

Behar Herald

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Prohibition

The Government of Bihar have decided to abolish prohibition which was introduced in certain districts of the province by the Congress Ministry. The reasons given for this step are (a) large increase in smuggling and the manufacture of illicit liquor due to lack of public enthusiasm for prohibition, (b) Government was losing Excise revenue to the tune of 16-20 lakhs of rupees annually, in addition to the extra expenditure involved in maintaining special staff to enforce prohibition.

The first argument, if true, is alone enough to denounce prohibition. If prohibition could really be enforced at a cost of 20-25 lakhs to the provincial exchequer, it would be cheap at the price.

It is a pity that the problem of alcoholism is seldom discussed scientifically and dispassionately, free from all emotionalism. The prohibition movement was started in America under religious (Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian) auspices. In India, it was associated with a political party and there was no genuine demand for prohibition from the people. Would-be reformers ignore the well-established fact that men cannot be made moral against their will, by the mere passing of a law. If people have a hankering for something and are prepared to pay for it, nothing can prevent them from having it. Many experiments have been made in various parts of the world to abolish prostitution and alcoholism, but human nature has proved to be stronger in every case than the legislators. The failure of the costly experiment in America is recent history. Three other countries, Norway, Sweden and Finland, also tried to enforce prohibition but in each case, it had to be admitted to be a failure and given up. As far as we know there is no country in the world to-day where prohibition is in force.

In India, only a modified form of prohibition was attempted, foreign liquor was generally exempted, only country liquor and toddy were banned. The objection to the latter was not sensible. Toddy is the least injurious of alcoholic

beverages as its alcohol content is very low. It supplies the much needed vitamin B-1 which is so often lacking in the dietary of poor people.

It is rather amusing that no one can criticize prohibition without being suspected of being a wine-bibber. In any discussion of the subject, almost everyone approaches it with an already formed prejudice in favour of, or strongly against, alcoholic drinks. It is rare to find an outlook based on proved scientific facts and not on mere opinions, and hence all discussions on the pros and cons of Prohibition tend to be on an emotional rather than on an intellectual plane.

The established facts can be briefly stated: (1) Alcoholic drinks are not a necessity to the normal healthy person. (2) They are quickly absorbed into the blood circulation and the alcohol in the drink can be burnt in the tissues and supply energy. In this sense, alcohol is a food, but it is a very costly food. The same number of calories can be obtained far more cheaply from other articles of food. (3) Alcohol is *not* a stimulant, but a depressant. The apparent stimulating effect can be said to be due to the removal of control of the mental brakes (inhibitions). It is the same as the effect of the whip on a horse. Its action on nerves is to delay and diminish response to stimuli. (4) Alcoholic drinks remove inhibitions. They dull the powers of self-criticism and self-control. This may be *prima facie* undesirable, but modern civilization has imposed so many artificial restraints on man, that an occasional relaxation of inhibitions gives one a sense of relief and freedom which need not be lightly valued. Occasional removal of mental brakes may be beneficial but it is very dangerous in anyone who is doing something which requires continuous and accurate judgment, e.g., drivers of cars, aviators, factory workers handling complicated machinery. (5) Alcoholic drinks are not "heating" in cold climates. The apparent feeling of heat is due to the rapid loss of heat from the skin. Polar explorers and climbers of high

mountains avoid all alcoholic beverages. (6) Moderate drinking has no effect at all on longevity. As a matter of fact, the lurid pictures painted by teetotallers of the effects of drink only apply to those who habitually drink to excess and habitual excessive drinking is a pathological symptom of a weak nervous system. The tendency to over-drink also goes with conditions that make for discomfort, unhappiness, and a sense of frustration or failure in life. Bad, overcrowded, cramped housing conditions, uncomfortable quarrelling home, lack of education and interest in life, domestic worries and anxieties all lead a man to seek solace and oblivion in drink. What charm in life has the Jharia coal-miner when he returns to his hovel after an arduous day's work? His only consolation is drink and to forcibly deprive him of this is cruel. A true philanthropist should try to make life worth living to him, not deprive him of the only thing that makes him forget the drabness of his animal-like existence.

There is one thing however to be said against the abolition of prohibition at the present time. The entry of the U. S. into the World War I gave a great impetus to the prohibition movement in America, and to save cereals that could be used for food, the Congress enacted laws prohibiting the manufacture of spirits, beers and wines. With the present scarcity of food grains in India at present, one is unable to view with equanimity the conversion of rice or any other food grain to country liquor.

It has been said that there was no need to remove prohibition because there was no complaint against it from any quarter.

There were plenty of complaints when prohibition first came into force, but later on things adjusted themselves to the new conditions. Those who had the money could always get drinks, the bootleggers were making good profits, the poor labourer in this country is never vocal. He bore his hardship silently as he is bearing without a murmur the high price of rice and clothing to-day. Through centuries, the habit of suffering in silence has been drilled into him.

Behar Herald

Patna

Tuesday, June 1, 1943

THE FOURTH INDIAN DIVISION

When in August 1939, the Fourth Indian Division landed in Egypt, none of its officers or men had ever handled an anti-tank rifle or mortar. They were on a mule transport basis and knew nothing of the internal combustion engine.

Many of the men were simple cultivators from the wheat fields of the Punjab;—but there were also stately bearded Sikhs, magnificent figures of Rajput riflemen, hawk-eyed Pathans from the bleak, sun-blistered hills of N. W. F. P., and wiry little Gurkhas from Himalayan Nepal. These men have left their mark in the dusty wastes of the Libyan desert, in the bush of the Abyssinian border, on the dry, scorching semi-desert plains of the Sudan, in the towering rocky mountains of Eritrea and Abyssinia and amid the softer and greener landscape of Syria.

The 4th Indian Division resisted Graziani's triumphant advance into Egypt. They defeated the Italians at Sidi Barrani on December 11, 1940 and then were diverted to fight battles in Eritrea, Italian Somaliland and Abyssinia. On the 20th May, 1941, Prince Vittorio Emanuele, Duc d' Savoy-Aosta, cousin of the King of Italy and Italian Viceroy in Abyssinia, surrendered to the 4th Indian Division.

When the Italians were vanquished completely in all these areas, the 4th Indian Division was brought back to the Western (Libyan) Desert. It fought at Tobruk and Benghazi during the third Axis advance in May 1942. It took part in the last drive of the Axis Army from El Alamein in November, 1942, it smashed the Mareth defences, won the victory of Wadi Akarit, and entered Tunis. It had also the satisfaction of capturing von Arnim.

Victoria Crosses are being very sparingly awarded in this war. But two of the officers of the Fourth Indian Division got the coveted honour;—Captain Premindra Singh Bhagat and Subedar Richpal Ram (posthumously).

The Fourth Indian Division has blasted Mussolini's New Roman Empire off the map.

GOODBYE COMINTERN!

Born at the close of the last war and dissolved when the end of the present war draws near, the Comintern synchronised in itself the hopes and fears of a generation between two wars. Today while there are jubiliations in some camps, there are plenty of regrets elsewhere at the recession of the ideal of a world revolution.

During its existence of over two decades the Third International had swayed world opinion violently and variously. The Axis was so obsessed with it that they had formal anti-Comintern pacts and the renewal of these pacts was the basis of Axis foreign policy till 1939, when Hitler retraced his steps and entered into a short-lived pact of non-aggression with Russia. In other countries, America notably, the Third International was looked on with considerable suspicion. In both Britain and America national Labour and Trade Union organisations were openly hostile to Comintern-directed Communist parties. The Russo-German war and the alliance between Russia and other members of the United Nations did not materially change the attitude of the latter towards the Third International. Its abolition might be calculated to assuage feelings of fear and distrust in some of these quarters.

Superficially the Fascist powers in their hour of defeat have scored an ideological triumph because their greatest dread and enemy, the Communist International, has performed a voluntary dissolution. More deeply assessed, the action has been merely the formal winding up of, to present seeming, an embarrassing institution. Except for partial successes in China and Spain, Comintern as an international body planning for social revolution has had only failures. In either country armed intervention by foreign powers lost Communism all the fresh grounds it had won. As an apex organisation for propaganda and preparation it was surely useful, but both in China and Germany the Communist movements could be largely or effectively countered because

Russian help through an invasion could not be forthcoming.

