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by

J. VIJAYATUNGA

(July and September 1925)

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Oct. 24th 1978

Dear Jim,

This is just a quick note to accompany the photo copies of Vijayatunga's magazine. I have not yet seen him, but I hope to locate him this week. I'm grateful for the loan of these documents and I know he will be delighted.

I also want to thank you again for all your stimulation and good cheer. They really helped to keep me going and I enjoyed our talks enormously. I hope to send you some writing during the next few months which will be some small form of repayment.

Warm regards,

Jim Manor

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CONTENTS.

			Page
A Poor Thing But My Own	...	By M. U. Moore, M.A.	1
Sita and Ravan	...	„ George Keyt	3
On the Necessity for Preserving Ancient Mss.	...	„ P. Anujan Achan	5
Ideals of Eastern Art	...	„ Manindrabhusan Gupta	7
The Siren (short story)	...	„ J. Vijayatunga	11
Reviews	...	„ K. V. P. Goonetilleke	15

Etc., Etc

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NOTICE

The temporary stoppage of the magazine was due to the recent serious illness of the Editor. The present number is without the usual number of pages for the same reason.

This is the last number that half-yearly subscribers are entitled to. Those wishing us to continue to send them the magazine for the remainder of the year will please send Rs. 1·50 or drop us a card ordering the copy by V. P. P.

With the next number a "Students' Page" will be introduced and will be conducted by a gentleman who has had special experience in this line. Probably a "Girls' Page" to be conducted by a lady editor will also be introduced. There will also be wood-block illustrations. EDITOR.

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A POOR THING BUT MY OWN

BY

M. U. MOORE, M. A. (Cantab)

I do not know how many readers of "The Librarian" peruse its pages with the object (amongst other objects of course) of improving their style in English: but that there is a wide-spread notion among the upgrowing generation of Ceylonese that style can be acquired at second hand, as it were, by reading, and imitating the writings of others, is unfortunately only too true.

How many young men have asked me what authors I should recommend them to study with this end in view!

The mere putting such a question is a pathetic, but palpable indication that the enquirer has failed to appreciate the fundamental fact that style, like personality, cannot be imparted; and though it may, be to some extent imitated, such imitation, being confiined to the form-side only, is lifeless and therefore worthless. It is a natural mistake of course; and probably every young writer has begun with imitation. Mrs. Browning says of her earliest attempts,

> "And so I poured myself
> Along the veins of others, and produced
> Mere life-less imitation of live- verse
> Achieving nothing."

For literary art, like everything else in nature is two-fold and possesses a life-side as well as a form-side: and in as much as the latter is merely the expression of the former, it cannot be divorced from it without losing all force and spontaneity.

The above-mentioned question (as to authors as models) is also a little saddening in another way—for even if it were possible to adopt a style from outside, so to speak, such a procedure would scarcely be dignified; would indeed be tantamount to a confession of impotence, even if it could be reconciled with the dictates of ordinary honesty.

Let us, then, realize at once that style has about it a certain *inevitableness*: it is what it is, because it is the direct materialization of the writer's feelings and susceptibilities, and of his own peculiar and particular view of things. No two persons think or feel, quite alike; and while there is a direct and natural correlation between the thoughts and modes of expression of each separate individual—such correlation denoting his particular style—the attempt to force one's ideas into modes of expression which are borrowed from another source would scarcely conduce to success.

"How then," it may be asked by the aspirant, "since it is useless to borrow or imitate may I hope to improve my style?" There is only one answer which can be given to this. *Learn to think clearly, learn to feel strongly, enthusiastically, learn to express those feelings*

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truthfully and fearlessly (and so *unlearn* most of what Ceylon education imparts in its schools and colleges.) Do not trouble about the style, for that will come spontaneously, and naturally, without taking any thought over the matter at all. Hear what Mrs. Browning has to say in this connection :—

"What form were best for poems? Let us think
Of forms less, and the external. Trust the spirit,
As sovereign nature does, to make the form.
For otherwise we only imprison spirit
And not embody. Inward evermore
To outward—so in life, and so in art."

Let me here relate a story which I believe to be perfectly true and which will illustrate what I am trying to convey. It is said that on one occasion Lord Beaconsfield (or Benjamin Disraeli as he was then) congratulated John Bright on a speech which the latter had just made; stating that he would give all he possessed to be able to make such a speech. Bright, who understood Disraeli's character, and knew him to be a man of extraordinary ability, but one who would also sacrifice principles to ambition, replied in his own brusque fashion, "You could do it *if you were only honest.*" The ability was there; but the motive force, which alone could inspire the fervid oratory of Bright, viz., his own genuine emotions, was wanting in the dispassionate and calculating nature of the other man, who achieved, indeed, the summit of his ambitions, but whose whole life was a sham, and a betrayal of everything which he ought to have held most dear.

