FRIENDS OF INDIA

Biographical Profiles
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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  Vol. IV  Indian System of Medicine
  Vol. V  Yogic and Tantric Medicine
FRIENDS OF INDIA
Biographical Profiles

by
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M.D., Ph. D., F.C.C.P. (U.S.A.)

MUNSHIRAM MANOHARLAL • NEW DELHI
To
DARSHI
My wife
from whom I snatch the moments for writing—
the moments that rightly belong to her.
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IN THIS BOOK are portrayed, men and women who belonged to different countries, different races, different callings, at different times; all foreigners. Many of them were scholars; others were social and political workers, art-critics and archaeologists, historians and administrators, pilgrims and doctors.

They had, however, one thing in common: They were all well-wishers and friends of India; through their noble efforts the image of India appeared brighter in the eyes of the world. They did not belong to the ‘crowd’; they followed the paths which their conscience dictated to them; they faced all the difficulties that such people are confronted with and this was part of the reason why they achieved what ‘men of the crowd’ cannot do. Their achievements reveal aspects of Indian life—historical, religious, social and political, a collective study of which leave a more vivid impression on the mind than is done by books on such topics.

Students, in particular, can derive from these biographical profiles, apart from a knowledge about these people and their achievements, a lesson in courage: that honest, earnest, dedicated work, even against heavy odds, is worth all the discomfort and inconvenience that it involves.

O. P. Jaggi
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INTRODUCTION

The early part of the nineteenth century was a very significant period in the history of India for two reasons: firstly, this was the time when Hindu society, after having fallen lower and lower during the past 800 years, reached the lowest abyss of social and national degradation; secondly, this was also the time when after having fallen so low, it stirred, gathered itself and gradually started climbing up.

This coming to consciousness was ushered in by Hindu leaders; yet in the process, it was pushed up, exhorted, praised and bravoed by many foreign friends and well-wishers whose splendid contributions command our respect and gratitude.

We shall first have a look at Hindu society as it was in the early nineteenth century, and then proceed to examine its regeneration which was made possible by the generous contribution of India’s foreign friends.

Hindu Society in Early Nineteenth Century

Writing about the contemporary Hindu character, Dwarka Nath Tagore, the grandfather of the great poet, said: “The present characteristic failings of natives are a want of truth, a want of integrity, a want of independence. These were not the characteristics of former days before the religion was corrupted and education had disappeared. It is to the Muhammedan conquest that these evils are owing, and they are the invariable results of the loss of liberty and national degradation. The utter destruction of learning and science was an invariable part of their system, and the conquered, no longer able to protect their lives by arms and independence, fell into opposite extremes of abject submission, deceit and fraud.”

This degradation of Hindu society penetrated into all its sections and strata from the highest to the lowest. The Indian rulers of small and large states lived in perpetual intrigue with
one another and were willing—even too glad—to invite the help of the Britishers in their fights and battles among themselves. They were concerned only with their own state, and with nothing else.

The concept of India was only geographical, the whole country being divided into a large number of self-contained units, almost mutually exclusive in character. "One who speaks of an Indian nation at the beginning of the nineteenth century does violence to historical facts."

The people did not regard themselves as citizens of India; they were the Bengalis, Marathas, Sikhs etc. and India was not a motherland to them. An Indian soldier was ready to fight against any Indian power including his own province or state, on behalf of any other power, which was willing to pay him for his service.

After the battle of Plassey, in 1757, when the British virtually became the rulers of Bengal, apart from the families or individuals who were directly affected, the middle class or the masses took no serious view of the happenings. There was no general out-cry against alien-rulers; it was the replacement of one foreign rule by another.

Education among the Hindus did not differ in any remarkable degree from what it was at the time of the Muslim conquest of India centuries before. The subjects of study of a Hindu scholar were grammar, lexicography, poetry, drama and rhetoric, law and logic. For all practical purposes, this education was heckneyed and useless.

Contact with Western Civilization

By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, contacts between the Indian ruling chiefs and well-to-do Hindu families and the British civilians and officers had been firmly established. These Hindus had picked up sufficient working knowledge of the English language, and Western modes and manners. This knowledge helped them in their dealings with the East India Company. There was an increasing demand for English education.

