.*)

Madhu.—Silly! Is that what you've in your book?

Ammu.—(*The corners of her mouth twitching with suppressed laughter.*) "Silly! Is that what you've got down in your book?

Madhu.—(*Approaching closer and standing in front of her with arms akimbo.*) Poor Miss Echo! Suppose your father were the animal you were playing with instead of me!

Ammu.—(*Throwing away the book springs up like a kitten from her demure perch and clasps her mother in a rapturous embrace.*) Mother, why is he always so cross with me? He's ever so sweet and nice to the children at school.

Madhu.—(*Kissing her cheek.*) Because my dear, he loves you and it's his way of showing it.

Ammu.—He never beats *them*.

Madhu.—He has no need to. Their parents do, at home.

Ammu.—Never even frowns on them when he is angry.

Madhu.—It is his duty as a teacher not to hurt or terrify the little children.

Ammu.—(*Passionately.*) Then, what about me?

Madhu —With you it's different. He's your father and it's his duty not to spoil you

Ammu.—Then I wish I had no father.! It wouldn't be so bad if I had only you to love me.

Madhu.—That is a sinful wish. It is your duty to obey your father and your mother and wish no sinful wishes.

Ammu.—Mother, I want to love him, and he makes it so difficult. I hate that word, duty!

Madhu.—Your father loves nothing else.

Ammu.—Mother, does he love you ever?

Madhu.—(*Embracing her to hide her confusion*) Oh yes, darling: has he not given me you?

Ammu.—*I've* never seen him being nice to you!

Madhu.—He's very little time, you know.

Ammu.—Last night I was lying awake for hours on end hearing grand-mother snore in ghastly fashion. It always puts the fear of ghosts and spirits into me to listen to her snoring and I try to forget it by thinking of you and father in your room sitting up and talking ever so nicely all by yourselves. I love to think it!

Madhu:—(*with a heavy sigh*) My poor child! And I often do lie awake and think of you! But your father is too tired with his day's work to sit up and talk at night

Ammu.—I have never heard him laugh! Have you ever?

Madhu.—(*Laughing*) Oh yes, thousands of times. But that was long ago. Now his work takes away too much of his life.

Ammu.—I hate his work.

Madhu.—(*Smiling*) It *is* hateful.

Ammu.—Why can't he find something else to do then?

Madhu.—He can't, by himself. And there's nobody to find it for him. Ever so may people are on the look-out for something to do however hateful it is. Else do you think any one would stick up to this thankless task of teaching?

Ammu.—(*Seeing Ithaman Nair coming in the direction of the stone-steps from the side of the court yard*). There's grandpa' (*runs forward to meet him Ithaman is a sturdy old veteran who carries his three score and ten years lightly on his unbowed shoulders and unbent back. His shining face and shining bald crown to match are illuminated by the undimmed lustre of his shrewd quizzical eyes.*)

Ammu.—(*Embracing his knees.*) Oh, Grandpa, has granny sent me the doll she promised?

Madhu.—(*Rising and coming forward with a welcome smile.*) Now, worry *him* for a change.

Ith.—(*Smiling.*) For shame! To play with dolls at your time of life! You are quite a grown-up girl now (*to Madhu*) How's the little one today?

Madhu:—In a very bad way. His father's gone to fetch the doctor from town.

Ammu:—Grandpa, but I *want* to play with a doll, don't you see? I don't *feel* at all grown up.

Itham:—Then you ought to.

Ammu :—(*Runs away from him and turning round says between a frown and a sob*) I simply won't grow up till I get that doll.

Itha :—(*taking it out of the folds of his loin cloth*) Well then, there you are. Now begin.

Ammu :—(*Running up to him with beaming eyes*) Dear, dear, dolly ! How do you call him ?

Itha :—Call him Kittu. Now go in and play for a while.

Madhu :—Be minding the baby till I come. (*Exit Ammu.*)

Itha :—Why, is it alone ? Where is Chimmukutty ?

Madhu :—Not back from the temple yet.

Itha :—Then the little child is alone, do you say ? What are you doing here ?

Madhu :—Trying to forget myself a bit. As for the little thing, it will soon be all alone,—with God !

Itha (*starts up angrily*) ;—How can you, woman !

Madhu.—Father, I should be less than a woman, a brute, if I don't wish the child dead and laid in its grave.

Itha.—What dreadful things are you saying ? Aren't you overwrought with too much work and worry ?

Madhu.—May be I am. I've seen in ten years' time eight children of mine follow each other to the grave in rapid, cruel, succession and the surviving child so starved in body and soul that I don't know which would have been kinder to *her*, to wish her with the happy dead or with us, the living !

Itha.—Why, what makes you so bitter to day ?

Madhu.—Do you know what this doctor's visit is to cost us ? Just half a month's income ! With the other half how on earth are we going to pay for his prescriptions and keep three or four human beings alive for a whole month ?

Itha.—Madhu, you speak and look unlike yourself today. I can hardly recognise my daughter in you.

Madhu.—(*Smiling sadly.*) No wonder ! I've been a School-master's wife these ten years, living on fifteen rupees a month and the mother of so many dead children.

Itha.—I should'nt expect a lady to allow wealth or poverty to vulgarise her soul.

Madhu.—I could be more genteel if I were quite stupid. But the more I think of my circumstances the more tempted I feel to rise in vulgar revolt against it all.

Itha.—You have to thank your own rebellious will for your unhappiness. Put your trust in God and be hopeful and contented like your husband. Consider what he has got to bear and how nobly he bears it.

Madhu.--He hasn't got to bear children year after year.

Itha.—But he has to bury them ; and that is suffering enough.

Madhu.—Yes, at first. Later on it makes a man callous to all suffering.

Itha.—Callous ! No ; he's only resigned and hopeful. Don't take his self control for want of feeling.

Madhu :—(*With a scornful twist of her lower lip*) His self control ! I wish it were greater or less !

Itha :—There's your mother-in-law ! (*indicating with a toss of the head Chimmukutty returning from the temple and crossing the court-yard in the direction of the stone-steps*) See what a load of misery she has had to bear, and how bravely she bears it ! That is what piety does for you.

(*Chimmukutty is younger than her brother and looks it. Her complexion is fair and her hair though silver-grey is abundent and glossy. She has a weak nervous mouth but otherwise has a pleasant look. With profuse vibhuti marks all over the forehead and chest, her string of beads, and lips muttering ceaselessly,*

and pious upturned eyes, she has a dubiously sanctimonious air and a sleek well nourished aspect)

Chim :—(*to her brother*) When did you come? Has the doctor been and given his verdict?

Ith :—Just a few minutes back. The doctor is expected every moment. May be he is detained by work elsewhere.

Chim :—(*to Madhu*) Who's with the child?

Madhu :—Ammu is playing beside its cradle.

Chim :—But what are you doing here, leaving it all alone!

Madhu :—It is sleeping, mother, and I am taking a little rest.

Chim :—(*frowning*) You shouldn't be resting here. But of course it is none of *my* business! (*to Itham.*) To night there is going to be an eclipse of the moon. Did you hear of it?

Itha :—Yes; I heard it mentioned

Chim :—It falls on Kittu's birthday!

Itha :—Very bad for him!

Chim :—Dreadful! The Gods have mercy on him wherever he is! (*tearfully*) Poor boy! My poor lonely boy! Wandering far away from home! (*Silent for some moments, tells here beads vigorously lips muttering prayers.*) I've arranged for special Puja tomorrow at the temple and besides we will bestow on the holy Brahmins gifts of a few silver and copper images of snakes and eggs in expiation. Gold alas is beyound our means now!

Madhu :—How much do you think it may cost in all, mother?

Chim :—Only some five rupees. You will tell Balan when he comes home, and let me have the money when I go back to worship, this afternoon.

Madhu :—Yes, mother.

Chim (*to them both*)·—Now let me go in and finish telling my beads. (*Exit.*)

Madhu :—So, that makes another big hole in the other half. The lunar eclipse.

Itha :—It is horrible. Those priests, pious frands, are fleecing her like a poor lamb. You needn't worry Balan for that money in the midst of these troubles.