Undoubtedly the Comintern had been a source of great hope to oppressed peoples all over the world, but its anomalous position as the foreign office of a socialist society and yet not the foreign office of the Socialist Republic had led to its increasing atrophy. When Litvinoff came out to western Europe to win trading and working acquaintances, if not friends, for Soviet Russia, and Stalin topped Trotsky, the Comintern had started becoming a misfit. On the signing of the Soviet-German pact the Comintern was delegated to a place inferior to that of the Soviet Foreign Office. The necessity for the preservation of the only socialist state was more urgent than carrying on the standard of a nebulous world revolution. Dissolution was inevitable.

The cross of world revolution has been too heavy a burden for either the Comintern or the Soviet state to bear. Yet it would be wholly wrong to construe that world Communism is a war casualty. Freed from the habit of looking to Moscow for help and initiative as also from being treated as Soviet spies, Communists in different countries might now become more active. Also the consequential disappearance of the psychology of only caring for the reports they made to Moscow, might encourage Communist parties to more realistic organisation.

Still while bidding the Comintern goodbye we cannot escape questioning ourselves: Can Communism be ever achieved through parliamentary means, which seem to be the only option now? Who shall now lead the band of the oppressed peoples of the world to strike up the *Internationale*? And who shall now give the cry 'Workers and Peasants of the World Unite'?

MAKING WHOOPEE

To-day, Saturday, the 29th May, has been a red letter day for us. It is one of the rare days on which our editorial luck is in the ascendant. We are lark-happy with the feeling that the free pass to the Promised Land is almost in our pocket. Without being perfectly certain of God being in His heaven, we are in a position

to assert that all is right with the world. Sitting in our unromantic editorial sanctum, with the temperature shooting up to 108°F, our thoughts are of springtime and daffodils and young birds chirping on dewy lawns. But for the handicap imposed by years and nature, we would have been frisking and gambolling like a lamb to give vent to the joy that is in our hearts. Through the window in front of us, the dusty Kadamkuan road looks pretty as a pre-war Christmas magazine cover. The group round the street corner hydrant seems to be composed wholly of Peris, Hebes, snow-maidens, sylphs, undines, Nymphs, Naiads, Graces, *Apsaras* and *Kinnaris*. We have a feeling that we will have to spend the the major part of the day signing a pile of cheques on the back and none on the front. Our readers may be wondering what has happened to make us so chirpy this morning. What has happened is really too sweet to believe. It is more remote from possibility than squaring the circle or arson in the Ganges. A money-order for Rs. 23 and annas 3 came to us this morning. The postman forked out 2 ten-rupee and 3 one rupee notes and while we were expecting to get the inevitable postage stamps for 3 annas, he produced before our surprise-bulged eyes, 3 one anna nickel coins! It is for the first time in many months that the post office has given out metallic discs to anybody and *we* have been singled out for this rare good luck. Verily, it is not jam tomorrow, but real, good, solid small coin to-day. Not *apres la guerre fini* but to-day, the 29th day of May. No wonder that we are bubbling over with that Kruschen feeling that impels one to jump across tables or slide down bannisters. We feel that we are more than a match to-day in geniality to George Robey, in optimism to a company promoter, in bonhomie to a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. So long, small coins were the stars that we looked up to as we walked through life but invariably postage stamps were the coal holes that we fell into. To have three real small coins in one's pocket, to jingle, press or rub, according to the fancy of the moment, is almost as good as being camped over the shaft of a gold mine.

Notes & Comments

Improving on Mr. Jinnah

A certain Mrs. I. J. Pitt of Cambridge is a claimant for the mantle of Miss Catherine Mayo. She has not the ability to write a fair-sized volume of the size of *Mother India*, but has only written a small booklet, "A study of the Muslim and Hindu Mind and its reaction to Politics". In this booklet she says: "The mental texture of the Muslim is Western. The Muslim can understand the British mind and methods in a way impossible except in very rare cases to the Hindu."

Whatever virtues Mrs. Pitt may possess, we regret to say that originality is not one of them. Readers of Miss Mayo's book will remember that the above is a mere paraphrase of a statement that appears in *Mother India*.

Mr. Jinnah talks of a Muslim Nation of 100,000,000. (Really 80,000,000, according to the last Census, but one hundred million sounds much nicer). Mrs. Pitt has gone one better; she has discovered an altogether different mental texture in the Muslims living in India from those of the Hindus. This really means that not only are the Muslims a different nation but a different race from the Hindus. We are expecting to hear some other Miss or Mrs. declaring that Hindus and Muslims are different biological species, *Homo Islamensis* and *Homo Hindensis*.

A Matter For Serious Consideration

Among the most sensational news of this week must be ranked the banning by the Government of India of "import into British India of live fungi likely to damage crops" from September 1, 1943.

As the news report is so disappointingly brief, one cannot help a crowd of questions coming to the mind.

Who are the people who import fungi that are injurious to crops? Why should not such fungi-importers be punished under the D. I. Rules? Who are the people abroad who export crop-destroying fungi to India? What is the price of fungi per maund? As the Government ban comes into effect from Sept. 1, 1943, will not the fungi-importing fraternity hoard lakhs of maunds of live fungi between now and the end of August? Are we so poor in fungi that we have to depend on foreign fungi? Why can't we be self-

supporting in the matter of fungi at least?

After writing all this, it strikes us that we have not the foggiest notion of what fungi is or are.

The Honourable Japanese

It is no matter of surprize that German-Japanese relations are decidedly frigid at present. No more do we hear of "Our great Japanese Allies" or "the Honorary Aryans", but there is a lot about "Eastern Barbarism" instead, in German propaganda broadcasts. Japan has done nothing to pull Hitler's chestnuts out of the fire, she has been more intent in lining her own lair. She was expected to attack Russia from the east to relieve pressure on Stalingrad. She was to have invaded India to divert the British forces from the Middle East and North Africa. She should have kept the American army, navy and air-fleet in the Pacific so engaged as to prevent the Americans from taking any serious part in the war in Africa and Europe. She has not been able to do any of these things. Well might Dr. Goebbels sing:

"We would make a lovely pair,

If you would only care;

But you are a frigidaire,

Don't be like that."

Franco-Germans

According to a Swiss report, Hitler has demanded of Laval that all Frenchmen between the ages of 18 and 40 be sent to Germany. If true, it would mean that defence of France is the sole concern of the German Army there and that young Frenchmen should look after the home front in Germany. If such an arrangement is continued for some time, a new Franco-German race would come into existence in both countries, solving for all future the old conflict between the Latin and the Teuton.

Theory and Practice

The Government of the United Provinces are apparently no believers in the popular maxim "Example is better than precept". As a matter of fact they are believers in its opposite "Precept is better than example" as is evident from a copy of the U. P. Government Gazette recently received by us. The Gazette is printed on one side of the paper only, the other side is left blank except for 16 lines of admonition in Urdu and 16 lines in Hindi: "Write on both sides of the paper." We have seldom seen a better example of "Do as I say, but don't do as I do". We shall not be surprised if in the

public parks of Allahabad or Lucknow Grow More Food is spelt with small flowering shrubs.

A Problem And Its Solution

A correspondent has pointed out that the communiqués issued by all the fighting Powers in this war agree in one respect. Whenever there is an aerial fight, "our" losses ("our" may refer to British, German, Russian, Italian, Chinese or American) are always half, or even less, of those of the "enemy".

The explanation of this is quite simple: "our losses" are counted in the number of planes that fail to return to the base. So, like maternity, it is a matter of fact. The loss to the enemy is largely conjectural and so, like paternity, it is a matter of opinion.

Fewer Bachelors

Youths of Bengal are apparently less eager for bachelorship this year than they were in the last. The figures, 7505 in 1942 and only 6923 in 1943, include both the Arts and Science groups.

A Dilemma

In his presidential speech to the Obstetric and Gynaecological section of the All-India Medical Conference, Dr. Baman-das Mukherjee regretted the appalling morbidity and mortality among our women and children.

It is certainly deplorable, but in a country where the population increases by 15% in 10 years, a low rate of mortality would not be a happy prospect either.

Fairy Story Plus Penny Dreadful

According to the Berlin Radio, there was a heavy air-raid on Calcutta on 27th April last. "The Japanese bombers concentrated on industrial targets and blew up two munition works in Howrah. This is a serious blow to Wavell. The anti-aircraft batteries in the suburbs and the centre of the city were attacked by Japanese pilots who also destroyed several hangars at the Calcutta aerodrome. Bombs were seen bursting over the railway stations of Howrah and Seal-dah".

No mention is made of the damage to the great hydro-electric power station on the Ganges at Dakhineswar or the destruction of the submarine base at Manicktola.