Style, then is only the witness of what is behind the words in which it is embodied—clear or confused, simple or complex, harmonious or discordant—it is but the natural manifestation of that psychical activity—those individual emotions, which produce it: it can no more be borrowed than the personality of which it is descriptive.

Few of us perhaps realize how very largely literature consists of those individual feelings which have been aroused in minds from some impelling cause or other, and so forced into utterance. Three quarters of literature is *the protest of souls in revolt*—in revolt against the shams, the insincerities, the hypocrisies, in a word, against the humbug of the day. And never, let me remark in parenthesis, has that humbug been so pronounced as it is just now. That is really what is the matter with the world to-day. The leaders of the new, as well as the upholders of the old order of things are equally insincere; or if sincere, sincere only in furthering their own interests and what is true of the civilized world in general is especially true in miniature of the little world of Ceylon—that delectable land of Goschen, in which intellectual mediocrity passes for inspired wisdom, and unctuous rectitude for God-given piety. In such an environment young Ceylon has at least a *fine* opportunity afforded it of acquiring a vigorous style of its own, and needs no artificial adjuncts, or literary training—expedients, which, indeed, serve little purpose, and often only succeed in defeating their own object. Let young Ceylon, especially young Ceylon which is attending lectures on English literature learn to endorse the attitude of Gilbert Chesterton in this matter, and to agree with him when he says that he "can never understand people who take literature seriously." A person who takes literature seriously—"a very amateurish thing to do," in Chesterton's opinion—is indeed the last person whose

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advice about books and literary matters in general, I, for one should care to follow; for if such a one knew anything about them to begin with, he will certainly end like M. Bonnard in Anatole France's story, by knowing nothing; and that, too, is the inevitable result of reading books of literary criticism, and attending lectures written or delivered by persons who profess to take literature seriously. Such reading, like reading with the object of improving one's style, is mere waste of time and does harm rather than good. I have quoted Mrs. Browning twice already, but on the principle that one cannot have too much of a good thing, let me end by a third quotation, from the same source which is about the best description I know, of how to read, and how not to read: and which really sums up much of what I have been saying.

"Mark there, we get no good
By being ungenerous even to a book,
And calculating profits—so much help,
From so much reading, it is only when
We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge,
Soul forward, headlong, into a book's profound,
Impassioned for its beauty, and salt of truth,
'Tis there we get the right good from a book."

And let me add by way of postscript that no finer example of a book "Impassioned for its beauty, and salt of truth" could well be found than this great masterpiece of literature—"Aurora Leigh."

SITA AND RAVAN

BY

GEORGE KEYT.

Ravan:

Your slim form wrapped with shining red
Of silk cloth wrought in Kashi gold,
Your moon-face, sweet lips, fragrant head
Uncovered, your long eyes that hold
Deep mirrored pools; these thrilled and drew
My free wild life, swift-limbed and bold,
Helpless in love of you!

Sita:

What are these amorous word you sing
Filled full of hidden shameless wiles?
O love-thief, lust-eyed, demon king,
Return unto your magic isles
That glisten in the milky sea:
Your queens await you with love-smiles,
What is your will with me?

Ravan:

O blissfull one, how like a child
You flush and strike me with swift words!
Your timid heart speeds fast and wild,
Like piteous voices of sweet birds
Alarmed and hastening to the trees,
Your voice! No snake: see, I am mild
Though love-tossed on mad seas.

Sita:

Depart and cease this song you sing!
The bird is flown out from the nest
Leaving her young. O serpent king,
You come to steal what makes life blest,
Even Ram's, who strays out in the wood.
Beholding you no good things rest,
O peril of all good!

Ravan:

How long shall I speak words with you?
My lure is spurned and all my love!
You spurn my strength that can subdue
The earth-kings and the gods above!
With what does Ram delight your days?
You lie bear like a poor trapped dove,
Alone, from all life's ways.

Sita:

The incensed chambers and gold hours
Of soft luxurious ease supreme,
I left for love of Ram. Scent-flowers,
Sweet tunes and winged forms of a dream.
Can these charms alter with the place
Where love-sleep comes? From love its gleam
Surroundings cannot chase!

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Ravan :

Of what avail are words with me?
The dim clouds of my self-restraint
Veil you, bright sun, in vain! They flee,
Being frail, before love's wind, I faint
With passion. Who is there to shield
Your loveliness? Why make complaint?
O sweet, be wise and yield!