Madhu :—I have to. He won't forgive me else. Her word is law to us.

Itha :—But think what it is to humour her foolish fancies like this every time! It is to take the bread out of the little children's mouths and throw it to the dogs that hang about a temple.

Madhu (*Smiling*):—It is 'Duty' we call it! Do you know what he would say about it? "My bread must never be her poison. I must grudge her nothing."

Itha :—(*hotly*) Nonsense. Where does that about bread and poison come in? This is a plain question of behaving like a man of sense or a fool.

Madhu :—It seems my cousin Kittu ten years ago, before he disappeared, taunted him with those bitter words. Ever since he has been saying, "Rather let *my* poison be the bread that sustains her life."

Itha:—Not bad as a principle. But whoever but a fool lived up to it so literally?

Madhu :—My husband isn't a fool. Does he look like a starved person? Or does his mother look at all like a poisoned one?

Itha :—No! You and Ammu are the starved and poisoned ones in this household. (*He rises and approaches her.*)

Madhu :—Ah, father the blessedness of being understood!

(*He lays both his hands on her shoulders and looks down intently at her in profound pity and affection. She breaks down with a sob and turns her face away.*)

Ammu :—(*Peeping in at the door*) Mother, mother, the baby's woke up and started crying.

Itha :—Let's in. (*Walks towards the door, Madhu proceeding silently in advance. Curtain,*)

End of First Act.

ACT II.

(*Time: about midnoon. Scene: A room inside the house. It has a window directly opposite the stage half-shut, and another on the right fully open. The door is on the left opposite to the open window. In front of the half-shut window to the left of it a cradle hangs from the ceiling by brown coir-ropes. The soiled folds of linen lining its bottom and the naked rosy limbs of the wee little sufferer imbedded among them are revealed without being exposed through the perforated sides of the wooden contrivance,— a battered old piece of furniture, more roomy and serviceable than attractive. Madhu sits on a low three legged stool beside the cradle, her right profile turned towards the audience. She is gazing through the open window at the placid sky over hanging a noontide landscape.*

Ammu enters running in sobbing violently)

Mathu.—Hush—sh—sh !—What's the matter?

Ammu.—(*Jerks out amidst her sobs*). My--my--doll--ll-ll--llies—both of 'em— thrown in the fire! (*Renewed storm.*)

Madhu.—Who did it?

Ammu. Father! (*Sobs continue.*)

Madhu. Why, what for? What did you do?

Ammu. Nothing! (*anothr vehement fit of sobbing,*) Mother, am I too old to play with dolls?

Madhu. I hope not, Why?

Ammu. Father said so.

Madhu. Then it must be so.

(*Enter Ithamam with an assumed cheerfulness of face and bearing by which he vainly endeavours to conceal an under-current of nervous apprehension.*)

Madhu :—(*Vacating her seat goes and stands at the foot of the cradle holding its ropes.*) What does the doctor say?

Itha :—Oh, he's quite reassuring. The child will get well in a couple of days.

Madhu :—But father, your looks belie your words.

Itha :—(*nervously stroking Ammu's hair as she nestles close to him.*) Do I look concerned? Well, I am sorry for this young lady here whose father just now did a very rash thing, threw her doll into the fire.

Madhu :—He must have been greatly upset about something or other.

Itha : He was; and yet to destroy the child's play things !—

Madhu : Why not? (*Then with a gravely preoccupied air as she sees through his ruse.*) Then it's as bad as I feared! Poor thing!

Itha. What are you murmuring? Why not? Because it is to treat the child like a plaything. It's downright cruelty.

Madhu. He is a school-master. What else can you expect?

Itha. No; this is sheer thoughtlessness.

Madhu. (*With a wan smile*) where *that* is bliss it is folly to think!

(*Enter Balan looking very gloomy. He is a heavy, 'solid' man of middle height and age with a face expressive of the forceful person accustomed to lay down the law of conduct to himself and others with supreme impartiality, With an intellect corresponding to his thinlipped, square-jawed solidity he might have done great things. But Balan's, alas, shone feebly at his dull, characterless eyes that dwelt on the mystery of the world with bovine calm and peacefulness.*)

Balan.—(*Frowning darkly*) *as he surveys Ammu's cowering figure*). What are *you* doing here? Sulking? Get away and be at your books? (*Turning to Itha.*) Uncle, don't spoil her. (*Exit Ammu, slinking off like a stricken fawn.*)

Itha: —(*winking hard at him*) what did the Doctor finally say?

Balan:—(*Impervious to the wink, stolidly draws a bench from the corner and says as he seats himself.*) He holds out no hope. It is too late to save it, he says (*breaks down with a sob in his voice*). Oh uncle! It is all so hard to bear! After all these years I thought I had a son at last. It used to gladden one's heart so much! And now—(*he covers his face in his hands and remains bowed down.*)

Itha —Don't be foolish, Balan. The doctor hasn't got the power of life and death over us. He can't even predict the future without astrology. Who knows what turn the baby's fate may take?

Balan.—*Pulling himself together with a visible effort.*) Ah, uncle, we must somehow console ourselves. (*to Madhu*) Who's in the kitchen?

Madhu.—No one.

Balan.—Where is mother? Not yet back from the temple?

Madhu.—Yes, she is at her prayers.

Balan —You may go now and get our dinner ready. Uncle is staying with us till the evening.

Madhu:—(*Looks woefully at the baby she is rocking in her arms*) Who'll mind this child here? Well, I'll take it with me.

Balan —To the kitchen! No! We will take care of it till mother gets back from her devotions.

Madhu:—You're sure to forget it when you begin to talk.

Itha.—(*Who has been watching the couple in sad perplexity.*) Balan, you should engage a cook at least till the child gets well You know it is really hard for a mother to be in the kitchen with a sick child crying for her in another room.

Balan.—It is against my principles to keep domestic servants. Madhu, if you stay on listening to us we'll never have dinner today. So you may leave the baby in the cradle and go to your work.

Madhu.—(*With frigid calmness*) I am not listening to your talk. It doesn't interest me. (*She lays the baby in its little bed, and pats its cheek, and goes out casting many a longing lingering look behind.*)

Balan —(*Continuing*) I teach my pupils that it is sinful for human beings to serve or be served by each other for money. To engage a servant is as degrading as to be a servant.. I have to practise what I teach.

Itha.—(*Losing temper.*) Bally rot! you don't keep a servant because it is cheaper to do without one. You make your wife do the servant's work in the household. She is your servant!

Balan:—(*Quite unperturbed*) That's quite natural. Husband and wife ought to serve each other. As for Madhu she is the chief blessing of my life. But for her I couldn't have stood these shocks. My Gods are good to me since they have given me her.

Itha.—(*Hesitantly and tentatively*). Balan, we men have the weakness to fancy the life of our women and children to be wrapped up completely in ours. The fact is they have their own lives to live.

Balan:—(*With dull doggedness*) Well, I suppose Madhu has her own petty cares to bother her, but she knows her duty and does it. She is a priceless blessing to me.

Itha.—That is what she is to you. But do you ever think what she may be to herself?

Balan.—I don't. I've no time to make or solve riddles.

Itha.—Madhu has plenty of time to ponder on the wretchedness of her life. It is not easy without a wrench to make both ends meet on fifteen rupees a month; and she has to make it.

Balan.—(*Hotly*). Why, if we had fifteen thousand a month we could do no more than do our duty without grumbling.

Itha.—Is it your duty not to wish for better circumstances ?

Balan.—Yes, when it is hopeless It might pay me to get myself trained as a teacher, but I have never been able to manage it during so many years. Who can support himself for two years on a monthly stipend of ten rupees? You can't keep a cart-horse fit on such terms! And the horse doesn't have to support a family!

Itha —You should have managed the training somehow.

Balan.—How? By borrowing money? What about repaying? I might as well sell this house forthwith as mortgage it. Besides, as long as mother is alive she'll never allow it.

Itha.—(*Smiling*) I wish I could help you with the funds as well as the advice. But I can't move a finger until after my elder brother's death. And he is still going strong at fourscore!