Private schools teaching English were accordingly founded in Calcutta and its neighbourhood; a few well-known among them being, Durrumtollah Academy of Mr. Drummand and
Introduction

Mission House, Serampore. An important government-sponsored institution was Fort William College, established in 1800 through the efforts of Marquis Wellesley. Another and even more important institution was the Hindu College in Calcutta, founded in 1817, through the efforts of Dwarkanath Tagore and other prominent Indians. Similar institutions opened in Bombay and Madras. All these institutions helped in the spread of the ideas and ideals then prevailing in Europe and England: nationalism, liberty and rationalism.

A strong supporter of the spread of such ideas among the Hindus was Raja Rammohan Roy. He had himself been exposed to these ideas and wanted the worn-out traditions and rituals that had taken hold of Hindu society to be done away with. He was very enthusiastic about the spread of English education in India. When the Government proposed to start a Sanskrit school for higher learning among the Hindus, it was Raja Rammohan Roy who protested severely against it and pleaded instead for the opening of a school where English language, culture etc. would be taught. He said: "This seminary [Sanskrit school] can only be expected to feed the minds of the youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society. The pupils there will acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India....The Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it should consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing Mathematics, Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences, which may be accomplished with the sums proposed, by employing a few gentlemen of talent and learning, educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with necessary books, instruments and other apparatus."

There was, however, some controversy among the British people in India as to whether, as a matter of policy, English education should be imparted to the Indians or not: some of the British officers were afraid that after learning English, the
Indians would ask for democratic institutions and liberty; others, including Lord Macaulay, were in favour of English education. It was the view of the supporters of English education that ultimately prevailed.

English education made people aware not only of the ideas and ideals of nationalism, equality and liberty but also made the educated Hindus aware of the fact that they were being denied these ideals by the foreign British rulers.

_Glorious Past of India_

Even more important was the knowledge that the educated Indians now perceived about the results of the researches being conducted by the British and the European oriental scholars revealing the glorious past of India. This was contrary to the previously held view of some of the British scholars who propagated that "abject condition in which the English found the Hindus in the eighteenth century represented their normal condition throughout their history."

Western scholars had discovered references about the historical work of Megasthenes in the writings of Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, Diodorus, Plotius and others, in which he had mentioned an account of his travel in the kingdom of Sandrakottos. Scholars were eager to know who this Sandrakottos was, because Megasthenes had given a very praise-worthy account of his kingdom, his army and the life of his subject people. Later researches indicated that this Sandrakottos was no other than Chandragupta Maurya of India.

Besides the above historical proof of the glorious past of India, many archaeological excavations also provided proofs of a similar nature. In 1865, Robert Bruce Foote discovered stone tools made by man in pre-historic times and concluded that the Indian sub-continent was inhabited by man as early as anywhere else in the world, and that his technical skill and capabilities were in no way inferior than those of men elsewhere. At about the same time, Cunningham located many sites of different ancient Indian cultures. In 1921, John Marshall discovered the site of the Harappa Civilization belonging to the third millenium B.C. This discovery pushed back Indian history by over 2000 years.

The work of oriental scholars like Charles Wilkins, William
Jones, James Prinsep, Max Müller, William Dwight Whitney and many others, in revealing different aspects of ancient Indian literature and culture, created a better image of India. The findings of these scholars brought home to educated Indians a very vivid picture of the past glory and greatness of ancient India which placed her on the same pedestal with Greece and Rome. It informed them of the leading part they once played as a great nation in the world. These European scholars showed how our fore-fathers are sprung from the same ancient family of mankind as the European thinkers; they showed how the Vedas, the sacred literature of the Hindus, are the oldest literary works in the world; that the Upaniṣads contain the most profound philosophical speculations that human mind has ever conceived; that the emperor Ashoka united the whole of India and Afghanistan under one rule, as testified to by his own records engraved on stone more than two thousand years ago, and that thanks mainly to his efforts, Buddhism, originating in India spread over the world. All these discoveries deeply stirred the hearts of the Hindus; with the result that they were imbued with a spirit of nationalism and ardent patriotism. The revelation of India’s past was one of the strongest foundations on which Indian nationalism was built, and its influence was felt in many ways at the different stages of political evolution in India.

