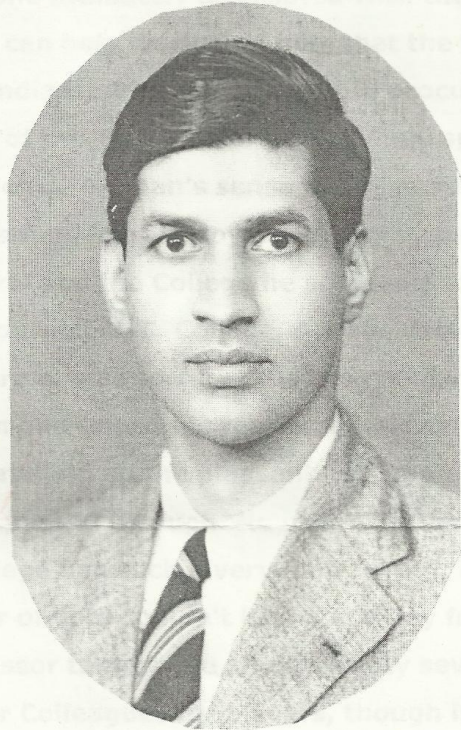


MY MASTER
BY PROFESSOR P.V. VAIDYANATHAN



The Mathematics Department of Sree Kerala Varma College has never been sluggish since the very inception of the Institution. It has always had a devoted band of highly brilliant teachers, some of whom were so extra-ordinarily excellent as were naturally called upon to adorn "fresh woods and pastures new". Dr. C. S. V. is, I believe, the solitary example of a genius S.K. V.C. can ever be proud of, who, like Casablanca on the burning deck, chose to stick to what he deemed, his post of duty, feeding the hungry sheep in this distant fold at Kanattukara. Talented teachers like Messrs Seetharaman

Govindarajan, Ramanathan, Veeraraghava., Venkateswaran, George. Sadaslvan etc. left the College seeking more lucrative posts elsewhere. We are and should be all happy about it.

Nevertheless, no one intimately associated with the College and our Professor can help disclosing now that the fact that no Institution in India could so far succeed in procuring the valuable services of this intellectual giant simply speaks volumes for Mr. Venkataraman's sense of selfsacrifice, his dedication .and his fundamental loyalty to the cultured' town of Trichur in general and the College he so deeply loved in particular. His sojourn at U. C. College, Alwaye, from where he came to Kerala Varma, was so short that he could virtually be said to have begun and ended his real academic career in this College, keenly watching all the pleasant and unpleasant vicissitudes it has passed through. No other Mathematics teacher in the College has such a very long record. He has it because the glitter of gold couldn't lure him away from "his" College. The Professor taught ,me about twenty seven years ago. We were later Colleagues for 8 years, though in different departments. Besides. ,I have also had the good fortune of the closest association with him. Teachers like Dr. Venkatarnman are born, not made. None of his Students will forget his classes, especially his colourful and unique method of presentation. The Doctor had a peculiar knack of injecting into the most backward brains all the elementary ideas of Partial Fractions and Asymptotes. He would do one and the same difficult problem In Trigonometry with infinite gusto in six or seven different ways, making use of, various principles

and their multifarious ramifications most picturesquely, and when we felt the feat (or feast?) was over, came the bolt from the blue - "A METHOD FOR ABOOBAKER AND OTHERS"! (Aboobacker was a back-bencherer, a very dull student whom the Professor never forgot to remember!). No wonder some students used to remark that he could teach Differential Equations to a lifeless pillar, if he so willed!. Classes In the first term moved slow; they gathered momentum in the Second; the third term was devoted to discussion of University Questions, and special classes to a rapid revision!. Very seldom did we cut his lively classes in Room 34. I have forgotten much of what he taught me, but I'll never forget the Coffee and biscuits he served us in February 1952 marking the culmination of a series of special classes In the small hall adjacent to Professor Sankaran Nambiar's room in the first floor of the Western Block.

One day, Just when I was entering the front door of his house, he was bursting out into such hilarious laughter as would a page of "Pickwick Papers" evoke that I immediately collapsed on the spot. I learnt subsequently that the sudden revelation of a happy solution to an intricate problem in "Numbers" at which he had been labouring for hours with Miltonic industry, was the immediate cause of that thunderous Eureka of this veteran Archimedes!. He was preparing his Ph, D. thesis then. The presentday Pre-Degree students of the Calicut Universit have "heard" of sculptor Jakanchari, in their English prose lesson, who forgot his hunger in the ecstasy

of his Vision. I "Saw" with my own eyes my Mathematics Master not only forgetting his hunger and thirst as his wife said -- we were neighbours then - but also utterly oblivious of every thing else under the sun save the majestic march of integers, symbols and equations in his manuscript thesis.

The Professor's public speeches were also replete with "mathematicalities", if they can be so termed. Even the welcome speeches as President of the Mathematics Association were not spared. His arithmetical precision and scientific accuracy were glaringly perceptible in all his straight, curved, acute and obtuse sentences. The rafters of the Main Hall roof reverberated with boisterous applause once, both from amidst the audience and from the dais occupied by Chief Minister Panampilli Govinda Menon, Principal Akhleswara Iyer and Prof. N.R. Ramachandra Iyer, when the President of the Mathematics Association referred in the course of his amusing welcome to the series of corresponding and alternate angles formed when the straight parallel lines of silent, disciplined listening of both sexes seated in front were cut by adjacent imaginary transversal joining the beautiful vertex of Panampilli's conical nose and the middle point of the top-width of the eastern door of Main Hall East!

Tall, erect and with searching eyes, Dr. C S. V. has a magnetic personality with his very fair complexion and handsome charming appearance, and dressed in the finest foreign fashion, he looked every inch a majestic

European and earned in our days the glorious nick name "Lord Mountbatten". The occasional glimpse of the Professor smiling and chatting with the equallu tall and Handsome Professor Nambiar under the portico, both in their best western dress walking towards the respective afternoon classes they always preferred with an Arden edition and the ocher with a bag of books, files, question papers etc.. thrilled us with deep delight and we felt as though two great foreign Ambassadors were walking down an International Airport after a Geneva Conference! Behind his fair exterior was hidden a fairer heart. An Extremely lovable person, full of the milk of human Kindness, always ready with a piece of good advice to the young and the aspiring, with an inimitably equable temper taking the unkind knocks of life with admirable composure, my Mathematics Master easily endeared himself to everyone in and outside the College. God bless him and his good family!

This is a humble tribute to a great Master who could have occupied a high chair in India or abroad, had he allowed himself to be a little selfish. Fate willed that the College should be lucky.