Balan.—(*Solemnly*) Let us not build our fortunes on the chance of other people dying. *You* might die first or I might.. There is no counting on death. It doesn't depend on age at all.

(*The baby wakes up and starts crying at the other end of the room where it is laid in its cradle*).

Itha.—You are a confounded pessimist.

Balan.—Don't waste your pity on me I am perfectly happy and contented with my lot.

Itha.—That's the pity of it. For that lot is miserable.

(*Renewed crying from the cradle but they are not aware of it*)

Balan.—It may appear so to others: but it is a man's duty not to grumble, whatever his lot in life, and do his duty. I am not so foolish as to waste myself by kicking against the pricks.

Itha.—But it is different with your wife. A mere word like 'duty' can't feed her hungry soul for ever.

Balan.—What does she complain about?

Itha —She will never complain; rest assured, not from duty, but from pride; on the other hand she wants *you* to complain a little, for that would be better than your self-satisfaction which she thinks horrible.

Balan.—(*A trifle abashed, but blustering to hide it*). Is it one of your seven deadly sins, to be self-satisfied?

Itha.—(*Shuffling nervously like an old man his eyes watering and limbs restless, dhe strain being too much for him*). Yes, in a way; for it indicates a certain deadening of the soul.

(*Renewed crying from the cradle. Madhu enters flustered and flushed, snatches the child to her breast, rocks it there for some moments, and the baby quiets down with a low reluctant croon*).

Balan.—Why! Has the child been crying?

Balan.—(*Without turning to him goes on rocking the child and says frigidly*) Yes, it seems.

Itha.—What! And we not to know it! could you hear its voice so far off in the kitchen? Impossible!

Madhu.—Yes, impossible to the ear, but not to the mind.

Balan.—Well, well, after all we men aren't used to minding babies. It is woman's work.

Madhu.—(*calls loudly into the passage*).Ammu! Ammu!

Ammu.—(*peeping in at the door her head alone visible*) Yes.

Madhu.—Go and remain in the kitchen and see that the pot over the fire doesn't boil over; do, there's a good girl!

Ammu :—Supposing it does, how can I stop it?

Madhu :—Sprinkle a handful of cold water on it thus! (*Showing her how*).

Ammu ;—Yes. (*Exit.*)

Balan :—You should have asked Ammu to stay in here by the cradle instead of

making her meddle in the kitchen. You can go there now since the baby's been quieted.

Madhu :—I'm not going to leave the child alone again till mother comes back to take charge of it.

Itha :—What does she mean by her leisurely prayers and devotions on such a day as this? It is she that should be in the kitchen today and not this girl with a child lying here between life and death!

Balan :—Uncle, a man cannot order his mother about like his wife, My mother does what she likes in this house, and she shall!

Madhu :—(*Sighing*) I hope she'll let me be with the child at least till—till—till —(*she breaks down with a sob and turns her face away.*)

Balan :—(*Surprised*) Madhu! What are you saying? Don't be sentimental, childish!

Madhu :—I know I can't afford it.

Balan :—(*Missing the irony observes ponderously*) No one can afford to be sentimental without being childish. You will have to do your duty even at the cost of a little pain.

Itha :—That word 'duty'! Mind Balan, you are making it an excuse for making yourself thoroughly unpleasant to others.

Balan.—(*nettled*) I'm a plain man living a plain life. As long as I and mine do our plain duties we are perfectly happy and contented in it.

Itha.—I am almost tempted to say it is a man's plain duty not to be so happy and contented.

Balan.—I don't deal in paradoxes.

Madhu.—Father, for Heaven's sake don't disturb this child's sleep; it may be sleeping off a little pain.

(*Enter Chimmukutty, rosary in hand as before. Balan and Itha. rise in respect and Madhu of course has been standing all along. Chimmu sits down on the bench erewhile occupied by Balan. Itha. sits down again on his stool.*)

Chim.—(*to Madhu*) Now you may go and see to their dinner. I'll remain here.

Madhu.—(*tremulously in spite of her habitual impassivity*) Mother, will you please see to the dinner today, for the baby is much worse and the doctor has given no hope and—and—may I just remain with it a little more?

Chim.—(*busily telling the beads with her fingers still*) No fear! don't be silly! Who's the doctor to give and withhold hope? *That* is God Almighty's privilege. I haven't finished my beads yet, and came only to relieve you from watching the child, since I may as well tell my beads sitting here as in another room, and the little beggar is sleeping and won't disturb me.

Madhu.—(*with another heart-rending sigh*) All right. Will you call me when it again wakes up?

Chim.—Yes.

Madhu.—Mother, don't forget.

Chim.—Of course not!

(*Madhu lays the child back in its cradle and tears herself away.*)

Chim.—(*to Balan and Itha.*) You too may go and have your wash before dinner. Don't stay in here and disturb me with your endless chatter.

(*They go out. She moves forward to the stool beside the cradle and takes up the position originally occupied by Madhu at the beginning of the scene. Her expression once again resolves into the usual pious placidity and contentment; her lips begin to mutter and her fingers get busy with the beads. She gazes up at the ceiling and is lost in pious contemplation.*)

(*Curtain*)

End of *Act* Two.

ACT THREE.

(*Time:— In the neighbourhood of midnight*

Scene:— An old bedroom inside the house. There is a table in the middle of the room with a lamp on it burning dimly.

Two beds on wooden cots are on either side and a window alongside each of them. The door in the back-ground leads into the hall and is kept open.

Madhu is sitting on the edge of the bed on the right musing. Ammukutty nestles by her side. Both of them look infinitely weary and sad. Madhu's tear-swollen eyes have dark semi-circles underneath them and Ammu's large solemn eyes are heavy with budding tears.)

Ammu.—Mother, Grandma snores so fearfully when I lie awake, and when I sleep, I dream of ghosts and spirits all night long. It's dreadful.

Madhu.—(*stroking her shoulder with an absent air*) Poor child!

Ammu.—Oh, it's dreadful! Tonight I'm sure to see the baby's ghost!

Madhu.—(*startled out of her reverie*) Why? Who put the idea into your head?

Ammu.—I *know*. Grandma tells me all dead people turn ghosts.

Madhu.—How absurd! As if babies are 'people'! No, they turn angels and go to heaven.

Ammu.—Mother, what is heaven like? Can't *we* ever go there?

Madhu.—My dear, it is a place where people love and understand each other infinitely, not as well as they can, but as well as they should.

Ammu.—(*evidently puzzled for some moments, gives it up and starts a new idea*) Do people die after they go to heaven?

Madhu.—No; they die before they go to heaven.

Ammu.—How I wish we could go there! But I hate to die.

Madhu.—So do I! So let us make heaven come down to us.

Ammu.—How? Can we?

Madhu.—Yes; by compelling people to love us and understand us, not according to their capacity or will, but according to our needs.

Ammu.—(*again looking hopelessly puzzled*) Mother, I don't understand. (*Madhu merely clasps her to her bosom and kisses her fervently.*)

(*Enter Ithaman in grave pensive mood. Madhu vacates her seat and moves round to the side of the other cot and stands there till he seats himself, carrying Ammu pressed close to her breast like a baby.*)

Itha.—(*shaking his head as he sits down*) Balan is terribly cut up! I've never seen him so moved! (*looking up at her*) You seem to be hardly affected as compared with him.

Madhu.—(*Sitting down*). He is more concerned for the dead and I for the living; he is engrossed in the past, I have to think of the present and the future, that's all!

Itha.—Still harping on the old string! Madhu, you are hardening your heart and filling it with bitterness. Happiness doesn't lie that way. Don't put the blame on circumstances. After all we are every one of us made happy by rising superior to them.

Madhu. (*Smiling enigmatically*) Well I'm going to be superior to my circumstances in a fashion you won't like,

Itha.—Why, what dreadful crime are you planning?

Madhu:—Oh, the dreadful crime of doing one's duty.

Itha:—(*with pretended relief*) Is that all!

Madhu:—Yes; my duty to my husband. I haven't discharged it properly yet.