**Indian Nationalism**

Educated Indians started asking for their right to participate in the administration of their own country so that they could personally look into the needs of the people and ameliorate their lot. But the British Government was in no mood to grant these rights. To put off the Indians they were making use of pious platitudes and threats alternately.

A few keen observers of the scene, who cared for the welfare of the Indian masses and hoped for the continuance of the British rule in India, saw the need for making British rule pleasant to the Indians. This, they felt, could only be done by associating the Indians in ruling their own country. They also knew that the British authorities by themselves would never initiate such a thing unless they were coerced. Only a broad-based organisation backed by powerful elements in India and
England, in their opinion, was competent to take up the Indian
cause and put it before the British authorities.

This was the task initiated and undertaken by Allen Octavian
Hume, a retired British Officer of the Indian Civil Service. His
untiring efforts in bringing about the formation of the Indian
National Congress and subsequent fight for the rights of the
people, forms a glorious chapter in the history of the struggle
for Indian freedom. Free India owes him a debt of gratitude.

In this regard, the part played by Sister Nivedita (Miss
Margaret Noble) and Mrs. Annie Besant, in awakening nation-
listic feelings among the Indians deserves special mention.

While some of the foreigners ‘discovered’ the glorious past
of India and others enthused the Indians to better their present
lot by overthrowing the alien rule, there were still others who
raised the prestige of India in the eyes of the world by
appreciating the Indian view of life: Romain Rolland, Ananda
K. Coomaraswamy and C.F. Andrews stand out prominently
among them.

India owes them gratitude because they presented before the
world an image of India which uplifted her not only in the eyes
of the West but also of the Indians themselves, who were los-
ing faith in their own way of life because of the glaring impact
of the West.

Nineteenth century India, would have, in any case, come
in contact with Western ideals of nationalism, liberty and
rationalism and would have come to know of its own past
glory, thereby feeling pride in its past and developing confi-
dence in its future, yet without the splendid contributions of
these foreign friends, the turning point—from medievalism to
the modern era—would have been more time-consuming and
hazardous. Certainly the thorny and difficult path along which
modern Indian nation and civilization emerged would not have
been interspersed with fragrant flowering orchards and oasis of
sweet memory as it is now.
C. F. ANDREWS

"He did not pay his respects to India from a distance, with detached and calculated prudence. He threw in his lot without reserve in gracious courtesy with the ordinary folk of this land."

— Rabindranath Tagore

On a cold wintry night, Andrews had once gone to the Railway station to receive some guests. The train being late, he walked into the Station Master’s room to find out when it would arrive. A beggar woman followed him and seeing a warm fire burning there, crouched down beside it. The Station Master was furious and ordered her out harshly. Andrews pleaded with him and begged him to let her stay for a while, and get warm. But the Station Master would have none of it. Andrews took off his own warm coat and wrapped it tenderly around the beggar woman’s shoulders, saying “Take this, it will save you from catching a chill.”

There are numerous such examples of his care and consideration for the poor in India. Because of these traits Andrews has been lovingly called ‘Deenabandhu’—The Friend of the poor.

This was, however, only one aspect of Andrews’ many-faceted and busy life, spent in helping India and the Indians attain their rightful aspirations and goals.

Early Life

Charles Freer Andrews was born on 12 February, 1871, in New Castle on Tyne. He was the son of a minister of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

Early in life he assimilated the true meaning of compassion and kindness. He got the most tender love from his mother—
and this made a deep impression on him. He in turn was to shower this love on all those around him.

Andrews entered King Edward VI School with the aid of a scholarship. He was fond of poetry and painting. He was considered a model student both in the classroom as well as in extra-curricular activities.

In 1890, he won an open scholarship and joined Pembroke College at Cambridge. In 1893, he succeeded in the examination, getting a First Class with distinction in Classics. Two years later, he cleared Theological Tripos, again with distinction.

In 1896, he went to work at Pembroke College Mission in South London. Here, he developed an aversion towards traditional religion, while his love and compassion towards the poor and the down-trodden increased.

Later, he left the Mission and became Vice-Principal of Westcott House, a theological seminary for training High Church clergy at Cambridge.

Andrews decided to go to India when Basil Westcott, who had gone to serve the Mission in India, died of cholera in Delhi. Basil in his writings, had spoken highly of India, placing it side by side with Greece — while Greece had been the leader of Europe, India, in his opinion, would be the leader of Asia.