Truth Does Not Pay

According to a Buenos Ayres message, "the Argentine Consul in Hong Kong, M. Muniz Lavalle has been relieved of his post as a result of a statement he made recently in the U. S. that the United States air-raid on Tokyo had provoked panic amongst the population there". It would have been diplomatic for him to say that the United States air-raid on Tokyo was welcomed by the population there.

The "Great Turks"

M. Sadak, one of the members of the Turkish Press Delegation that recently toured India, has written an article in the *Aksam* of Istanbul, in which we come across the statement "India attained full political and

NATIONAL WAR FRONT

The Tunisian Victory is a curtain raiser to the reconquest of Burma through Rangoon and the great river valleys as certainly as of the storming of Europe

THE "ECONOMIST",
London

administrative unity only under the Turkish Emperors." The fact is that neither the empire of Asoke nor that of Akbar was co-extensive with the British Indian Empire. The interesting thing about M. Sadak's statement is his claim to call the "Moguls" of our history text-books Turks. We think M. Sadak is right. Babar, the first "Great Mogul", was a descendant of Timur Beg (Tamerlane of our history text books) who was the Sultan of Samarkand in Turkestan. Timur's father was the chief of the Turkish tribe of the Berlas. So, perhaps it is more correct to call the "Mogul" emperors of India Turks. The Turks, like the Chinese and the Japanese, belong to the Mongol race but their home was not Mongolia. The Emperors of China or the Mikado of Japan have as much claim to be called Mogul emperors as Akbar or Shah Jehan.

"Mogul" is the Arabic and "Mughal" the Persian form of Mongol. Sir Jadunath Sarkar popularised the latter form in his writings.

The Author Of "Marriage"

It is sad to learn that M. Leon Blum, an ex-Premier of France and the leader of the French Socialists, is now a prisoner in the Nazi Concentration camp in Majdanek, near Lublin, Poland. M. Blum, who is now 71, is a rare combination of a literary genius and a statesman of international repute. He is a fine orator and is better known to the world as a literary critic and the writer of the stimulating book *Le Mariage*, first published in 1907, than as an ex-Premier of France. In 1920, Blum fiercely opposed the French policy of occupation of the Ruhr. His only fault apparently is that he has some Jewish blood in his veins.

Efficiency And Futility

Every country in the world has been talking about growing more food but it is only Great Britain that has been most successful in actually carrying it out into practice. Pre-war Britain produced only $\frac{1}{3}$ of her food requirements annually; now she is producing $\frac{2}{3}$, that is to say, she has doubled her food production. The out-put of food per head in Britain to-day is the highest in the world and in terms of food value is nearly three times as high as Germany's. The increased food output has been achieved with the help of a great increase in

the use of farm machinery, not by shouting slogans, putting up posters, advertising in newspapers, writing articles or delivering lectures.

Nature's Compensations

Mr. Beverley Nichols writing in the *Sunday Chronicle* has said that "India, compared to Britain, is the microbe's paradise."

The microbes do not have it all their own way in India as appears at first sight. Compared to England, our warm climate and the insanitary conditions here are certainly far more favourable to multiplication of microbial life. But Nature has given us enough of brilliant sunlight, one of the most efficient germ-killers. Low temperature and improved sanitation keep down the number of microbes in England. In India, the bright sunlight performs the same function to some extent.

If a microbe were asked to write an essay on "Insolation in India", it would have to draw largely on passages in Mr. Jinnah's speeches where he talks of the Congress.

Blazing A Trail

Our congratulations to Mr. Narendra Nath Mukherjee, the well-known founder of *Rasha Chakra*, the peripatetic literary society, on his success in the *Hindi Sahitya Visharad* examination. For many years now, Mr. Mukherjee has been interested in bringing together young literary talents in Hindi and Bengali for a better mutual understanding.

Emotion Clouding Judgment

Speaking on the occasion of the Tunisian victory, Field Marshall Smuts referred to the cleansing of "our continent" of the Axis menace. This has led the *Indian Social Reformer* to ask "whether the South African Premier's use of the possessive pronoun implies the public declaration of South African claims to dominate Africa and how far these claims have been accepted by the United Nations".

Without claiming to hold any brief for the Boer General, we would like to say that this seems almost like trying to read a meaning into an innocent word where none was meant. If we say that so far Germany has not succeeded in gaining a foothold anywhere in "our continent", it does not imply that we are claiming to dominate Asia.

When a paper of such balanced views and sober judgment as the *Indian Social Re-*

former makes a remark of this kind, it only indicates the depth of feeling in India over the South Africans' treatment of Indian colonists there.

Well Done !

According to a Lucknow message of May 11, "A Bania who had collected small coins worth Rs. 18 thousand in an underground cellar was robbed of his hoardings last night when thieves broke into his house."

We don't think we have ever heard of public benefactors doing good to society in the guise of thieves. We are not ambitious and an information that somebody has got even 8 annas worth of small change in his house would be enough to induce us to don a black mask and borrow a jemmy for a midnight excursion.

Neither Prosaic Fact Nor Poetic Truth

Our local daily (May 14) published the news of the death of a retired Deputy Magistrate at the age of 85. "He retired from service in the year 1927 from Monghyr."

Are Government servants allowed to remain in service till they are almost 70 years of age?

We have noticed similar discrepancies before, between the official age of super-annuation and the age given in obituary notices in newspapers. For the sake of *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* it would be best for journalists to give only the age at death or the year in which the late deceased retired from Government service. Both these should not appear side by side in the same paragraph.

Super-Romantic Cows

We all think the Russians to be remarkable people. If there be any doubters in our midst, they will be convinced on reading the following news published in the *Independent India* of May 11:—

"On an average, every collective farm in Kazakhstan owned 1270 head of cattle in 1941 and 15,000 in 1942."

Of the 1270 head of cattle in 1941, about half, 635, must have been bulls. So in one year 635 cows must have given birth to at least 13,730 calves,—that is, each cow gave birth to 22 calves in one year,—a remarkable performance even for Socialist Soviet cows.

All My Eye And Betty

Martin

For commendable ability to look ahead and for long-range

planning, there is nobody to beat our "Grow More Food Movement." In a note issued on May 24, the "Movement" has given precise instructions for propagating *litchee* trees in the country, presumably with a view to increase our food supply. We may be short of rice or wheat to-day, but why worry, we may have plenty of lichis to eat for a month in the dog days of 1950 if we start *litchee* plantations to-day.

Doctors would cordially welcome the idea of people filling themselves with *litchees* at a time of the year when the powers of digestion are at a low ebb.

A Nice Unorthodox Hindu

According to a New York message (May 24) a new canteen for Lascars of merchant marine has recently been opened in New York. "Separate stoves and cooks serve the the Mohammedans and the Hindus. The present cooks are Anwar Alle and Mohamed Hari of Calcutta."

Presumably, Mohamad Hari is the Hindu cook in spite of his Muslim proclivities.

Saving Time

If the Mediterranean be now open for Allied shipping, the time saved by ships in going through the Mediterranean instead of through the Cape route would be as follows: London to Egypt, 25 days; New York to Egypt, 26 days; London to Bombay, 16 days; New York to Bombay, 12 days; London to Freemantle (W. Australia), 4 days; London to Melbourne, 2 days.

Intellectual Acrobatics

A Press communique from New Delhi (May 25) has set at rest all the speculation that was going on in the country "regarding the interpretation of the term 'cotton' as used in the Cotton Forward Contracts and Options Prohibition Order, 1943."

We are now told, to our great relief, that "cotton means cotton generally, and consequently raw cotton in any form and of any kind whatsoever."

Seldom have we seen so much meaning put in so small a word that puzzled so many.

The Tragedy Of Longevity

Born in 1863, Mr. Henry Ford is almost 80 to-day. Words cannot express the shock that he has received at this time of his life at the death of his only son and heir, Edsel Ford (see Behar Herald, April 6), the President of the Ford Motor Company, on May 26, at Detroit after a short illness following a stomach operation.

Birds Of Bihar—III

The Nilkanth Or "Blue Jay"

By S. L. Roy

BY name at least this bird is known to many of my readers and I hope that most have also had ocular evidence of the existence of this bird—unbeautiful when at repose but strikingly beautiful when in flight. He is most in evidence from March till the rains set in because during this period he woos, marries and produces his family, a period when his *elan vital* finds full expression in a life of creative energy.