Itha :—(*Smiling in spite of himself*) But he doesn't complain. He's perfectly satisfied with your record hitherto.

Madhu :—Naturally. A wife's foremost duty to her husband is to nag when his conscience is sluggish.

Itha :—(*in grave reproof*) You are asking for trouble. Balan is not perfect. But a man may do far worse than feel an honest satisfaction in making the best of a bad job.

Madhu :—It is easy to make the best of a bad job for yourself and call it duty ; let others do the same duty by you, and your eyes will be opened.

Itha :—(*approching her*) you are sailing in deep waters. My old head can hardly catch up with you though my old heart aches for your suffering little soul. (*placing his hands on her two shoulders he looks down into her eyes*) you have something on your mind besides all this! Come, tell me what it is!

Madhu :—Father, can't you guess it?

Itha :—(*Smiling*) No. Old men are as bad as children at guessing. Is it simply anguish for the dead? Unshed tears?

Madhu :— (*tremulously*) No-—It's —It's unshed tears for the unborn! Father, I'm three months with child!

(*She covers her face in her hands. Itha. starts back as if stung by the idea. He looks a shade more grave and pathetic and slowly wipes his forehead and slinks back reflectively to his original seat on the edge of the oppoiste cot. Ammu goes up to him and stands embracing his knees. He pats her cheeks and smiles at her*)

Ammu :—(*with timid hopefunless*) Grandpa, may I go home with you? I can't sleep here tonight with grand mother. It's so dreadful with ghosts and spirits about the house.

Itha :—But surely you can sleep with your mother?

Ammu :—No ; father never allows me to, since I'm grown too old!

Itha :—Well, once in a way he'll let you if you don't make a habit of it.

Ammu :—Oh, father never will allow it! He never does!

Madhu :—(*raising her face*) My dear, he will.

Itha :—(*starts*) Madhu, it's getting late and I'm keeping your mother waiting for me at home. I must make a move. Besides, I can't stand Chimmukutty's pious platitudes when she returns from the temple. She mustn't see me.

Madhu :—She will soon be here. The eclipse should be over by now. Oh, the dreadful fuss she'll make on hearing the news! you can escape it by going home ; where can *I* run away from it?

(*Enter Chimmukutty looking gloomy as an undertaker. As before she is coming straight from the temple and has got all the usual adjuncts of conventional piety on her.*)

Chimmu :—Ah, Madhu, my poor child, what horrid sins of your past life have you to answer for!

Madhu.—I wish I knew, Mother!

Chimmu :—Take warning by these blows and chasten your heart You have been too proud and obdurate in your heart to be truly pious and charitable. Be contrite, be humble! Don't you see how you make the innocent suffer along with the guilty for your wickedness?

Itha .—If she too were to be pious and charitable after your fashion who'll take care of the pots and pans at home? Balan?

Chimmu .—Don't sneer at holy things, brother. It's time you cast off your levity and began to think seriously of the latter end, for it's near.

Itha.—As for me I don't mind. Can't you let *her* alone at such a time as this? She has had sorrow enough without your trying to add to it.

Chimmu.—(*petulantty*) Brother, you were always coming between me and my children. (*Whimpering tearfnlly*). As if *I* have no sorrows! To think that *I* was in the temple giving gifts to holy men and polluting them without knowing it! Did any of you think of informing *me* of the child's death? Do any one now ever think of me except as a nuisance! It is nothing to you whether I am alive or dead. Then, why should you trouble to send word to me of what passes here in my absence! I wish I were dead and a happy riddance to you!

Madhu.—Where could we get a messenger at dead of night?

Chim. Where there is a will there is a way.

Itha.—You shouldn't have gone out this evening with the child here in such a precarious state.

Chim.—The child here had its mother to take care of him. Who but I would think and act for my poor Kittu far away, in greater danger, with an eclipse falling on his birthday! My duty called me to the temple You don't know what a parent's heart is! But I'm too tired to stand here arguing with you all night. (*turning to Ammu*) Ammu, do you come along with me to bed.

Ammu —(*in wide-eyed apprehension*) No! I'm sleeping in here with mother.

Chim.—All right. Do as you please.

(*Exit*)

Itha —(*Rising.*) Do yau think my advice can be any use to you? I doubt it Any way it's but one word, resignation.

Madhu.—(*Rising from her seat which she had assumed just a moment back*) Father, I want something more precious, your blessing!

Itha.—(*Smiling brightly*) Who am I to bless and curse? I have never played *that* role yet. May God bless you!

(*Enter Balan in profound gloom but not without his usual grimness*)

Balan. Uncle, if you're going, it's getting late—

Itha.—Before I go, Balan. I would like to put in a word for this young lady here (*indicating the cowering figure of Ammu with a smile.*) She wants to sleep with her mother tonight.

Balan.—(*eyeing the disconsolate protege with withering scorn*) Why, is she growing more childish as she grows older? For two years now she has been sleeping alone and apart. No, no, uncle, I'm afraid you want to spoil her.

(*Ammu runs out into the passage and her heart-rending sobs are heard through the door*).

Itha —(*drily*) Well then, may I take her home with me?

Balan.—(*amazed*) What an idea! And tomorrow she has got to attend school!

Itha —Very well. I thought schools were made for children, not children for schools.—An old man's mistake (*laughs mirthlessly*). So long! (*Exit*)

(*Balan approaches and seats himself near the impassive Madhu and says ingratiatingly*).

Balan —To see old men making common cause with children in order to make us forget our duties!

(*Madhu turns away her face, as he vainly endeavours to catch her eye.*) I'm so dead tired after a most strenuous day. (*another long pause*) And it's my only day of rest in the whole week! (*Madhu rises up abruptly and goes and occupies the opposite cot and remains gazing at the night through the open window*). Madhu! (*no answer*) Madhu! (*He is chilled by her silence and the wet blanket is noticeable in his injured tones as he continues*). Will you go to bed now? I'm ready to retire and a bit tired. (*Madhu silently turns*

down the lamp and makes for the door), Stop! What do you mean by all this? Where are you going at this hour of the night?

Madhu.—Ammu can't sleep alone. I'm going to her.

Balan.—Why, it's our plain duty to make her get rid of her silly terrors! Will you have her grow up into a moping mollу coddle like some of the women we know?

Madhu.—I owe a duty to my own feelings and once in a way must do it.

Balan.—Your duty is the same as mine, isn't it?

Madhu.—No. It is to have my own wishes and feelings satisfied now and then, and not be a dutiful blockhead for ever.

Balan.—Why, that's self-indulgence; don't call it duty.

Madhu.—I don't mind. I can't split straws Yon have robbed and tortured me enough with that horrible word, duty. Flesh and blood can't stand more of it!

Balan.—(*Softly*) Are you nervous, beside yourself, a trifle excited, upset with this—er—sudden blow?

Madhu.—I wish I were! But the child's death hasn't so much as touched me! On the other hand I wished the poor thing dead when I thought how cruel it would be to wish it to grow up among us!

Balan.—(*Starts up as if on spring!*) You are a monster, if you are not mad! (*Sits down with an effort and says shaking his head from side to side and looking down*) You are out of your senses. I've known you too long and too well to believe you are sane. Sorrow has unhinged your mind!

Madhu.—It's easier for you to question my sanity than to search your own conscience.

Balan.—I hope you would stop trifling. Conscience is a sacred word with me.

Madhu.—And nothing more than a word!

Balan.—Why, what have I done? Wherein did I fail to do my duty? Come, speak plainly and ease yor heart.

Madhu.—How can I speak more plainly? I wish you *will* fail in your duty sometimes; at least fail to mention it so often.

Balan.—You can't mean it!

Madhu.—I do mean it.

Balan.—(*goes and stands confronting her*) Madhu, what does all this mean? Can grief for a dead child make you so far forget yourself? This is not the first time we've had to bear it either. (*Madhu shudders visibly*) your mind is for the time being deranged. Give it complete rest, Stop brooding. This wild mood will pass,

Madhu.—Be happy in that belief. Now let me pass.

Balan.—I wish you to stay.