He came to India on 20 March, 1904. Years later he claimed this date “a second birthday in my life”.

**At St. Stephen’s**

Andrews was formally admitted to the Cambridge Brotherhood and joined St. Stephen’s College in Delhi. Here he met Sushil Kumar Rudra, who was then its Vice-Principal. It was Rudra, who initiated Andrews into “the strangeness of the new life in the East”. Years later, he wrote: “I owe to Sushil Rudra what I owe to no one else in the world, a friendship which has made India from the first not a strange land but a familiar country”.

At St. Stephen’s, Andrew’s influence was all-pervasive. His teaching was inspired. He could teach any subject in the Humanities, but the subject in which he excelled, was English poetry. His teaching of history was equally masterly. He never referred to the text-book but drew upon the vast storehouse of his memory.
In 1907, Hibbert-Ware, the Principal of the College, was offered a bishopric in one of the colonies and Andrews was offered the Principalship of St. Stephen's. He rejected it, and pleaded that it should go to Sushil Rudra who was Vice-Principal and his senior at the College by many years. Till then, no Indian had been appointed Principal of any missionary college. Andrews carried the day; the authorities agreed to appoint Rudra Principal but with much fear and trembling, for they felt that they were trying a dangerous experiment. However, the experiment proved such a success that many other missionary colleges followed suit.

In guiding the affairs of the college, Andrews and Rudra made an ideal team—Andrews with his idealistic vision chalked out the policy which Rudra moderated and put into practice in a cautious manner. The reputation of the college rose very high, so that it attracted some of the best talent both on the staff as well as among the students.

For sometime, while still teaching at St. Stephen's, Andrews went and settled in the Chamar Bastee at Subzi Mandi and worked among the cobblers. He also made his students visit the slums in the neighbourhood and organize health and temperance campaigns. He thus made them aware of social evils such as drink and drugs and the disease and poverty of their less-privileged brethren. This sort of work was not new to Andrews. Back in England, he used to visit the homes of the very poor people who lived in slums adjacent to the Church he frequented.

**Wider Horizons**

The first decade of the twentieth century was a period during which the feeling of nationalism spread throughout the length and breadth of India. As part of the Swadeshi movement, Lancashire cloth was being burnt in the streets of Calcutta. The Extremist Party was agitating for Swaraj (complete independence) under the leadership of Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Bipinchandra Pal and Arabindo Ghose. Andrews saw the change taking place in India, and decided for himself not to restrict his field of work to missionary duties alone but to widen it so as to help the Indians in realizing their dream of independence, regeneration and renaissance.
In an article ‘The Indian Point of View’ published in 1908, he posed a question: “The pulse of a new life is beating in Indian hearts... They feel subjection and inequality as they never did in the past. What will be the Church’s answer to this new spirit? The Anglo-Saxon Church, even in its early missionary days, led the English people into freedom, unity and self-dependence. Can the Indian Church, tied as she is to a foreign State Establishment, do the same in India?” To this question, he himself supplied the answer. He said: “The awakening of the East in its effects upon politics, art, literature and thought may well be called a Renaissance. With very much of this Renaissance—with the longing for freedom and enlightenment, the love of country, the desire for a true and healthy national existence, the wish to elevate the countless myriads of the common people—no thoughtful Christian can fail to sympathize. As an Englishman, he may feel at times that the day of his power is on the wane, but as a Christian he cannot but rejoice and welcome into the brotherhood of man the new nations that are now being born.”

He discussed the Indian situation with his friends and acquaintances and expressed his sympathies for their cause openly. This made him suspect in the eyes of the regime, but brought him into close contact with national leaders like Gokhale, Lajpat Rai and others.

The call came for him in November 1913 to take a plunge into the national scene in India. Gokhale requested him to proceed to South Africa to rectify the wrong done to the Indian community by the white regime there. He responded to the call of Gokhale with fervour and enthusiasm.

Gandhiji and Polak received Andrews and Pearson, when they landed at Durban in 1941. Andrews found the personality of Gandhiji suffused with humanism and charity. “Our hearts”, Andrews wrote later, “met from the first moment we met each other, and they have remained united by the strongest ties of love ever since. To be with him was an inspiration which awakened all that was best in me and gave me a high courage, enkindled and enlightened by his own. His tenderness towards every slightest thing that suffered pain was only part of his tireless search for truth whose other name was God.” In turn
Gandhijji realised that "it was not a friendship between an Englishman and an Indian. It was an unbreakable bond between two seekers and servants."