Sita :

Depart and cease your menacing!
I weep not, clinging to your feet,
To spare me, sinful demon king,
Nor will I yield and see the sweet
True things of life made foul for me!
Shame follows you with things unmeet.
O monster, rise and flee!

Ravan :

The booming wood around us swoons.
My heart yearns, stinging like a wasp!
In the lute of my will you are the tunes.
Your little fingers in my grasp
Are petals of small lotus buds—
Soft, helpless, cool in my strong clasp
Aflame with sunset-floods!

Sita :

Alas, alas, his brazen hand
Embraces me; I strive in vain.
I sicken and cannot stand:
My shame-wrung heart is numbed with pain,
My dancing vision floats in mist,
The horror of his face again
Has whispered close and kissed!

Ravan :

Deliciously your trembling form
Throbs in my clasp! Slim *kaluwel* vines
Beside your graceful limbs are lame!
Your golden face like sunrise shines,
Olinda red your lips, the sea
Your panting bosom which reclines.
O love, ascend with me!

POETRY AND THE PLAY

It is a fact providing much food for thought, that *throughout the British Empire* there are, to my knowledge, only four magazines devoted solely to poetry, two of which are comparatively new and as yet unestablished. Of the remainder "*Poetry* or *Poetry and the Play*," as it is now called, (for it will henceforth embrace the drama) is of most interest to residents in the Dominions and Colonies as it takes special interest in the poetry of the Empire as a whole instead of confining itself to that written in the British Isles.

The magazine is the official organ of the Empire Poetry League, which has branches all over the world and it hopes soon to start a centre in Colombo. Membership of the League is open to all, the annual subscription being one guinea including the supply of *Poetry and the Play*, post free. Members are entitled to submit verse for criticism to the League Headquarters, at Abbey House, Westminster, London, where it is impartially and and frankly criticised free of charge by expert and experienced critics.

A special Indian Empire Number of *Poetry and the Play* will be issued in the Autumn and it is hoped to publish separate numbers representing the best verse of each Dominion and Colony in the course of time.

The quality and diversity of the contents of the magazine are such as must appeal to all, and as the circulation increases steadily, so the size and scope of it are enlarged. The April number is a special Spring Book-Number and is the first in which the size of the magazine is doubled and in which the Play is introduced.

Those wishing to join the branch which is being formed in Colombo should communicate with the Editor of The Librarian who will give them full particulars.

Hon. Sec.,
THE EMPIRE POETRY LEAGUE.

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ON THE NECESSITY FOR PRESERVING ANCIENT MSS.

BY
P. ANUJAN ACHAN,
(Ex-student, Visvabharati.)

Speaking at the First Oriental Conference, Poona, Pandit Anantha Krishna Sastri advocated even Government intervention for the preservation of Mss. on the ground of their being national rather than private, property.

We may fully endorse the view expressed by the enthusiastic Pandit. But we would urge owners of private Mss. Libraries to preserve well and utilise fully the priceless wealth entrusted to them by their forefathers.

All over India in almost every aristocratic home can be found a private Mss. collection. In Kerala there are hundreds of such houses each possesing thousands of Mss. written mostly on palm-leaf. Unfortunately for us they have been for a century or more left by the neglect of the owners to be eaten by insects or to be sold away to foreigners at ridiculously low rates.

There is a story still current in these parts that once a German scholar approached a Brahaman house to purchase Mss. at the rate of one anna per *grantha*. A *grantha* is equal to thirty-two letters. But the owner who mistook a *grantha* to mean a Mss, sold away some of the important works at the rate of one anna per Mss. When he was asked what bargain he had made in the transaction he is said to have replied that he had cleverly included smaller *granthas* (Mss.) too among the the bigger ones—meaning thereby that his bargain was really better than what the inquirer had expected !

This is only by the way.

The time has changed since and we are expected to wake to the times. Every family that possesses a Mss. collection, however small it may be, must be proud of the wealth and ought to protect it from being invaded by insects or even by foreigners. One may not be able to know the value of what one possesses. Therefore it is necessary to take a complete and descriptive list of all the Mss. each family has got and to have it circulated among other libraries of the world. If possible, Mss. must be given on loan to scholars on security and no distinction should be made in this respect between Indian and foreigners.

Arrangements should also be made for publishing rare works. The Mss. which we possess here are nearly fifteen hundred in number. They are classified into different groups viz., Veda, Purana, Nataka, Kavya, etc. A complete catalogue of these Mss. is being taken. Needless to say, it will be a great help for the growth of learning in India if families possessing Mss. of ancient and rare works will preserve them well and let them see the light of day as early as possible.