Madhu.—Then you must allow Ammu to stay in here for the night.

Balan.—My dear. don't give way to weakness. What does the girl gain by cuddling? At her age it is positively indecent to be sleeping in the same room as her parents.

Madhu.—All right. I'm going to her

Balan.—(*seizing her by the waist and in a coaxing tone*). Don't let us quarrel. I must have you by my side tonight. (*She trembles and turns pale.*) I command you to stay! (*He lets go of her. She strides rapidly out of the room making straight for the door. Once outside, she jams the door in from the passage and draws the bolt with a click and a clang. Balan stares stupidly at the closed door from where he stands, then goes and tries it to verify his doubts, returns, and*

throws himself dazedly on the cot. He raises his hand to his brow as if to wipe the sweat on it, drags himself to the open window and sits gazing thoughtfully on the darkness outside made visible by the mischievously twinkling stars.)

CURTAIN.

[We congratulate the young author on his insight into life, his grasp of the inwardness of the humdrum and the commonplace. But we cannot help wishing that he would free himself from the Shavian tradition of Encyclopaediac stage-directions. May we suggest that it upsets the balance of the play, is inevitably self-assertive, and almost suggests that the author was not quite sure if he wished to achieve a novel or a play?

—Ed., Z. C. M.]

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MADRAS

ഒരക്രമിയുടെ വിക്രമം.

1. നിറഞ്ഞിടും ഭൂതിനിമിത്തമല്പവും
കുറച്ചുലേൽക്കാതെ വിളങ്ങുമിന്ത്യയെ
"അറംഗസീബാം" മുകിലേശ്വരൻ ജനം
വിറച്ചുപോം മട്ടുഭരിച്ചിതേറെനാൾ.

2. അവൻെറയാത്മാവിനെ ഘോരമാംയമൻ
കവൎന്നു വേഗേനതിരിച്ചുപോകവെ
അവൎണ്ണ്യമിബ്ഭാരതരമ്യഭൂമിത-
ന്നവസ്ഥപാൎത്താലതിലും കടുപ്പമായ്.

3. പടയ്ക്കുപാരം പടുവാമവൻെറ പി-
ന്തുടൎച്ചയെല്ലാം ബലഹീനരാകയാൽ
ഇടക്കിടക്കായഥ നാട്ടിലെങ്ങുമേ
പടൎന്നുകൂടീവിവിധാക്രമങ്ങളും.

4. പെരുത്തു, കുത്തുംമറി, ദൂഷണം, കട-
ന്നിരുട്ടിലെത്തിക്കട്ടുകൊള്ളതൊട്ടതായ്
പുരുപ്രഭാവത്തോടു ഭൂഭരിക്കുവാ-
നൊരുത്തനില്ലായ്കിലിതല്ലയോ ഫലം?

5. ചിരിച്ചു "കൂട്ടാളി"കളോടുമൊത്തുടൻ
തരിമ്പുപോലും ഹൃദികൂസലെന്നിയെ
തരിച്ചുകൈത്താരോടു രാജപാതയിൽ
ചരിച്ചു ഹാ! തസ്കരവൎഗ്ഗമെപ്പൊഴും.

6. ഒളിച്ചിടേണം നൃപദോഷമെന്നത-
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വെളിക്കുകോലായിലിരുന്നു വൃദ്ധമാർ
വിളിച്ചുപാടുന്നിതു രാജദൂഷണം.

7. നരാധിപൻ തന്നുടെകേടുമൂലമീ-
വരാഭമാമിന്ത്യയിവണ്ണമാകവേ
നിരാകുലം "പേഷ്യ"യെ "നാദുഷാ"ഖ്യനെ-
ന്നൊരാൾ ഭരിച്ചാൻ മൃഗരാജപൗരുഷൻ.

8. പരപ്പുകൂട്ടുന്നൊരുനെററി, ഝത്തുത്തം
പരംപെറും മട്ടുവളഞ്ഞ ചില്ലികൾ

ഉരത്തവമ്പോടെരിയുന്ന പാവകൻ
കരംകൊടുക്കുന്ന വിലോചനദ്വയം;

9. കരുത്തതോൽപ്പന്തൊടുമാടലെന്നിയെ
മരുത്തുനിന്നുള്ള വിശേഷനാസിക,
തുരങ്കംപറിച്ചഥ വീപ്പുചത്തപോൽ
വെറുപ്പുതോന്നിപ്പോരുഗണ്ഡഭിത്തികൾ.

10. തടിച്ചുദന്തച്ഛദ, മഭ്രവന്മദം
മുടിച്ചുപായിച്ചൊരുതാടി കേവലം
ഇടിക്കുമൂനത്തെയണയ്ക്കുമൊച്ച, യി-
പ്പടിക്കെഴുന്നാപ്പുരുഷൻ ഭയങ്കരൻ.

11. ഇരുമ്പുലയ്ക്കക്കു സമാനമാമവൻ-
പെരുംകരംവന്നു തലയ്ക്കുവീഴുകിൽ
കരുത്തനെന്നാകിലുമന്തകാലയം
ഞെരുക്കമില്ലാതെയടുത്തു കണ്ടിടും.

12. അഴൽക്കടൽക്കുള്ളലകൾക്കിടുക്കിലായ്
കുഴങ്ങുമിന്ത്യാചരിതങ്ങളൊക്കയും
തഴച്ചമോദത്തൊടു കേട്ട പോരതിൽ
പഴക്കമേറീടിന പാർസ്സിഭൂമിപൻ.

13. "ഇതാ! രസം! നോക്കുക! ശക്തികാട്ടുവാ-
നിതാണു നമ്മൾക്കൊരു നല്ലതാംതരം"
പ്രതാപിമന്നൻ നിജമന്ത്രിയോടിദം
കൃതാന്തഗംഭീരരവത്തിലോതിനാൻ..

14. അനർഘയാം ഭാരതദേവി! യുൾത്തടേ
നിനയ്ക്കുവാൻ വയ്യിനിയൊന്നുമിങ്ങഹോ!
ഘനത്തിലാനംഭ്രഷ്ടയെത്തുമന്തരേ
നിനക്കുപാർത്താൽ തുണപാരിലാരൊരാൾ?

15. കടുപ്രകോപാലവനാശു വാളുമായ്-
ത്തുടുത്തനേത്രത്തൊടുമിങ്ങു ചാടിയാൽ
തടുക്കുവാനാരിവിടത്തി—ലേവരും
നടുക്കമോടോടിയൊളിയ്ക്കുകില്ലയോ?

* * * *

16. നിറഞ്ഞിടുന്നു പൊടിയാലെയംബരം
മറഞ്ഞിടുന്നു ദിനനാഥവിഗ്രഹം

വിറച്ചിടുന്നുധര കമ്പമാർന്നപോ-
ലുറച്ചിടുന്നുഭയമോടുമാരുതൻ.

17. ശ്രവിച്ചിടുന്നെന്തൊരു ഭീമനിസ്വനം
ചെവിക്കകം കൊട്ടിയടച്ചിടും വിധം
കവിഞ്ഞുവാരാന്നിധിയെത്തിടുന്നിതോ?
ഭവിച്ചിടുന്നോ കടുമേഘഗർജ്ജനം?

18. അതല്പ തല്പക്കൊടു കാതുരണ്ടിലും
വിതയ്ക്കുമീയുഗ്രഭയങ്കരാരവം
ഇതക്ഷമം നാദൃംഷയായ കണ്ടകൻ
ചിതത്തിൽ യുദ്ധായ വരുന്നഘോഷമാം.

19. വഴിക്കുനില്ക്കും വിഷയങ്ങളിഷ്ടമാം-
വഴിക്കു കൊള്ളയ്ക്കിരയാക്കിയായവൻ
ഒഴിഞ്ഞിടാഗ്ഗർവ്വോടു ഭാരതത്തെയും
പിഴിഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നതിനായണഞ്ഞുപോൽ.

20. വിശാലരമ്യാസ്പദസിന്ധുദേശ, മാ-
പ്രശാന്തവാരാണസിയിത്തരം പുരം
നിശാചരോദഗ്രനവന്റെ കോപമാം
കൃശാനുവിങ്കൽ ചുടുചാമ്പലായ്ക്ഷണാൽ.