In Africa, Andrews moved amidst the people, discussed their problems and gauged their sentiments. He used his influence with the Governor General, Gladstone, whom he knew personally. He argued and persuaded the authorities with cogent analysis of the trouble to hammer out a settlement to the Indian problem.

He exhorted the regime to take a humane stand, to repeal the imposition of the £3 toll tax imposed on Indians, to retract the Act, declaring as illegal, the religious ceremonies of Indian marriages. His efforts paid rich dividends when the Indian Relief Act was passed.

**Love for Tagore**

Andrews met Tagore in 1912, at the time when Yeats, the Irish poet, read some of Tagore's English renderings of his own poems in the *Gitanjali*. The same evening Andrews had an intimate conversation with the poet and a bond was forged which was never to break. His poems gave Andrews the idea that Tagore's poetry had a supreme appeal and message to the West. In admiration he wrote: "I believe that the way to mutual understanding between East and West lies in Tagore's poetry."

In April 1914, Andrews paid his first visit to Shantiniketan and the poet welcomed him with a special song composed for him. Andrews joined Shantiniketan in 1915 and it was his home till he passed away. He literally merged into Shantiniketan. He helped the Sriniketan, the agricultural sector of the institution, to develop. He started social work in the villages round about.

The letters that passed between Andrews and Tagore project the deep bond of friendship and appreciation between them. In a letter to Tagore on 23, May, 1914, Andrews wrote: "My heart is yours, my beloved friend and you are tracking me in the only way I can ever learn — through sympathy and love. Your letters have been coming morning by morning .... They have brought me a vision of a larger, fuller life than I had ever known. It is dawning upon me, and I am opening my dim
eyes: praying with awe that it may be given me through love, to enter that world which you have entered. There are so many things I long to ask you but they can wait. I will keep my heart's love pure that it may strengthen you.” From Paris on 7, September, 1920, Tagore wrote to Andrews: “Your letters always bring the atmosphere of Shantiniketan round my mind, with all its colour and sounds and movements; and my love for my boys, like a migratory bird, crosses back over the sea seeking its own dear nest in the Ashram. Your letters are great gifts to me—I have not the power to repay them in kind...."

The following remarks indicate the appreciation in which they held each other. “Andrews,” said Tagore, “did not pay his respects to India from a distance with detached and calculated prudence. He threw in his lot without reserve in gracious courtesy with the ordinary folk of this land.... He came to live with us in our joys and sorrows, our triumphs and misfortunes identifying himself with a defeated and humiliated people.” On his part Andrews wrote: “I have never in my whole life met any one so completely satisfying the needs of friendship and intellectual understanding and spiritual sympathy as Tagore.”

**Regards for Gandhiji**

Gandhiji found in Andrews a ‘brother’ who would rush to his side in times of need. This was especially the case when Gandhiji had any dangerous illness. On two such occasions—in the years 1918 and 1934—Andrews was with him night and day while he was very near death. When Gandhiji went to London to negotiate with the British Government in 1930, Andrews acted as a bridge between the separate factions. When he watched the response of Gandhiji to the moves and counter-moves, he found that Gandhiji “interpreted through his actions, much that I have tried to understand.... He has shown me the meaning of that ‘greater love’ whereof Christ speaks”.

While Andrews had the highest regard for Gandhiji, he did not hesitate to express his views in case he differed with the latter. When Gandhiji made a dramatic bonfire of foreign clothes to foster the Swadeshi movement, Andrews criticised the action and stated: “Destroying in fire the noble handiwork of one’s own fellowmen and women, of one’s brothers and
sisters abroad, saying it would be 'defiling' to use it— I cannot
tell you how different all this appears to me....' when Gandhiji
encouraged recruitment of Indian soldiers for World War I, Andrews expressed his painful disagreement. Again, when Gandhiji described Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dayanand Saraswati as pigmies in comparison to Ramanand and Kabir, and when he attacked the Christian missionaries for their work in India, Andrews felt hurt and wrote strongly to Gandhiji.