India had many well-preserved Mss. libraries in the past. Her library at Nalanda was a monumental one. *Dharmakunja* as it was called contained many thousands of Mss. mostly dealing with the Mahayana Buddhism. She had her libraries at Vikramasila, Kanchi and such other centres of learning. We know how most of them have been destroyed by foreign invaders mainly out of religious bigotry.

It is only the remnants of those libraries that we possess today. In China and Tibet translations of thousands of Sanskrit works are still to be found, the originals of which have now been lost. Mss. in the Pali language exist in different parts of Ceylon and Burma all of which deal with the Hinayana Buddhism. It is—we need not repeat—highly beneficial that ancient Mss. should be collected and safely preserved, and if posssible rare works brought out after critical examination.

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IDEALS OF EASTERN ART

BY

MANINDRABHUSAN GUPTA.

An artist's function is to create and not to vindicate the cause of art. True Artists are always silent, and their whole energy is focussed into their creative propensity. I am violating that tradition of artists in thus writing about art; because in our country, appreciation and criticism of art are rare I do so. I know a sincere appreciation of our art cannot be brought about by lectures and books; still these help to bring about that sympathetic atmosphere, which tends towards the appreciation of art.

If you look repeatedly at a beautiful sculpture of the Buddha or Siva or at an old painting of Ajanta, Sigiriya or of the Rajput school, you are sure to be benefitted more, than, you are by reading volumes, describing their beauty. At first you may be puzzled by their anatomical variance but later on you are sure to be attracted by their serene atmosphere.

Most people bring these charges against Indian art, that, the figures do not portray real life, that anatomy is disregarded, that Indian art does not follow the laws of perspective, shade and light. Yes; these charges are quite relevent. Indian artists do not imitate real life; they do not follow the optical laws of nature. What they do, they do on some purpose. It is not because they cannot imitate reality, but because they do not want to. I shall try to explain this point. But while my explanation may touch one's intellect, but it may not touch one's heart. The highest forms of sculpture, painting, music and poetry appeal not only to the intellect but to the heart also.

A poem by the famous classical Bengali poet Chandidas says :—

"Friend who makes to me the name of my beloved? Oh! through my ears, as it enters into my heart, it dissolves me into ecstacy." These lines may well recall Milton's—

"In service high and anthems clear.
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies."

Here in the poem of Chandidas, we see that a name has more significance than a sound. Here more is meant, than meets the ears. So in the work of an artist one should not expect what meet the eyes only.

When a poet or an artist gets an inspiration he breaks loose the shackles of form and attains the highest joy in his creation. The object of art is what we call *rasa* in Sanskrit, the fulfilment of joy and emotion.

Mr. Nandalal Bose, the well-known Indian artist says, "It is the mind, that sees everything through the eyes. Everybody knows that, the eyes in themselves have not the power of vision. When inattentive, we do not see a thing, though present before us. Sometimes we see a part of it only. Again we see it otherwise than what it is."

An object impresses the artist's mind in manifold aspects. When it passes through the crucible of his personality, it takes a new form so to speak. We can say then that the object is thus idealised. A flower, to an artist is not just a flower. So, when the artist draws the flower, he does not attempt to portray the external from of it, but tries to reveal in his work, the inner essence, hidden in the flower. The artist is not a compiler of facts. He is a poet and a visionary.

Let us take a statue of Buddha. He is sitting in the posture of meditation. His chest is wide, waist extenuated like that of a lion. The extremely simplified body is very smooth and delicate. When we see the figure, we get an idea of calmness, the idea of victory of the spirit over the passions, Here the artist did not try to portray, the statue of the person

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"SEXUAL SCIENCE"

BY

Dr. Marie Carmichael Stopes, D.Sc., Ph.D.,

Fellow of the University College, London, etc., etc.

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known as Buddha, but gave expression to the idea of Buddhahood, the idea of everlasting peace. You see all his sermons and religion in that single piece of stone.

Here the sceptical critic will shrug his shoulder and raise a question, "yes, it is all right, I understand that the statue of Buddha is very beautiful; but why should it be unnatural? What is the harm, if it be like the real Buddha himself in flesh and blood. Could we see Buddha before us, we would have been fascinated by his noble and calm appearance. Why should we not expect then in the artist's work the idea of nobleness, and calmness, and the true representation of the person at the same time?"