21. നൃപാലവാസസ്ഥലമായ "ദില്ലി"യാം
സുപാവനം പട്ടണമായതിങ്കലും
അപാരവീര്യം തിരളുന്നവന്റെ കാൽ-
നിപാതമുണ്ടായ് വിധിയാർക്കു നീക്കിടാം.

22. ഇളപ്പമല്പം പിണയാതെയപ്പുരേ
പുലർന്നിടുന്നോരു വിഭൂതികാൺകയാൽ
ഇളക്കമെൾക്കാംപിനു സംഭവിച്ചുപോൽ
പുളപ്പുകൂട്ടുന്നൊരു പാർസിരാജനും.

23. "ജനങ്ങളെക്കാലനു നല്കിയെന്തിനാ-
യനല്പപാപം വെറുതെബ്ഭരിപ്പു ഞാൻ
ധനം ലഭിച്ചീടണമത്രമാത്രമേ
മനസ്സിലുള്ളു മമവാഞ്ഛകേവലം.

24. ഇദംമനോരാജ്യമിയന്നുകൊണ്ടു തൻ-
വിദഗ്ദ്ധനാകുന്നൊരു ഭൃത്യവര്യനെ
തദന്തരേ വിട്ടിതു താഴെയോതിടു-
ന്നുദന്തമിന്ത്യാപതിയോടു ചൊല്ലുവാൻ.

25. “കണംപെടാതീഷ,ലെനിക്കു ചൊല്ലിടും-
പണം തരേണം നൃപതേ! ഭവാനുടൻ
ഇണങ്ങുമെന്നാകി, ലതല്ലയായ്കിലി-
ക്ഷണം തുലക്കും തവ രാജ്യലക്ഷ്മിയെ.

26. തടുത്തു മാം നിൎത്തുവതിന്നു തക്കതാം
പടുത്വമങ്ങേക്കിയലുന്നതാകിലോ
പൊടുക്കനെപ്പോരിനു കോപ്പുകൂട്ടുകെൻ-
മിടുക്കുഞാനപ്പൊഴുതങ്ങു കാട്ടിടാം.”

27. ഇതേതുനാളാണു കഴിഞ്ഞതെങ്കില-
ങ്ങതേദിനം രാത്രിയരാതിസഞ്ചയം
സ്വതേശയിക്കും പദമാൎന്നുവാളുമായ്
ച്ചിതേതരം രണ്ടു മുഗൾപ്രമാണികൾ.

28. അടച്ചു നേത്രങ്ങളഗാധനിദ്രയിൽ
ക്കിടന്നിടുന്നാച്ചിലരെസ്സസംഭ്രമം
കടന്നു വെട്ടിക്കുലചെയ്തു മത്തരാ-
യുടൻതിരിച്ചാരതിമന്ദബുദ്ധികൾ.

29. തുണച്ചുവേണ്ടുംപടി ചക്രവൎത്തിയെ
ഗ്ഗുണംസ്വരാജ്യത്തിനു സിദ്ധമാക്കുവാൻ
കണം കരുത്തില്ല കരത്തിനെങ്കിലോ
പിണച്ചിടുന്നെന്തിനു ഹന്ത! ദുൎഘടം?

30. ജനിച്ചനാട്ടിന്നു തരത്തിലിത്തരം
കുനിച്ചുവെച്ചാരതിഘോരസങ്കടം
തനിക്കു കണ്ഠത്തിനെഴുംകുടുക്കു താൻ-
തനിച്ചു നിൎമ്മിപ്പതു മൂഢധൎമ്മമാം.

31. സ്വസംഘവാസസ്ഥലമാൎന്നു വൈരിസാ-
ഹസംപ്രവൎത്തിച്ചൊരുവാൎത്ത രാവിലെ
നിസൎഗ്ഗധീരൻ സചിവേന്ദ്രനാശുപോ-
യസംഭ്രമം നാദൃഷയോടുചൊല്ലിനാൻ.

32. തുടിച്ചുഗണ്ഡസ്ഥല,മുഗ്രമാംവിധം
കടിച്ചു ദന്തങ്ങൾ, ചുരുട്ടി മുഷ്ടിയും
“മുടിക്കുകീ മാത്രയിലിന്ത്യ”യെന്നവൻ
തടിച്ച രോഷത്തൊടുമാജ്ഞ നല്കിനാൻ.

III

33. വദിപ്പതെന്തിന്നിനി കഷ്ടമേ! പരം
മദിച്ചു ചാഞ്ചാട്ടമരാതിസേനകൾ
ഉദിച്ചു തോഷത്തോടു പാഞ്ഞു; വൻജലം
നദിക്കെഴുന്നോരണപോകിലെന്നപോൽ.

34. തരിച്ചുകയ്യോടു സദാ "രണം"കൊതി-
ച്ചിരിക്കുമാവീരരിലീയൊരാജ്ഞയോ
ശരിക്കു പോകും തരണിക്കു ശക്തിയിൽ
തെരിക്കനെക്കിട്ടിടു മൃത്യുപോലയായ്.

35. പൊടുക്കനെ ബ്ഭാരതമാതൃവംശമൊ-
ട്ടൊടുക്കുവാൻ പാർസികൾ തീർച്ചയാക്കിനാർ
കടുത്ത ശാർദ്ദൂലവരൻ സ്വദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ
പ്പെടുന്ന നൽഗ്ഗോവിനെയെന്തു വിട്ടിടും?

36 വരാഭകോലുംഗദ, വേൽ, ശരാസനം,
കരാളമാംഖഡ്ഗമിവണ്ണമായുധം
കരാഞ്ചലത്തിങ്കലെടുത്തു ചാടിയി-
ദ്ധരാതലം ഞെട്ടി വിറക്കുമാറവർ.

37. ദിനങ്ങളൊട്ടേറെ വിശപ്പു പേറി വൻ-
വനത്തിലോടും വൃകസഞ്ചയത്തിലായ്
നിനച്ചിടാതെത്തിടുമാടിനുള്ളതാ-
മനല്പഭീ ഭാരതഭൂമി തേടിനാൾ.

38. മലക്കെഴും ഗർവ്വ ശരീരപുഷ്ടിയാ-
ലുലച്ചു പാർസിപ്പട തന്റെ ഗർജ്ജനം
നിലച്ചിടാതന്തകനുള്ളൊരുച്ചമാ-
മലച്ചുപോൽ മാററൊലികൊണ്ടിതെങ്ങുമേ.

39. ഒളിയ്ക്കുനൽക്കാഞ്ചന പീഠമാകുമാ-
വിളിപ്പെടും ഭാരതനെഞ്ചിൽനിന്നുടൻ
വെളിക്കു ചാടും ചുടുരക്തധാരയിൽ
കുളിച്ചിടാനാക് ഖലരൊത്തിറങ്ങിനാർ.

40. സ്വനേത്രലാക്കായ മൃഗങ്ങളെക്ഷണം
വനേചരൻ "കാച്ചി"വിടുന്നമാതിരി
അനേകമന്നാളിലരാതി ജീവനം
ദിനേശജന്നായ് ബലിനൽകി നിഷ്ഠുരൻ.

41. വയസ്സചെന്നോൻ, ശിശു, നാരിയിത്തരം
മയം മനസ്സിൽക്കരുതാതെ നിഷ്ഠുരം
അയത്നമായോധജനങ്ങൾ വാളിനാൽ
മയക്കിയെല്ലാരെയുമൊന്നുപോലവേ.

42. സ്വദേഹരക്ഷാവശരായി ഹാ! ചിലർ
വിദേശവാസത്തിനു കെട്ടുകെട്ടവെ
മദേനകായത്തൊടിടഞ്ഞു ജീവനാ-
പ്രദേശവാസം പരമേകിമാററലർ.