When he sits on his perch, he does not at all attract attention, because his round ball of a body is of a dull pinkish hue which does not improve his appearance. But when he takes wing, as he often does during this season, the deep blue ribbons on his spreading wings and tail at once show off the striking beauty of his plumage. The suddenness of this change of colours is so startling that some American winter visitors to this country have described him as "the surprise bird." During the breeding period he is very active in the air and his acrobatic gyrations are quite wonderful. He is ordinarily very sedentary-looking and seems to sit and mope on his elevated perch which is generally the top of the trunk of a tall palmyra or a date palm which has decayed and lost its bushy top. Jutting branches of large trees are also his resting places and the passenger in a train will not fail to see him on the telegraph wires along the railway lines.

Though a beautiful bird, he has no voice. His ordinary language is a single sound which hears like "tchok" but during this season of life and vigour he occasionally indulges in a cackling laugh which is quite harsh. The aerial acrobatics he indulges in during this season and his loud discordant shouts are meant to show himself off to the lady *nilkanths* watching from nearby perches, who are led to choose their mates by these performances. The standard of selection is yet unknown to the cutest ornithologist. When you find two *nilkanths* sitting side by side in a branch, you will be quite correct in assuming that the pairing

has been accomplished and the birds have found their seasonal mates for the preservation and continuance of the race. Thereafter ensues a search for the nest where the coming progeny will be reared. This is generally the hole in a tree, preferably near the junction of a large branch. Better still the cavity at the top of the trunk of a tall palm, the top of which has broken off. Some dried grass and feathers are used in the upholstering and therein four white eggs are laid. The babies are hatched out quite naked without any fur or feather on them but in twenty days they assume the dress of their parents and are able to fly about as well as their progenitors—such is their precocity.

To us Indians the *Nilkanth* is a sacred bird. The Hindu will not kill him—and the reason is not far to seek. The Hindu social system enjoins many customs and rituals which are really based either on economic or hygienic grounds. In this case there is an economic reason. This bird eats grasshoppers and many other insects which are a pest to the agriculturist. He is thus a great friend of man. It is also a protected bird and its name occurs in the list of birds enumerated in the gun-licences issued by the Government. He should never be killed. The English bird-student calls it the Indian Roller—the English Roller being much more pale blue and less purple in plumage than our *Nilkanth*. In fact it more resembles the Roller than the jay with which its similarity is superficial. America has no Roller and the large number of Americans who are at present in this country will not fail to be interested in these birds and to them I would quote the advice of Mr. Frank Finn who wrote long ago: "Brother Jonathan can not do better than set to work to supply the deficiency (of Rollers) with a big consignment of our lovely Indian species; for the Roller would not only be a great ornament to the prairies, but a very useful ally in grasshopper plagues."

Japan's Ural Mountains

A common mistake made by many people before Japan's entry into the war was to under-estimate her resources for carrying out a total war against Britain and the United States for a long time. This was due to the fact that most people looked up gazetteers and examined the figures given for the Japanese islands and overlooked the fact that Japan had been actively developing the economic resources of Manchuria during her ten years' occupation of the country. Unlike other territories conquered by Japan, Manchuria has received plenty of capital and machinery in this period,—also the most-favoured-puppet treatment.

Manchuria has been industrialised for the benefit of the Japanese war machine. She has really been treated as an integral part of Japan (just as Algeria was of France) and not as conquered territory to be exploited for the profit of the owner.

Many light industries were bodily transferred from Japan to Manchuria to the benefit of the latter. The principle followed was to treat Manchuria less as a subject state than as a state absorbed within the Japanese body politic.

The policy of regional self-sufficiency which the Soviet applied both in Eastern Siberia and in the Urals was also applied by the Japanese to Manchuria in their two 5-year plans. Manchuria has ample resources in iron and coal. Steel is made in the Showa Steelworks. Iron is manufactured by the Panshibu Coal and Iron Company. The foundry at Erhtaokou is said to manufacture iron of 99.8% purity from ores of Tungpientao. The supply of coal is ample from the fields of Mishan.

Among light metals, the production of the two essentials to war industry,—magnesium and aluminium, have been largely increased. Local copper ores are of low grade, but vigorous attempts have been made to attain self-sufficiency in respect of this metal. Production of non-ferrous metals, lead, zinc and molybdenum (for special steels) have also

been accelerated.

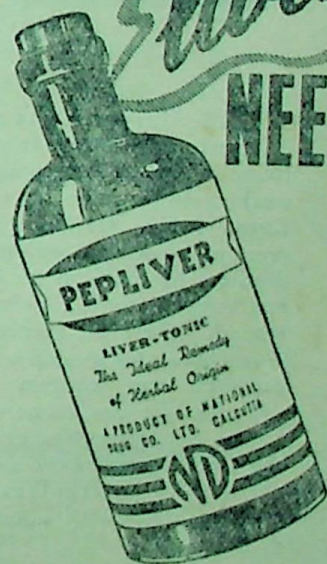
There are two sources of hydro-electricity: the Lake Chingpo Water Power Station and the Fengman Power Station (at Kirin, the place where a well known brand of Japanese beer is made).

The Manchu Electric Company in Kirin manufactures chemicals like carbide. There are plants for the manufacture of motor cars, arms, machinery, ammonium sulphate and soda in Manchuria.

With her vast soya bean crop, Manchuria is expected to play the part of granary to North China and Japan. Industrialisation having caused a shortage of agricultural labour, agricultural machines have been distributed among the farmers. Additional cattle have also been supplied.

In course of time, Japan expects to develop Manchuria as the Russians developed the Ukraine,—a vast food-producing area of mechanised agriculture, dotted with heavy industry.

YOUR
Liver
NEEDS



PEPLIVER



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The sun had just set behind the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas and there was a sudden advent of dusk on the cliffy side of the Kosi. On the sands of the opposite bank and on the tree tops visible in the distance the reflected light of the now invisible sun still lingered. The last ferry of the day had left. Just then a woman came breathless on the ghat along the gully. It was deserted, she could see. Obviously she had come to catch the last boat which had drifted afar down the swift current and was nearing the opposite bank. The disappointment was too much for her; she stood stock still and stared

at the receding boat. The boat touched the opposite bank, the passengers got down and started for their destinations along the different footpaths branching off from the ghat. Having secured the boat the boatmen also went away. After sometime all disappeared in distance and darkness. Silence and darkness descended on the river and it was darker under the shadow of the cliffs. Stars faintly glimmered from the hazy sky of a wintry night. The surface of water now and then quivered. Gusts of chilly wind blew from the north though the cliffs protected the narrow stretch of bank on which the woman was standing. When she recovered

from the first shock of disappointment she started feeling afraid. But there was no escape. She could not for a moment brook the idea of going back. That was unthinkable. She would rather spend the whole night there all alone in cold and darkness than face an infuriated husband.

Well, she will catch the first boat in the morning, she consoled herself. She moved from where she had been standing for her limbs were getting stiff. An upturned boat was lying nearby and by its side a few sheaves of straw. She sat on the hay and reclined her aching back on the curving flank of the boat. She wrapped her *chadar* round herself, folded her arms round her knees and buried her head in her lap to warm herself with her breath. After sometime she felt warmed up and presently started dozing.

She thought she was lying wrapped up in her father's blanket on the *machan* in his field. She was the spoilt child of her father for though a girl she was allowed the exclusive male privilege of keeping her father company on his nightlong vigils over his ripening crops. It was so interesting. They would light a small fire near the *machan* and her father would sit in front of it with her in his lap and smoke an endless chain of *chilams*. It was so cosy there, huddled up against his broad and hairy chest. His body odour did not repel her, it was so much like him—strong and soothing. And then he would tell her stories and now and then when he was either sad or in mood he would sing. She was interested in the stories and loved to hear his manly voice raised in crescendo but she had never succeeded in listening to the end of the story or the song as she would fall asleep. Her father would then lift her up tenderly and put her in the hay on the *machan* and cover her up with his blanket. On some days her father would ask her to lie there quietly as he had some business in the neighbouring hamlet. She knew he went to drink. She would lie awake awaiting his return but never succeeded. She was not afraid of being left there alone as she was perfectly familiar with the surroundings by

A Five-minute Story

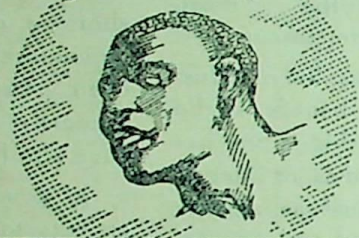
The Man

By Vinay

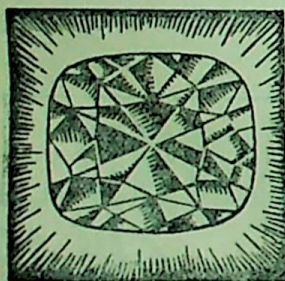
the daylight and thought she could make them out even in darkness...She thought her father had come back, she heard him cough and she felt her back chilly. Perhaps the blanket was pulled too much on one side. Her hand groped back to adjust it but instead of the end of the blanket it encountered some hard and moist object. She woke up with a start and looked around. Well, well, where was she?