It is a question, worth paying attention to. I have mentioned before that we do not see with our eyes only. Our mind is at the back of them. So the appearance of an object reflected into our brain takes its shape as small or great, as ugly or beautiful, according to the bent of our mind. So that we cannot ignore the mind, in the work of an artist. An object is not what it seems from external appearance. The real appearance is its impression on the mind. In this way every object in God's creation is shaped and reshaped and put into new shapes and colours. Beauty is in the human mind. And therefore God's creation is beautiful.

When we read a poem, we say that we can see the poet in it, as for instance when we read Wordsworth, we learn of his intimate love for nature, and when we read Milton, we realise the sublime religious conception of his mind. Similiarly distinctions can be made in the work of artists also. Leonardo Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael are the great artists who brought about a renaissance in Italian art in the 15th Century. Michael Angelo is heroic in his treatment, while Raphael is delicate and Da Vinci blends the two.

The treatment of European art is rather dramatic and pathological. This remark is somewhat true with regard to their dramas as well. In the dramas of Shakespeare, we observe the hard grimaces, the clashing of teeth and the conflict of emotions. Even love appears in violent and frenzied mood. Hamlet and Romeo, two famous heroes of Shakespeare, show in their love, the excited, morbid state of their minds.

To the Indian mind, beauty is perfect in harmony. Love is perfect in control. In Kalidasa's *Kumara Sambhavam*, Gouri as a young maid, went to Siva and offered herself but was rejected by the great God. But, when, after practising ascetism, she removed the passion of her mind, she was able to move the mind of Siva.

In Shakespearian dramas nature and space are hardly seen. The dramas are full of events. In Tempest, though Miranda is growing up in the lovely island, surrounded by sea, she has nothing to do with nature. The island is merely taken to serve the purpose of events. It has not got any psychological relation.

Here Nature is like the back-grund of those pictures of the Renaissance where the figure drawn has no relation with the landscape in the back-ground.

But Sakuntala of Kalidasa is a part and parcel of Nature. She is growing up in a hermitage like a flower, She loves the trees and the creepers as her sisters and everyday she waters them. She gives the creepers in marriage to the *Sahakara* tree. To her they are all living entities. It is Nature, that soothes the human mind in affliction. In Sakuntala, though we see affliction and tragedy for a time, it does not end there. It ends in union, it ends in selemnity. Shakepeare would have finished the drama at the highest pitch of tragedy. European taste wants forceful, vigourous events exciting the nerves. In a drama event after event is coming. The mind does not find any space to rest upon. But in *Kumara Sambhavam*, *Sakuntala*, *Meghadutam*, the narrative portion is very short; while the poet goes on unfolding the beauties of nature in a most magnificient manner.

(To be continued)

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VARIOUS VIEWS

Women in India

Before the child has become a girl and has scarcely even half finished her education arrangements are in full swing with regard to her marriage and her education is stopped. Boyhood or girlhood is the happiest time of one's life, but girlhood is entirely cut out from the Indian woman's life. It is between ages ten and twenty that there is free scope for one's individuality and latent capacity, unhampered, either by the disadvantages of a child body, or by the cares and worries of a grown-up social and professional life. It is then that the foundations are laid for the future greatness of an individual. The absence of girlhood from Indian life and the consequent lack of opportunity for the due awakening of the individual's latent capacities, is the cause of the presence of so few Indian women prominent or endowed with genius in any walk of life. Far removed are we from the days of ancient Indian glory, when men and women vied with each other for excellence of achievement in every field.

No amount of statistics with regard to death-rate among babies, premature death of young or rather child mothers, alarmingly low average life-period of an Indian, will ever convince most parents of the fact that there is anything wrong with Hindu social customs and what is miscalled 'religious rites and usages.' The present marriage customs among a majority of Hindus are as far removed from religion as is murder or any other violent crime; for to improve the trials and responsibilities of motherhood on a young girl is nothing less than a violent crime.

If a young mother escapes an early death, children are born with monotonous and cruel regularity, leaving her no time to satisfy the other cravings of a human soul. She becomes a slave.—*Brothers of The Star.*

America on Wheels

In England Cabinet Ministers cannot afford to keep motor-cars. In America, thanks in the main to the enterprise of Mr. Henry Ford, a car is regarded as an essential perquisite to the normal working household. Professors and students, typists and bricklayers, the humblest operative as well as the wealthiest millionaire owns, or appears to own, a car. Little children drive about in toy automobiles. In Los Angeles there is a car to every four persons, children included. When winter comes the roads of Florida are black not only with the automobiles of the wealty in search of change and sunshine, but also with the Ford cars of the working men. American civilization is on wheels.—*The Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher in "Scribner's Magazine."*

As a Man Thinketh

The average of human beauty is rising, and it is rising because of our steady rise in virtue. I do not use this word in a priggish sense, but for want of a better term to describe the inherent decency of instinct and goodness of mind which surround us. The human countenance is shaped by the mind behind it, and as you think so you become. Exercise has improved our bodies, but it is our healthy minds that put us into sporting activities.