43. പുരങ്ങൾ കാണുന്നവ പാവകന്നുസ-
ത്വരം രസത്തോടഥ നല്കി നിർദ്ദയം
പരക്കെയാലില്ലിയിലെങ്ങു മായവർ
തിരക്കിയോടീ വെളിവാട്ടു കൊണ്ടപോൽ.

44. അടക്കമററുള്ള കലാപമീവിധം
നടന്നിടുംവേളയിലാത്തുനാദൃഷ്ടാ
സ്ഫുടപ്രകോപത്തൊട്ടു ഖഡ്ഗപാണിയാ-
യ്ക്കടന്നുചെന്നുവരരാജധാനിയിൽ.

45. അനന്തചാരുത്വമെഴുന്ന "കേകിയാ-
സന"ത്തെയെള്ളിൻതരി പോലെയാക്കിനാൻ
ജനങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ടാടിവരുന്ന "കോഹിനൂ"-
രനന്തരം തന്നുടെ കൈക്കലാക്കിനാൻ.

46. മികച്ചൊരാരാജഗൃഹം സമസ്തവും
തകർത്തു പാർസ്സിക്ഷിതി തന്റെ നായകൻ
പുകഴ്ന്ന ലങ്കാപുരി പണ്ടരക്ഷണാ-
ലകണ്ടകൻ മാരുതിയെന്നപോലവേ.

* * * * *

47. പുരങ്ങൾവെന്തങ്ങിനെ വീണിടുന്നു ഹാ!
പരംപിടയ്ക്കുന്നിതു കന്നുകാലികൾ
കരഞ്ഞിടുന്നൂ ഭയമാർന്നു വൃദ്ധമാർ
തിരഞ്ഞിടുന്നൂ ചെറുബാലരമ്മയെ.

48. മുറിഞ്ഞു കൈകാലിവ, വേണ്ടതേതുമൊ-
ന്നറിഞ്ഞിടാതങ്ങിനെ പായുമന്തരേ
കുറിയ്ക്കുവിട്ടുള്ളൊരരാതിസായകാൽ
മറിഞ്ഞുവീഴുന്നു തെരുക്കൾനെഞ്ജനം.

49. ഈമട്ടിലുള്ളൊരുകലാപമതാകമാന-
മാമന്നവൻ മുകിലനാഥനറിഞ്ഞനേരം
ധീ മങ്ങിയേറെയഥ നാട്ടുഷയായിട്ടന്ന-
കേമന്റെ പാദയുഗളേ പരിചോട്ടുവീണു.

50. പെയ്യുള്ളതെററുകളെയാസകലം പൊറുപ്പാൻ
പെയ്യുള്ള ബാഷ്പമൊട്ടമായവനന്നിരക്കേ
ആതുംഗവിക്രമിയവൻ ക്രിയപോരുമെന്നായ്
ചാതുര്യ്യമാന്ന ഭടരോടറിയിച്ചു കണ്ണാൽ.

51. പണ്ടാരാക്ഷസരാജനാംദശമുഖൻ സൈന്യങ്ങളൊത്താദരാൽ
കൊണ്ടാട്ടം ധനനാഥമന്ദിരമുടച്ചമ്പോട്ടുപോയിടവേ
ഉണ്ടായുള്ളൊരു ഡംഭിലുംവലിയതാംഡംഭാൻക്രട്ടം രസാൽ
രണ്ടാംരാവണനായി നാട്ടുഷയഹോ പേഷ്യയ്ക്കുപോയീട നാൻ.

പി. കെ. ഏട്ടനുണ്ണിരാജാ.

പുസ്തക പ്രസ്താവം.

1. വീരരവിവൎമ്മ ചക്രവൎത്തി.

[ഗ്രന്ഥകൎത്താവു്: കോങ്ങോട്ടേ കൃഷ്ണൻനായർ-
നോൎമ്മൻ പ്രിൻറിങ്ങ് ബ്യൂറോ, കോഴിക്കോട്ട്. വില 8ണ.]

ഭാഷാസാഹിത്യരംഗത്തിൽ വളരേക്കാലമായി നടനംചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ശ്രീമാൻ കോങ്ങോട്ടെ കൃഷ്ണൻനായരവർകളെ | സാമൂതിരികോളേജുമാസികാവായനക്കാൎക്ക് പരിചയപ്പെടുത്തിക്കൊടുക്കേണ്ടുന്ന ആവശ്യം ഒട്ടും തന്നേഇല്ല. കാരണം അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻേറ ഗദ്യപ്രബന്ധമോ പദ്യകൃതിയോ ഈ മാസികയുടേ ഒട്ടുമിക്കാലും സഞ്ചികകളിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധിപ്പെടുത്തീട്ടുള്ളതുതന്നേയാണ്.

ശ്രീമാൻ കൃഷ്ണൻ നായരവർകൾ "ശ്രീദേവീഹരണം" എന്ന ഒരു നാടകം പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചപ്പോൾ, "സംസ്കൃതനാടകരീതിയേയും ലക്ഷണങ്ങളേയും അനുകരിച്ചതു്" "സമീചീനമായിട്ടില്ലെന്നും, "നാടകങ്ങളിൽ ശ്ലോകങ്ങളേചേൎത്തുന്നതു പ്രകൃതിവിരുദ്ധമാണെന്നും" "പ്രാകൃതഭാഷ ആവശ്യമില്ലെന്നും" മററും പറഞ്ഞു പലരും ആക്ഷേപിച്ചിരുന്നുവത്രേ. അങ്ങിനേയുള്ള "വിമൎശകന്മാരേ ധിക്കരിക്കാതേ അവരുടേ ആവശ്യപ്രകാരം നവീനരീതിയിൽ ഒരു നാടകം എഴുതുവാൻ തുടങ്ങിയതിൻേറ ഫലമാണിനാടകം."

വീരരവിവൎമ്മ ചക്രവൎത്തി എന്ന ഈ ഗദ്യനാടകത്തിലേ കഥ കൊല്ലവൎഷം 5-ാം നൂററാണ്ടിൽ നടന്ന ഒരു കഥയാണ്." വേണാട്ടിന്നധിപനായ വീരരാവിവൎമ്മരാജാവ്, സ്വന്തം പിതാവിൻേറയും സോദരൻേറയും നേരേ വാളെടുത്ത വിക്രമപാണ്ഡ്യനേ യുദ്ധത്തിൽ പരാജിതനാക്കി ബന്ധനസ്ഥനാക്കിയതും അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻേറയും പുത്രിയായ പത്മാനനയേ വിവാഹം കഴിച്ചതും ആയ ചരിത്രസംഭവമാണ് ഈ നാടകത്തിൻേറ ഇതിവൃത്തം. "ഒരു നടന്ന കഥയേ അതേവിധത്തിൽ നാടകമാക്കി തീൎത്തതല്ലാതേ" അതിൻേറ രചനയിൽ തൻേറ "ഭാവനാശക്തിയേ" ഗ്രന്ഥകൎത്താവ് "ഒട്ടും പ്രയോഗിച്ചിട്ടില്ല." ഈ നാടകം, "പൊടിപ്പും തോങ്ങലും" ഇല്ലെങ്കിലും വായിച്ചു രസിപ്പാൻ കൊള്ളുന്ന ഒന്നാണെന്നുള്ളതിനു സംശയമില്ല. പാട്ടും ശ്ലോകവും ഇല്ലാത്ത നാടകങ്ങളിൽ അഭിരുചിയുള്ള രസികന്മാൎക്ക് ഇതു പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും രസകരമായിരിക്കുമെന്നു പറയേണ്ടതില്ലല്ലോ. വാചകരചനയിലും പദപ്രയോഗത്തിലും ദുൎല്ലഭം ചില സ്ഖാലിത്യങ്ങൾ ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ വന്നുപോയിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നു പറയാതിരിപ്പാൻ നിവൃത്തിയില്ല.

2. ചവററുകൊട്ട.

(ഗ്രന്ഥകർത്താവ്. പുത്തേഴത്ത് രാമൻ മേനോൻ. ബി. ഏ; ബി. എൽ. രാമാനുജമുദ്രാലയം ക്ലിപ്തം; തൃശ്ശിവപേരൂർ. വില 8ണ.)