She looked around and remembered. It was now completely dark. She could make out a tall human form standing not very far from her. He was not aware of her presence till the movement of her waking up made him sharply turn towards her.

"Who is there?" he queried in a harsh voice. There was no response. He stared hard at her and cautiously moved nearer. "Who are you?" He repeated in a menacing tone. She was seized with a mortal terror. She wanted to get up and run away; but she felt her body paralysed. The man came still nearer, lighted a match and peered towards her in the faint and uncertain light. He could make out a crouching human figure and a pair of terror-stricken eyes trying to look away from him but helplessly staring back into his. The match-stick burned to the end and the man gave an awkward cough and moved a few steps away. "Why are you here? Are you alone?...Do you feel cold?" He asked her trying to unharshen his voice. She wanted to reply but it stuck in her throat. She felt terribly afraid. She had heard of bad people who did mischief to helpless women. She was alone and helpless and completely at his mercy...and he looked so strong...and terrible. Had she arrived at the ghat only a few minutes earlier she would have been nearing her father's home. How glad he would have been at her unexpected visit, she thought in her ignorance. She pitied herself. A great lump rose in her throat and she burst out in



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Or...?

Siinha

stifled sobs. The man startled and moved farther away. She continued to sob and tears freely trickled down her cheeks and she felt a bit relieved.

Meanwhile the man had collected some stray faggots and lighted a fire. Now he came again towards her and invited her to come near the fire and warm herself. Her sobs had died away and she was somewhat composed but she could not reply to him. The man remained standing for some time and scratched his head. He heaved a great sigh and timidly came near her. When taking away his blanket wrapped her with it and retreated.

She had watched his movements with increasing fear and while he was stooping over her she had shuddered as if somebody was going to butcher her. When he went away she wanted to throw away the blanket but could not. Slowly the blanket warmed her and her fear started thawing. Now that the man was shut away to her vision by the blanket she was somewhat reassured too. She remained still in that position enjoying the luxury of the unexpected comfort and could have presently dozed off when she was startled into looking out by a violent fit of coughing. She saw the man sitting near the fire with his back turned towards her. He had only a torn shirt on and a *gamcha* wrapped turban fashion around his head. He was pulling hard at his *chilam* and when the blown out smoke drifted towards her she knew it was *ganja*.

A strong gust of cold wind blew towards her making her automatically cover her face and draw the blanket closer to her body. And then she recalled how cold that man must be feeling sitting there in the open with nothing on him but his shirt. She was still afraid of him but her fear was now cocktailed with a sense of gratitude towards him. The man was coughing again but now she had reconciled to it. And as used to be on her father's *achan* lying alone wrapped

up in her blanket waiting for his return sleep stole on her. Presently she stretched herself on the hay, drew in her knees and was fast asleep before long.

When she woke up the sun was already up. She got up, shook off the sand from her *sari*, arranged her *chadar* and moved away a little leaving the blanket there on the ground. The man stood not far from her and was looking at her with the corners of his eyes. Now in the daylight she could see how he looked and the face which she saw was not reassuring. In fact it looked everything and much more than she had imagined him to be in the night. She was thankful (not to him) that he had done her no mischief. She again looked at him. He was gathering his blanket, put it on his shoulders and went towards the river's side. He looked terrible indeed but he was trying to look mild. The woman's eye could make this out and it slightly tickled her vanity. After all, had he not done a good turn to her. Poor fellow, he must have felt very cold during night; perhaps he did not get any sleep: his eyes looked so red.

A few people had by now arrived at the ghat and the boatmen on the opposite bank could be seen unfastening the boat. One of the waiting female passengers looked curiously at her and she understood the question in her glance. Her woman's common-sense made her alert. She quickly moved towards the man till she was immediately beside him. When the boat came she invited the man to assist her boarding it.

The two sat a little apart from others and crossed the river in silence. Upon getting down she waited for him to start and when he moved on she followed in his steps. They were the only persons going by that footpath; the rest had taken other routes. He walked in silence trying to walk slow, off and on timidly looking back to see that she was coming. After walking for over a mile they came to a wood and in front of them the path branched off in two different directions. At the crossway he halted and turned back. There was nobody

to be seen anywhere but now she did not feel afraid of him. The man asked her as to which way she was going. She pointed out, and named her village. He gave a start at the name of the village. "I am very sorry, I can't escort you there," he blurted out and added almost shamefacedly: "My name is Malkha Singh, and for last two years police are after me. If I go your way people will recognise me and though nobody in particular has grudge against me in your village, somebody might like to earn a couple of thousands." She underwent a sudden metamorphosis at the name Malkha Singh. Malkha Singh—he was a notorious robber of the *ilaka*, the terror of *sahukars* and dismay of the police. And she had been

alone with him the whole night. He might have done mischief to her, murdered her. Lucky, nothing happened. She was terribly afraid and felt aggrieved at having to remain with him alone, with the notorious robber, last night. He had stopped speaking and was watching with dismay at the changed expression on her face. He did not know what to say or do. And she hated him. What business he had to come to the ghat last night. And she had been walking with him, the robber. She swiftly moved away and started running along the path leading towards her village. She did not look back and did not stop even for breath till she felt she had outdistanced his vision. Then she stopped to take breath and hated him.

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Review

Inspite of four years of war M/S M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Ltd. (14, College Square, Calcutta), have brought out a better and bigger edition of their "Hindusthan Year Book & Whos' who".

On a casual survey we have the following suggestions to offer—All the various wavelengths, used in Indian radio stations, according to weather conditions, ought to have been mentioned in the chapter on Radio in India; The list of newspapers and periodicals should have been made more complete; In a previous review we had pointed out that things Indian and general should not be huddled together. The publishers have failed to take note of it; perhaps to save labour. To be methodical lists are to be given in an alphabetical order; Is MRA, a code for a hate-free, fear-free and greed-free world, an Oxonian product?

Pointlets

The Telegraph Department will do well not to remove the telegraph office located at Kalyani in Muzafferpore.

x x x

Licences have already been granted for the sale of standard cloth (though there are no signs of that commodity) to cloth dealers who are themselves, it is believed, capable of creating black markets.

x x x

The Oudh & Tirhut Railway have instructed officers to report to district officers any cases of maltreatment of civilians by military personnel within Railway bounds.

AUTHENTICITY

"The Nazis have called in Japanese experts to organise defences in Aegean Islands", states the Istanbul correspondent of the *News Chronicle*, quoted by the London Correspondent of the *Hindu*. The above has been reported by the Madras correspondent of *Independent India* and forwarded by the Delhi correspondent of the *Behar Herald*.

Modern Thought

To The Editor, Behar Herald

Sir,—Which way shall the world win the peace? This question disturbs most thinking men today. Humanity might not achieve any startling social, political or economic change, but if after a protracted and devastating war it returns to the same way of thinking as it had followed in the pre-war years, the war would have been fought in vain.

How shall we think now and in the years that succeed the war? I am not suggesting that we shall have a dogmatic creed and none be allowed to stray outside. But we cannot ignore that the chaos of the Twenties and the Thirties was due largely to out-of-date thinking. I am a common man, living in quite mean and uninspiring surroundings, and my education was aimed more at enabling me to earn a livelihood, than to make me a thinker. I am not able to do either satisfactorily; the wages I earn provide me very little more than the barest necessities, and since inside my skull a few ideas, adventitious to my employment-aimed education, have entered I find it hard to reconcile that the world is in the prime of its health. Apart from the war, the diseases of human society are manifold and I don't see them as people a generation earlier saw it: Political dependence, untouchability, communalism, prohibition of widow remarriage, child marriage, and our position as a debtor country. I have purposely cited Indian viewpoints, for they loom large in our estimation of things.