Sir William Orpen.

"One impulse from a vernal wood
Will teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can."

Wordsworth.

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Our Short Story

THE SIREN

"The Siren, a work of sculpture, the beauty of whose lines has survived the ravages of pitiless time takes us back to the halcyon days of Greece, when the master minds of the time vied with each other in offering their tributes of poetry, music, painting and sculpture to the benevolent goddess that presided over the prosperity of their city—Athena of Athens. Gentlemen, I want you to-night to join me on the magic carpet. Let it take us back, back through the centuries and place us before the very door of the Master Craftsman. There we see him in the midst of a most harmoniously arranged studio placed in gardens befitting a Prince's abode; we see him lightly passing a well-earned leisure in the warm embraces of his divinely beautiful Helen. While, at the gates wait the Prince of Thessalia with his retinue, till such time as it will please the Master to come out. Gentlemen, such were the conditions amidst which Genius lived then and such was the homage that art received in those days."

(Sir Jeremiah Bings, at the Annual Dinner of the American Artists in London, 3rd July, 192....)

* * *

In the most crowded quarter of Athens there is a drab, patched-up single room. On one side it adjoins a sweetmeat maker's; on the other sides lives the laundry woman who takes in the washing of that street. The door opens to an ill-paved street on which wicked-eyed children and barking dogs keep up a regular din. Taking up the best part of the room is a long block of marble. The top is covered with a miscellany of things, a torn piece of muslin, an old quilt, and a two-week old copy of "The Athens Courier." On the floor are a chisel and a hammer. On a string stretched across one corner of the wall are a shirt, and a few other odd clothes. There are a stool and a rough table. The rest of the room is bare except for a little space under the only window. The window is a small square aperture about eight feet above the floor, Below the window a picture torn from "The Athens Courier" is pinned to the wall. The picture —that of a young woman robed in a tiger's skin and carrying a pitcher on her shoulder, bears under it the legend, "Miss Helen at the Pitcher Dance given by the Prince of Thessalia." If we now turn back to "The Athens Courier" that had been used to cover up the marble block we have already noticed, and examine under where the portion is torn off we will find another picture—that of a portly, double-chinned, devotee of Bachus. Heavy eyelided, the drooping, characterless lips covered up by a bushy beard, short in stature, withal the picture is that of a sphere supported by two plump, well-rounded off pillars. Under this picture are the following words, "The Popular Prince of Thessalia who well maintains the sporting traditions of his family."

Enter Thucydes; lazily pulls out his arm from the right sleeve of his jacket and allowing it to hang from his left shoulder walks up to the picture on the wall. He looks at it, calls out "Helen," sighs, and turns his eyes to where the marble block lay covered up. He raises the different coverings and discloses a beautifully hewn figure. On the slab where the feet rest is the Greek word meaning "Siren."

He looks at it for some time, then walks up to the table and sitting down at it writes. He is very agitated. Now he gets up, now he sits down, the next moment he holds the sheet on which he was writing as if he was about to tear it, again he settles down and continues to write. After nearly an hour he lays down the pen and reads what he has written. Let us steal up to him and look over that page of unwritten history.