ഗദ്യരചനയിലുള്ള സാരസ്യംകൊണ്ടും പദ്യനിർമ്മാണത്തിലുള്ള ലാളിത്യംകൊണ്ടും പ്രസംഗത്തിലുള്ള മാധുര്യംകൊണ്ടും മലയാളികൾക്കു സുപരിചിതനായിട്ടുള്ള ഒരാളാണ് ശ്രീമാൻ പുത്തേഴത്തു രാമൻ മേനവനവർകൾ. അദ്ദേഹം കൈരളീദേവിക്ക് അർപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഒരു ലഘൂപഹാരമാണ് ഈ "ചവററുകൊട്ട." "ചവററുകൊട്ട"യിലുള്ള സാധനങ്ങൾ പഴന്തൊലി, ചിരട്ടക്കയിൽ, കുപ്പിച്ചില്ല്, കരിക്കട്ട, തീപ്പെട്ടിക്കോൽ, ചക്കമടൽ, കുററിച്ചൂല്, പുല്ല് എന്നിവയാകുന്നു. ഇവയിൽ മൂന്നെണ്ണം "മാതൃഭൂമി"യുടെ വിശേഷാദർശങ്ങളിലും, "മൂന്നെണ്ണം "കൈരളി" മാസികയിലും, ഒന്നു "സരസ"ൻെറ വാർഷികലക്കത്തിലും" അവതരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളവയാണ്. ചവററുകൊട്ടയിലുള്ള സാമാനങ്ങളെ ബഹിഷ്കരിക്കുന്നതിനുമുമ്പ്, അതിൽ വിലപിടിച്ച വല്ല സാധനങ്ങളും പെട്ടുപോയിട്ടുണ്ടോ എന്നു പരിശോധിക്കുന്നതു് സ്വാഭാവികവും സാധാരണവും ആണല്ലൊ. അതുപോലെതന്നെ ഈ ചവററുകൊട്ടയേയും ഒന്നു കൂലങ്കഷമായി പരിശോധിക്കുന്നതു രസാവഹമായിരിക്കും. ഈ ചവററുകൊട്ടയുടെ "ഉള്ളടക്കം," സമർപ്പണം, പ്രസ്താവന, അവതാരിക, ആമുഖം എന്നിവയെക്കൊണ്ടു സവിശേഷം അലംകൃതമായിട്ടും ഉണ്ട്. ചവററുകൊട്ടയുടെ അകത്തും പുറത്തും ഗ്രന്ഥകർത്താവിൻെറ പ്രതിഭാവിലാസം പ്രകാശിച്ചു കാണ്മാനുണ്ട്. ചവററുകൊട്ടയിലുള്ള വിശേഷവസ്തുക്കളെ ചവററുകൊട്ടയുടെ പുറംചട്ടയിൽ ചിത്രീകരിച്ചു പ്രദർശിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതും ഒരു മനോധർമ്മവിലസിതംതന്നെയാണ്. രസകരമായ വിധത്തിൽ നേരം പോക്കിന്നു പ്രയോജകീഭവിക്കുന്നതാണു ഈ "ചവററുകൊട്ട." എന്നാൽ ഈ കൊട്ടക്കുള്ള ഒരു വലിയ കോട്ടം അതിന്നു ഒരു "മുഖവുര"കൂടിചേർത്തു ഭൂഷണസാകല്യപരിപൂർത്തി വരുത്താത്തതാണ്.

Our Competition Page.

It is a great surprise to me that only five students sent in solutions of the simple 'number question' which was published in the last issue of the College Magazine. May it be that many students here have an aversion for 'Elementary Mathematics'? In that case, the type of question has to be changed and, as good luck would have it, I have received from Mr K. Vasudevan Nair, B. A., an 'old boy' of this college, an interesting and novel question of quite a different type for insertion on this page I need hardly say how thankful I am to him and hope that other 'old boys' will follow suit.

K. R. Ramakrishnan (J I.) is the prize-winner in the last competition. One of the solutions was wrong. The remaining three correct solutions are those of P. R. Sitaraman (S. I), V. P. Subramanian (J. I.) and S. Subramanian (J. I.)

The number wanted is 69. $69^2=4761$ and $69^3=328509$ and hence the square and cube of 69 contain all the ten digits from 0 to 9 once and once only. If this is not simple, I do not know what is.

A. V. K Krishna Menon.

"Cabinet" Competition.

(K. Vasudevan Nair, B. A.)

A reformed constitution for India is now on the anvil. Within a year or two the Constitution Act would have come into existence. Whether we want it or not, we will have to accept it. Though the proposed Federal constitution is to be dyarchic at the centre, we shall, for the purposes of this competition, decide to have a full-fledged National Ministry.

Below is given a list of the Ministers of the first Indian National Cabinet. And another list of political leaders also is given hereunder. You are required to choose a *Speaker* for the first Federal Assembly and a Minister for each department which he would be able to control and guide satisfactorily, from the list of persons given.

Speaker of the Federal Assembly.

Prime Minister
Minister for Justice
Minister for Finance
Minister for Home Affairs
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Defence
Minister of Education
Minister for Industries and Commerce
Minister for Labour
Minister of Transport
Minister of Public Health
Minister for Public Works

List of Political Leaders.

Mahatma Gandhi	Dr. Moonje
Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Sreenivasa Sastri	Vallabhai Patel
Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru	Dr. M. A. Ansari
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	Sir M. Visweswarayya
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya	M. A. Jinnah
Moulana Shaukat Ali	A. Rangaswamy Aiyangar
Mrs. Sarojini Naidu	N. M. Joshi
Begum Sha Nawaz	Sir Purushothamdas Thakurdas
Sir R. K. Shanmugam Chetty	Sir C. Sankaran Nair
M. R. Jayakar	Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar
Sardar Sardul Singh Cavasheer	Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi
Subhas Chandra Bose.	C. Rajagopalachariar

All you have to do is to write the names of the Speaker and Ministers you choose against the department to which he or she is selected.

The competition is open only to the present students of the College who purchase copies of this issue of the Magazine. The solution with the name of the competitor addressed to "*Cabinet Competition*" must reach the principal on or before the 1st of December 1933.

A prize will be awarded to the competitor who sends in an all-correct solution which agrees with the Competiton Editor's solution lodged with the principal.

The decision of the Competition Editor on all matters relating to this competition is absolutely final. Mutilated answers will be disqualified.

Our Exchanges.

The receipt of the following magazines is acknowledged with thanks :—

Annamalai Nagar Miscellany, Chidambaram.
Health and Welfare, Saidapet.
Muslim Review, Lucknow.
The Barrovian, Isle of Man.
The Leader, Masulipatam.
The Hindu Theological High School Magazine, Madras.
The Government Brennen College Magazine, Tellicherry.
Indian Commerce, Madura.
The University Students' Union Magazine, Vizianagaram.
The Light of the East, Ranchi.
The Andhra Christian College Magazine, Guntur.
Buy Indian, Madras.
A Government College Miscellany, Mangalore.
St. John's College Magazine, Palamcottah.
St. Joseph's College Magazine, Trichinopoly.
The Theosophical College Magazine, Madanappalle.
The National College Magazine, Trichinopoly.
The Maharaja's College Magazine, Ernakulam.
Our Home Magazine, Madras.
St. Thomas' College Magazine, Trichur,
The Indian Educator, Madura.
The Ardra, Ceylon,
The Findlay College Magazine, Mannargudi.
Rays of Light, Trichinopoly.
The Popular Magazine, Trichinopoly.
The Modern Student, Calcutta.
Excelsior, Changanacherry.
Blue Mountain Magazine, The Nilgiris.
The Malabar Christian College Magazine, Calicut.
The Presidency College Magazine, Madras.
The Scholar, Palghat.
The Indian Ladies' Magazine, Madras.
The Elphinstonian, Bombay.
Queen Mary's College Magazine, Madras.
Swadeshi, Bombay.
St. Aloysius' College Magazine, Mangalore.
Scientific Indian, Calcutta.
The South Indian Teacher, Madras.
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