I, however, put the world's problems a little differently, and India's social evils find a place of themselves. The world has not outgrown its ideas of property and ownership and control which it found necessary soon after humanity learnt the use of fire. All social evils proceed from this out-of-date thinking. The adjuncts to this out-of-date thinking which cling to us are superstitions, idealized superstitions in the form of religion, theories of racial or occupational or sex superiority, the fetish of sex purity and many more. Most of them are at root economic conveniences idealized into moral institutions.

I am aware you are suspecting me of being a Marxist. I am of some sort, but I wouldnt say that to my scepticism harrassed mind I find Marxism by itself wholly satisfying. I have, however, known friends who have found it complete; there are others who have found Freud as completely informative; there are still others who have an answer to everything biological or even otherwise in Darwin; and some people say that the social implications that shall follow from the humanising of the theory of Relativity and other discoveries of Modern Physics shall in itself solve all our problems. And there are still others who believe that if Edison can be amply interpreted through Fords and Kaisers, the world will cease to be the awkward place it is to-day. They say that the best thing to do is to telescope the standard of living and then contrary to the ways of handling any telescope to push at one stroke the lower portion of this telescope a good deal forward, by raising the minimum standard of living very high.

Some of the above are only philosophical remedies, others practical means only and some with both philosophical and practical aspects. The point is not, what they are or are they individually a full and complete answer to our doubts and our difficulties. Most probably the world shall arrive at its best health by a judicious synthesis of Marx, Freud, Darwin, Einstein, Edison. Ford and Kaiser for synthesis is the soul of the consolidation of progressive thinking and theorisation.

The most important thing about it all is that there is progressive thinking, we have found out ideas to overthrow the ideas of old. But are these ideas really as much assimilated by us as they should, being of the present age rather than of antiquity. How many of us do think of the theory of evolution in the same manner as the large number of people do about the Biblical theory about origins. We know Darwin as the intellectual curiosity who gave a monkey ancestry to men and women. We know Freud

as the intellectual pervert who suspected improper sex relationships between parents and children. We know Einstein as a mathematical genius and hedge behind his mathematics to hide ourselves from the knowledge he wants to give. We know Ford as the man with the millions; Edison has the best reputation as the telephone boy who climbed up to be a great inventor. Part of the responsibility can be laid on biographers who have extolled careerism over contributions to human life, to biographers who when they have tried to be human have only sought to emphasise abnormalities of sex relationships. So great has been the influence of careerism that even Upton Sinclair has to portray a successful career in his *Mountain City* in order to put in a word or two about socialism.

And it is here that you come in. Could you not take some lead and let us have discussions and forums on modern thought? Could not a study circle be organised under your aegis? For surely you have always had the intellectual leadership among all journals of this province.— Yours etc.

Progressive

Oliver Wendell Holmes, asked to express briefly his idea of happiness, said: "Four feet on a fire place fender."

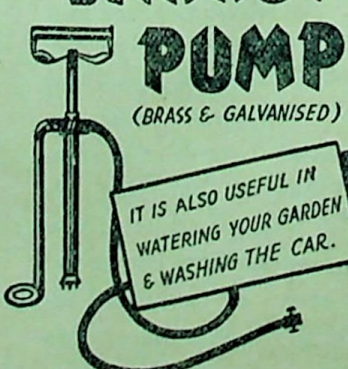
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APPLYING PHYSICAL STIMULI

Various places might have been selected for an Allied landing in Europe after the liquidation of the African campaign. Sicily, Sardinia and Southern Italy were the most conveniently situated as there is a heavy concentration of men, materials, ships and aeroplanes in Algeria and Tunisia at present. The only argument against the selection of Sicily, Sardinia or Southern Italy was their obviousness,—the element of surprize was lacking, but the way in which docks, aerodromes, ports and other military objectives are being systematically smashed everyday in Sicily and Sardinia leaves little doubt that the obvious is going to happen. The American Air Force is carrying on precision bombing by day, the R. A. F. has specialised in mass bombing by night. Both are valuable; greater weight of bomb loads can be carried at night, greater precision in hitting selected targets is possible by day. As Mr. Churchill humorously said "There is nothing like 24-hour service".

The names of places bombed since May 12, some repeatedly, would make a formidable list. Confining ourselves only to those places whose names can be located on the map, Cagliari, Carloforte, San Pietro Island, Piana Island, Iglesias, Villacidro, Macomer, Alghero, Sassari, Porto Torres, Asinara Island, Caprera Island, Golfo degli Aranci, Terranova, La Maddalena and Arbatax in Sardinia; Egadi Island, Trapani, Palermo, Messina, Catania, Melili, Syracuse, Pozzatto, Comiso, Licata, Porto Empedocle, Castelvetro, Marsala, in Sicily; Reggio di Calabria, San Giovanni, Catanzaro, Ostia, Lido di Roma, Civitavecchia, Grosseto, Livorno (the corrupted Anglicized form of the name; appeared as Leg Horn in some papers) in Italy are among the places that have received the attention of Allied bombers during the last fortnight. The islands of Pantellaria and Lampedusa, Mussolini's Malta, are never forgotten by the Allied bombers. Out of the way places like Preveza in western Greece, the island of Milo in the Aegean Sea, Cape Malo, south of Greece also have received attention. We have not been able to locate many of the newly constructed aerodromes in the two islands whose names appear everyday in the papers as having been bombed.

Headline Fare

The War

After the severe fighting ending in the Axis debacle in Tunisia a lull has set in land warfare in the main theatre of war. But indications are that it is only a lull. Though there has been no authoritative pronouncement to the effect, unofficial reports regard the present period as one of preparation for the next logical step in the war against the European Axis—invasion of European mainland. With the Allied Navy once more supreme in the Mediterranean, fairly powerful in the North Sea and the Channel, decisive Allied air superiority and huge massing of troops on the British Isles, the stage seems to have been set for an Allied landing on the Continent. When and where it will come need not be speculated upon, in the fitness of things it should come as a pleasant surprise to the peoples of United Nations and to the discomfiture of the Axis High Commands. If a new front is opened in Europe continuity and surity of free flow of supplies and reinforcements from the arsenal of democracy across the Atlantic is guaranteed as the U-boat menace to the ocean lanes has been greatly reduced and is likely to be mastered as the result of successful anti-Doenitz offensive. The U-boat sinkings have had a record low in May.

Meanwhile the air offensive against the Axis sinews of war on the Continent continues unabated. The air offensive is in its third week and there is no sign of decrease in its intensity. On the Mediterranean sea-board, the R. A. F. and U. S. A. A. F. continue to pound objectives on the islands of Pantellaria, Sicily and Sardinia as also on the Italian mainland. In western Europe the highly industrialised Ruhr area has been singled out with Dortmund, Dusseldorf and Essen as the main objectives in the week under review.

During the last few weeks neutral capitals have been doling out news of huge preparations by either side on the Russian front for a regular summer offensive. For the present whatever fighting there has been is of local importance. The Russian drive in the Kuban seems to have spent itself up after breaking through the main defences of the Black Sea port of Novorossisk. In the same region, German counter-attacks to regain the lost ground have met with no success either. The

Soviet Air Force is scoring signal success in the air battles in the Kuban skies. Further up on the Middle Donetz the German bid to capture an important bridgehead at Lisichansk was successfully frustrated.

On the otherwise eternally potential, but moribund Far Eastern front, the Allies have scored a fairly important victory against the Japs. A year back the Japs had captured the island of Attu in the Aleutians. On May 11, U. S. troops landed on the island and have within two weeks dislodged the Japs from the place, the victory was achieved as the result of U. S. mastery of the air overhead and control of the surrounding waters which enabled them to establish superiority in men and metal on the ground. In the south-west Pacific the Allies made the most outstanding air raid in the area—on the most important Japanese base in the Solomons after Guadalcanar, the base of Lae. The Japs made small and unsuccessful attack on a north Australian point.

While the RAF and the USAAF continue to hammer at the Jap objectives in Burma the enemy attempted raids on Cox's Bazar and Chittagong. In the course of the latter raid the raiders suffered signal defeat as out of 31 planes participating in the attack 17 were destroyed or damaged. On the ground only patrol activity is reported from the Arakan front.