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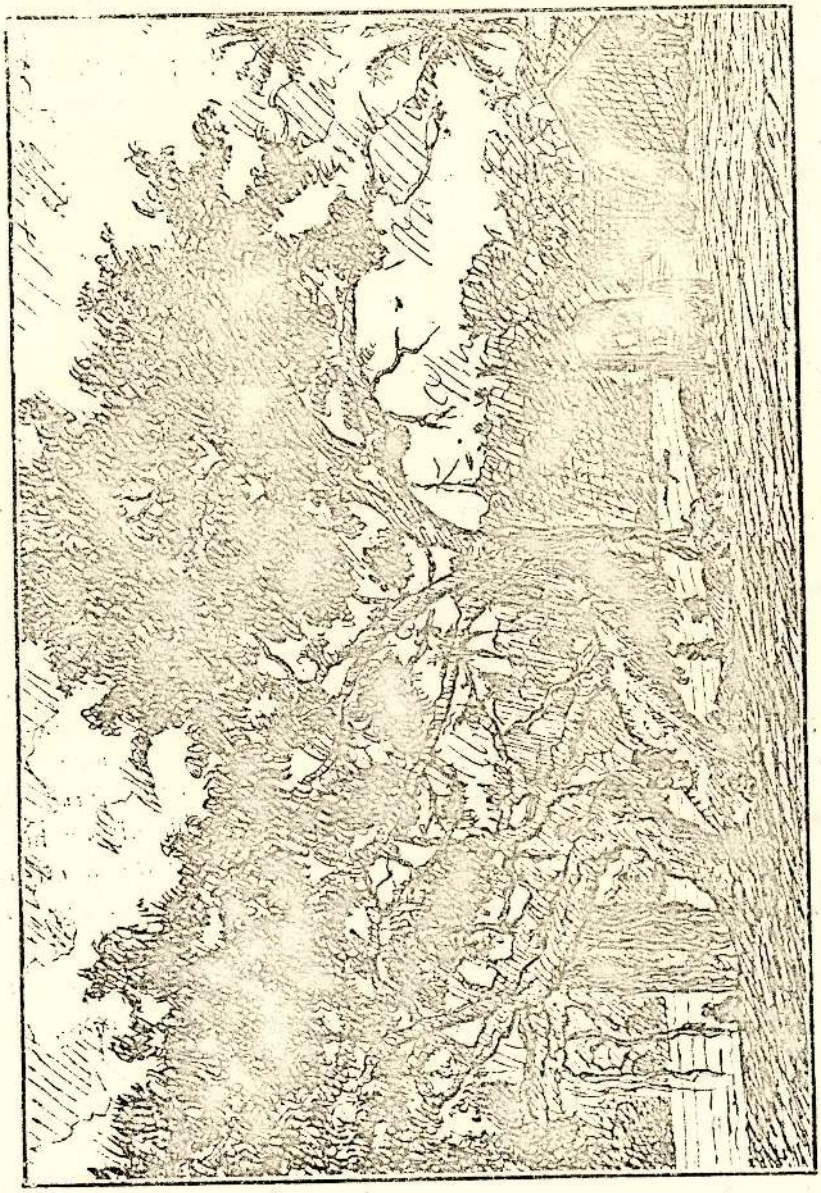
UNDER THE SPREADING BANYAN TREE



From a Drawing by C. Nagalawatta

Block kindly lent by Mr. V. T. Sivagurnathan.

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"Dear Helen,"

I do not know where to begin this letter. My distracted mind refuses to separate act from act, year from year and array piecemeal the story of my life, that is my sufferings. Moreover I have not the heart to tax this sorely troubled mind of mine and get it to pour forth grammatically arranged pieces of essay but let it say what it wishes.

I was not an ordinary individual who wanted to just live. Within me was a fire which tried to shoot out its tongues into the world of light. Within me was a hunger which yearned to lick the nebulous mass of life into shapes, distinct and meaningful. And I would have done all this and enriched the country I have been born into, and honoured the age I lived in. But neither the country nor the age wanted it. And I wonder whether there would ever be a country or an age that would want Genius. All art is given to the world in spite of it. The world refuses it with out-turned palms and in the face of that refusal Genius proffers his gift. Even so do I give my Siren, a millionth of what I would have done had I been asked, and a fragment of what it woul dhave been had I completed it. I would have yet persisited had I your light to look for. But even you found the dazzle of wealth more inviting, and there you have gone and immersed your light, where it cannot be noticed in order to be appreciated. A glimmer is heaven-sent in the darkness of a cave, but what is it in the richly-lighted chamber of at palace. A man can work if there is Hope, be it ever so distant. But if instead of the unending road that he used to see spread out before him, he finds the mouth of an abyss, the abyss of despair—into it he plunges. Had I any sign to hope for your interest in me I would have faced further disappointments. Even as the moon shines by the light of the Sun, so does art thrive by the inspiration of Love. But perhaps there is another world for men of our type, a world to open whose gates they use not the man-made key of silver but the magic "Open Sesame," of God-given love.

And there I go to join those who have gone before me, scorned of men—and who will come after me. Farewell Helen."

* * *

It was a lovely afternoon when everything was wearing an air of relaxation. The Prince of Thessalia and Helen accompanied by their retinue were taking a walk along the streets when a sudden fancy suggested something to the Prince.

"Let us go and see Thucydes in his studio. I hear the fellow is clever with his fingers. Perhaps I may ask him to carve for me the legs for that new couch of yours. What say you, my Helen?"

They entered his studio. With one arm thrown caressingly round the neck of the Siren while in the fingers of the other hand was held a letter they found Thucydes. On the floor was an empty vial.