India

'Why does he not write to me?' had queried Mr. M. A. Jinnah, in the course of his 90-minute presidential address at the last session of the A. I. Muslim League in Delhi. And he—Mahatma Gandhi—in response wrote but the note was intercepted by the King's representative at the imperial capital. Two more reasons for the interception—other than the one advanced in the Government comunique of 26th last—are confidentially whispered: 1. Lord Linlithgow is jealous. So long as 'My Dear Mr. Gandhi' is his

guest he insists on being his sole correspondent. 2. Close on the heels of his inquiry the Quade Azam had thrown out a challenge—not off record—who is there who can prevent him from doing so? The Viceroy accepted the challenge. He did not keep mum over it. The fact of the Mahatma having written the letter and its contents also have been made public, perhaps for the benefit of Mr. Jinnah. The Mahatma has written the letter and the Government have prevented its being delivered to the addressee—Mr. Jinnah. And the reaction of the fiery Jinnah was a statement that does not deserve to be treated seriously. To be very mild it is lame. Thanks to the blindness of his followers this exposure does not threaten the leadership of Quade Azam.

On the eve of his Kashmir holiday Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has come in for another stunt. He and five others have issued a statement questioning the advisability of the continued detention of Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders without trial and demanding their trial by an unimpeachably impartial tribunal on the charge of fifth column views, the charges—which have been advanced by New Delhi off and on. The anxiety of the gallant knight of the British Empire is to provide the Government with a moral basis for its action. The Britisher has taken the hint and the Secretary of the State for India solemnly withdrew the charge of being pro-Jap. against Mahatma Gandhi during the last session of the House of Commons. Now that the charges, which had remained unsubstantiated, have been formally withdrawn, the judicial sense of Sir Tej need no more feel outraged. As for the continued detention, a Privy Councillor must be knowing that the 'Reasons of State' provide a pretty tough moral basis. Sir T. B. Sapru can now enjoy Gulmarg with his conscience at peace for the time-being.

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This India

By Mallinatha

Pegging Our Claim

"A sum of rupees 2 crores has been set apart for the propagation of the ideals and cult of Mr. R. K. Dalmia's "Society of One."—The Searchlight, May 17.

We deserve a share of this as we have always cared for number one more than for anything else.

Overdoing It

"The Bey of Tunis has gone to Madagascar with his 25 wives."—New York message, May 16.

Even paradise would be wilderness enow with such *entourage*.

Modern Nomenclature

"King Emmanuel 713 abdicates?"—Headlines, The Searchlight, May 15.

Kings are now named like the drugs M & B 693, Salvar-san 606...

A Topsy Turvy World

"Shipping Losses In Pacific. U. S. Fleet Enjoy Better 'han Japanese"—Headlines, The Hindusthan Standard, May 18.

To enjoy losses, to be sorry over one's gains are new moral virtues.

Enforced Drought

"Some parts of Patna is (*sic*) practically dry in respect of sugar."—The Indian Nation, May 19.

Neither are we wet in respect of coal.

With An Artist's Distaste For Detail

"The Congress now claimed to be the sole arbiter of the country's destiny."—The Hindusthan Standard, May 23.

A more urgent claim is to be saved from its friends.

No Income Tax In Kingdom Come

"Mr. Radha Kant Saran, ex-Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax, gave a very interesting lecture the other day at Samastipur on the subject of "How people enjoy life after death."—The Searchlight, May 24.

Many people are prevented from enjoying life before death by the ex-colleagues of Mr. R. K. Saran.

A Diary Of The North African War

The Beginning

1940

10th June 1940. Italy declared war on France. 15th June. France capitulated to Germany. The fall of France created a precarious situation for Britain in Egypt where plans of joint defence had been based on Anglo-French collaboration. The sudden collapse of France left wide gaps in British defence arrangements in Africa and the Middle East. General Wavell, who commanded the Middle East Army found himself in a difficult position.

Italy had a vast, well-equipped modern army of 300,000 in Libya under Marshal Graziani.

First Axis Advance

From Libya, the Italians pushed into Egypt, reached Sidi Barrani. The British troops had to evacuate and retire to defensive positions far behind their original forward lines.

First Axis Retreat

Despite inferior numbers, Wavell attacked the Italians.

December 11, 1940. Italians defeated in the battle of Sidi Barrani and put to rout.

1941

5th January, 1941: Bardia captured. 22nd January: Tobruk capitulated. 12th February; Benghazi occupied. The entire coast-line of Libya came into British hands. Many Italian generals were killed, more captured. Marshal Graziani had more than 250,000 picked troops ready for occupation of Egypt and the Suez Canal. This army was completely wrecked, nearly a lakh and a half Italians surrendered.

Second Axis Advance

As part of their spring offensive against the vital centres of British defence in the Near and Middle East, German troops were slowly and imperceptibly infiltrating into North Africa through the port of Tripoli in March 1941.

April 6, 1941. Germany invaded Yugo-Slavia and Greece.

Responding to the call for help from Yugo-Slavia and Greece, British troops from Libya had to be diverted to the European mainland. Taking advantage of this weakness, the

Germans forced their way from the west and captured Benghazi and Bardia (13th April). Tobruk was besieged.

Second Axis Retreat

November 18th. British offensive begun by the 8th Army.

November 22nd. Tobruk garrison relieved.

November 23rd. Bardia taken by British.

December 20th. Derna and Mekili pass to British hands.

December 25th. Benghazi occupied.

1942

January 17th. Axis garrison at Halfaya surrendered. The whole of Cyrenaica upto Benghazi was cleared of Axis troops.

Lull during February, March and April.

Third Axis Advance

In May, Rommel, substantially reinforced, launched a big scale offensive.

21st June. Tobruk surrendered.

29th June. Mersa Matruh was evacuated.

General Auchinleck took command and Rommel's forces were halted at El Alamein, only 60 miles from Alexandria, the British naval base in Egypt.

In August, General Alexander succeeded General Auchinleck as C.-in-C. of Middle East.

Third Axis Retreat

November 1. The VIII Army under General Montgomery launched an offensive.

November 7. 140,000 American and British troops landed in various points of Morocco and Algeria, with complete equipment. The VIII Army continued to push and the Axis troops made a hasty retreat. Mersa Matruh was recaptured.

November 13th. Tubruk retaken for the third time.

November 17th. Derna and Mekili captured.

November 20th; Benghazi evacuated by Axis.

The British First Army, under General Anderson, the American Fifth Army under General Eisenhower, and the French forces started a simultaneous attack on the Axis forces in Tunisia, from the west, and their advanced units reached the country round Tunis and Bizerte

by the middle of November. The Axis had landed large numbers of men and much equipment in Tunisia by troop-carrying planes. The Allied progress from the west was halted.

1943

The Eighth Army had in the meantime continued its victorious progress begun in November.

15th January. Buerat captured. 23rd January. Tripoli occupied.

After this, completing the capture of Libya, the VIII Army entered Tunisia and began its attack on the Mareth Line (March 26—29). On April 6, Wadi Akarit, at the north end of the Gabes Gap was cleared of Axis troops.

On 13th April, Enfidaville was captured and the remaining 2 lakhs of Germans and Italians were confined to the north-west corner of Tunisia, surrounded by Allied armies and subjected to constant air attacks.

May 7th. American troops entered Bizerte.

British 1st and 8th Armies entered Tunis.

Act V. Scene Last

May 12. The Axis troops were ordered not to continue any further resistance.

Von Arnim surrendered.

Curtain Falls

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Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

By Shibendra Narayan

Twenty-eight years a prisoner—fourteen of these spent in Andamans—Vinayak Damodar Savarkar whose 61st birthday was celebrated this week is one of the foremost exponents of militant politics which in this country has been only associated with much younger names.

As a student in London he was charged with conspiring against the British rule in India. Later apprehended by British police hounds on a romantic voyage to India, Savarkar had to escape to French territory. He was however handed over to the British authorities by a French gendarme who had not very clear idea of International Law. Savarkar's arrest went up to the International Court at The Hague, but Savarkar failed to secure release.

The following 28 years, Savarkar was confined in cells introspecting on the renaissance of the Hindu nation. No one expected him to survive the long imprisonment, but his will carried him through, and in May 1937 when the world had almost forgotten him Savarkar walked out of jail gate in western India and walked to leadership much quicker than anybody else has done in this country. The Congress and the Congress Socialists both expected him to join their ranks, but Savarkar who had learnt his patriotism from Sivaji's tales went straight to the Hindu Mahasabha and overnight transformed it from a largely ineffectual organisation, playing second fiddle most of the time to the Congress, to a vigorous political party fighting a three-front struggle against the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League. Frequently his Mahasabha has influenced Congress policy too.

He brought the introspection of his 28 years of lonely prison life on to the question of re-creating the Hindu nation. He expressed his analysis of history in his presidential address at the Ahmedabad session of the Mahasabha as follows:

"But each time we rose and tided them over.

"The Greeks under Alexander the Great came conquering the world but they could

not conquer Hindusthan. Chandragupta rose and we drove the Greeks back inflicting crushing defeats on them, military and cultural. Then centuries after, the Huns came on us like an avalanche. All Europe and half of Asia lay at their feet. They smashed the Roman Empire to pieces. But after some two centuries of life and death struggle against them, we vanquished them in the end under our Vikramaditya the Great. The Shakas also fared no better.....

"Where are those of our enemies—the Huns and the Paithans and the Shakas today? Their very names are forgotten! Gone, effaced from the face of Hindusthan and the world as well. The virility and the staying out power of our race triumphed over them all.

"Then centuries after Mohammedans invaded Hindusthan and carried everything before them. Their kingdom and empires seemed to reign supreme. Though Hindus were divided and disintegrated, suffered defeats and courted humiliations, but for full six hundred years throughout the Muslim ascendancy they carried on a life and death struggle to regain their national honour and glory. At last the Sikh sword in the north, Marhattas in the south and the Rajputs in the central Hindusthan completely shattered the Moghul Empire and re-established Hindu sway all over Hindusthan.

"In the meanwhile, before we could recover from the struggle of centuries with the Muslims, the English faced us and won on every point. We could not even find time to consolidate what we had heroically snatched from the Muslims and fell an easy prey to the British sword. But long afterwards, once again the people of Hindusthan rose against the British domination. This time they suffered a heavy defeat and Hindusthan went completely under the British sway.

"But now....."

In his strange adventurous career, Savarkar who was resurrected after virtual political death by his will, symbolises the will and force that shall resurrect Hindusthan.

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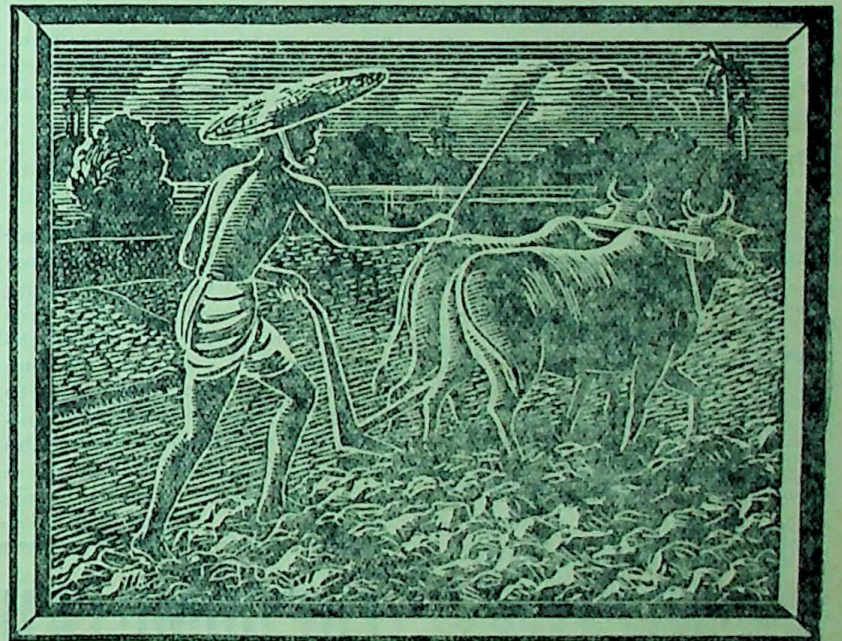
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Banking Practice

By Amiya Bhushan Ghosh

Although of recent growth the development of banking in India has been rather rapid. Not to speak of bigger towns and cities there is hardly any municipal area where one or more branch office of a bank is not found now-a-days. This is certainly a sign of the economic progress of our country; for industry and commerce, mainly on which economic development of a country depends, are themselves fostered by a progressive banking system.

It is to be regretted, however, that regular banking practices are not uniformly followed by different banks and often by branch offices of the same bank. This drawback may be due to either that the importance of the technicalities of banking practices are not fully realised or that there is want of adequate number of qualified employees who can be depended upon to follow the correct practice. Perhaps both the reasons are there.

The Indian Institute of Bankers is the only institution which has been imparting practical as well as theoretical education in Banking for about 15 years. The Imperial Bank of India and the foreign banks and some of the bigger Indian banks have been taking advantage of the benefits offered by that institution by encouraging the members of their staff to get qualified by passing the Institute's Examination. Bengalee bankers, however, seem still not to have much appreciated the value of technical qualification in the working and development of banking. While we find the number of banks and branches increasing by leaps and bounds there is hardly any tendency to be found for the proper training of efficient assistants for running these establishments. Of course, thanks to the large scale unemployment among the intelligentsia, there is no dearth of educated employees who can manage to carry on with the ordinary routine work of an office. But as they are lacking in specialised knowledge, important points affecting the legal protection of a bank cannot be expected to be decided by them to the best interest of the institution they serve.

Anyone having experience of the working of branches of Indian banks must have noticed the callous disregard with which the provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act and banking practices are over-looked. While in some cases essential formalities are done away with, unnecessary precautions are taken in matters which can be safely passed unnoticed. For example a current account is often allowed to be opened without the party being properly introduced, while a bearer cheque or an order cheque with a correct endorsement will be found to be branded with stamps like "Payee's account will be credited on realisation", "Endorsement guaranteed" etc. Sometimes order cheques with regular endorsements are returned by the paying banks under the objection "Endorsement requires Bank's guarantee". The writer was once told by the branch manager of a reputed Bengalee bank that he always insisted upon the endorsement on order cheques being guaranteed by the collecting bank. This is purely a case of misconception of the responsibilities of the paying banker and causes unnecessary inconvenience.

The treatment of bank drafts appear to present a formidable problem before many a bank employee. Some banks require the payee of a draft to be identified before making payment to him. In order to secure themselves against possible loss they even require the issuing office of their banks to have the drafts crossed before issuing them. These annoying

precautions are absolutely unnecessary. For section 85A of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 clearly provides that "Where any draft purports to be endorsed by or on behalf of the payee, the bank is discharged by payment in due course". As regards the effects of crossing on a bank draft the law does not seem to make any clear provision. The question whether the law regarding crossed cheques should apply to bank drafts, as well, has not been satisfactorily dealt with by Mr. M. L. Tanan, who holds generally that according to the Indian law a bank draft is also a cheque. The very fact that a separate section (85-A) had to be added to the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 to afford protection to bankers implies the assumption that bank drafts are not always treated as cheques. The English law was ammended leaving no ambiguity on this point. The Indian law should also be explicit on this matter.

But all these questions relating to the practices and law of banking require to be thoroughly discussed among the employees of different banks through a proper organ. Opinion of the Indian Institute of Bankers on the ambiguous or controversial points may be sought for. Efficiency is bound to be improved and work simplified if the employees are encouraged to study and discuss the various questions raised in the course of their day-to-day activities. But who is going to offer facilities to and hold prospects before the growing

number of educated young men who are being increasingly entrusted with the management of Indian banks?

Another important question is the selection of the locality where a branch bank is opened. There is total absence of co-operation among the rival institutions in solving this essential problem. It is not at all difficult to name dozens of places, crowded with banks although there is very limited scope of banking business. The fun of the thing is that this unhealthy rivalry among credit institutions is very often supported by our leaders. The amusing spectacle of a gentleman occupying a high position in society presiding over the opening ceremony of a mushroom bank may be observed not infrequently. The people seem to be unperturbed by the disappearance of many institutions into obscurity. The cry is raised in our nationalist newspapers against any stringent measures which the authorities may propose to impose upon the activities of banks. But there is seldom any agitation in the newspapers for the checking of unsound activities on the part of our own banks. On the other hand in the review of balance sheets of banks or similar institutions the dangerous points are hidden from the ignorant public and the bright spots, if any, are only pointed out.

But I am digressing. The point is that to have a healthy system of banking in our country there should be sincere co-operation among the rival institutions in the matter of opening branches. In this vast undeveloped land of ours there is still very large scope for extending the banking business. But there should be a plan and understanding between rival institutions not to open branches in the same locality unless justified by business possibilities. If necessary, some of the existing branches may be abolished by mutual agreement among sister institutions. Public confidence in the banks is sure to grow as a result of their co-operation. It is high time that individualist mentality and personal ambition should give place to the collective spirit which is the order of the day.

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