Helen took the letter, read its contents and said, "Poor Thucydes." The Prince gave her his arm and they passed out followed by their retainers.

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REVIEWS

The Poetry and the Play. (Merton Press Ltd., Abbey House, Westminster, S. W. 1, England.)

Conscious of delays as we rushed into print, the last English mail delivered the eigth volume of "The Poetry and the Play."

This inspiring anthology of recent verse comes very presentably bound from the Merton Press at Abbey House, Westminster, and is the literary spokesman of the "Empire Poetry League" where sits too, that eminent literateur Doctor Tagore.

This twelve-penny monthly is a unique and universal thing. It is a dauntless Journal that tours the Empire singly, collecting exclusively in a common treasury the songs and madrigals consecrated to the Muse of lyric and dramatic verse.

The prose and poetic wares of "The Poetry and the Play" are all going for a shilling—a remarkably modest price for a dish of toothsome lyric delicacies. The prose contributions to this number teem with high literary values and the comments they embody on the theme of dramatic poetry are informing and original. "Moonshine in the water" is typical of its fellows.

Manifold meanings given to the incidents that made for the untimely death of Marlowe deepen the tragedy of it all. Mr. Fowler Wright, in his "Death of Christoper Marlowe" sets forth conflicting views current on the violent end of the great tragedian, shifts every evidence and judiciously discriminates allegation from fact. The essay will enter the literary repertories of all Marlowe-lovers as a valued and cherished document.

The impressive style of the dramatisaton of poetry and the aids to it of stagecraft are discernible in the "Dance Drama" by Terence Gray dealing with the popular story of Deirdre.

The short lyrical pieces, however are the 'bestest' things in an altogether happy collection. "Maytime" is pleasantly occupied with lark and elm, robin, pear-tree, the blossoms and the breeze. Ian Dall is truly a light-footed, 'Dancer into day dreams and into stray-dreams;' as he impatiently summons his Proserpine in the most vivacious and tuneful chimes. It is a pity that the rude intrusion of a sprinkling of unfamiliar metaphors dims the lyric virtues of the too academic "Candle." On the contrary, the anonymous writer of "Antony Ted" approximates more closely to lyric perfection. "Antony Ted" is a successful revolt against the school of fixed measure and rigid form and in the sincerity of its simple sentiment, its easy diction and the rhythmic flow of sound, abide the highest lyric beauty and elegance.

A few pages of the present number carry "Short notices" of contemporary poetry. The criticisms are just and learned and are indispensable guides to poetry lovers intending to take stock of the latest harvests.

But the most beneficial feature of the magazine is the poetry competition aunounced in its closing pages. The competitions are designed to encourage honest experimental work among the young and the old and to enthuse with more than a pat on the back the precocious muse schooling in the diverse regions of the Empire. "The Poetry and the Play" is therefore another cord of kinship thrown round the Empire's peoples to gather her scattered races and link them in a fellowship of love by the medium of song. We commend the journal to the notice of our public schools and to all true lovers of pure poetry in the Island.

The Ceylon Theosophical News.

We have received a copy of the first number of this magazine. Its tone and purpose and modest appearance foretell a successful future for it. As there is a growing number of Theosophists in this country the magazine will prove of great help to them and will be the means of disseminating Theosophy among the general public here by whom it is little understood.

The Mirage. (Sinhalese Novel) by Martin Wickrama-singhe. A review will appear in our next number.

K. V. P. GOONETILLEKE.

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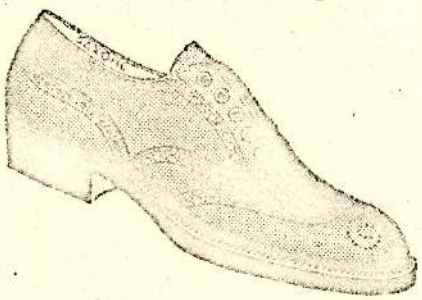

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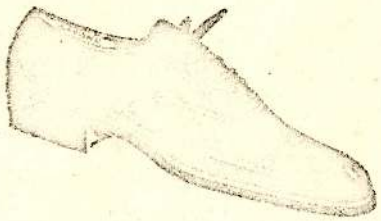

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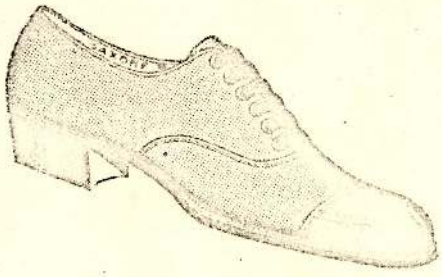

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