Both Tagore and Andrews disagreed with Gandhiji on some of his techniques. Both of them thought that Gandhiji was clearly wrong in asking the students to leave their educational institutions and in the words of the poet, "it was like utilizing the fire from the altar of sacrifice in incendiariism". Both agreed that the movement should not be run by a rabble but by hand-picked men.

These differences, however, did not dampen their affection for each other. Both Andrews and Gandhiji found in each other the honesty and integrity which they cherished. Andrews was with Gandhiji right from his first struggle in Champaran District in 1917. He was at Jallianwala Bagh, the Vaikom Satyagraha, the Assam Tea Labour and Assam-Bengal Railway strikes. He was Gandhiji's mediator both in India and in England. He spread Gandhiji's message in the States. His last words to Gandhiji on his death-bed were, "Mohan, I feel that Swaraj is coming."

Andrews helped the workers in the textile mills in Madras; Railway workers at Howrah, Lilloah and Kachrapara; the victimised Railway workers at Tundla. He did relief work among the 4000 tea-estate workers stranded at Chandpur (now in Bangla Desh), who were on their way to Uttar Pradesh after the disastrous post-war slump in the Assam tea gardens. He guided the relief operations during the disastrous Orissa floods. He frequently visited the camp at Matiaburuz in Calcutta and helped the returned emigrants from Fiji there. He worked with the Sikh reformers who were challenging the authority of religious leaders who had prevented access to the Guru-Ka-Bagh. He visited South India to examine the problems of the untouchable community and participated in the Temple Satyagraha at Vaikom. He investigated the conditions of forced labour in
Rajputana and the Simla Hills. He made a report on the Amritsar Massacre and condemned it very strongly. He thoroughly investigated the opium traffic in India, Burma and Malaya, and presented the findings in a report to the League of Nations Conference in 1924. He was twice elected the President of the All India Trade Union Congress.

During these acts of reconciliation, he was often misunderstood by both the parties. To many Indians, the sight of “an insidious, bowing, cringing, khaddar-wearing, bare-footed, white Sadhu who takes our side to help us lose the game”, was repulsive. Many Europeans dubbed him a ‘traitor’, and an ‘Indian spy’. About his predicament in the role of a reconciliator, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, once said: “I have seen him return from interviews with officials where harsh words had been said to him and about those whom he loved. But no anger ever entered his heart, and he knocked again and again at the doors of those who misunderstood him; he had overflowing love for India, and the burning desire that his England should do justice to her.”

Andrews had great hopes for the world through the regeneration of India. He appreciated the ancient and continuing religious traditions of India and thought that India could lead the world on the religious path. In 1924, he wrote: “While the great movement of Indian renaissance has been growing in depth and volume, year after year, there has been one constant longing in my heart, which I have tried in different ways and at different times to put into words. This intense longing has been that I might live to see this new movement in Indian life and thought tending more and more towards the ‘things that are of God’.... For I have felt, with all the strength of slowly formed conviction, which has become more settled every year, that among all the countries of the world in modern times, India has one great gift to offer to the future of the human race, namely her unbroken religious experience.”

That the religious experience alone was not enough to redeem the world, Andrews knew only too well. In his opinion, what was needed was an amalgam of the East and the West—an amalgam of religion and action. An essay written by him but published a few months after he had passed away, indicates this: “The
romantic and idealistic element which is still strong in the
religions of the East must be brought into closer contact with
the classical and realistic element which came back to Modern
Europe with the Renaissance and has dominated Europe ever
since. Only thus can the spiritual conception of the universe
which is innate in the consciousness of mankind, in East and
West alike, find its true setting and its full expression”.

_Lovable Eccentric_

Andrews had his lovable eccentricities too. He had no sense
of possession and even the few clothes he had, were kept in a
cupboard which was never locked. Most of them were stolen
by the servants under his very eyes. Undaunted, Andrews,
picked up whatever he wanted out of his colleague’s cupboards
in Maitland House where they lived together. These did not fit
him well. The baggy appearance of his clothes was well known.

Once Andrews was invited to dinner at the house of the
Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. The latter knew of Andrews’ dressing
habits well and told his staff not to wear dress-suits but to
appear in grey bags and old tweed coats in order to let Andrews
feel at home. Andrews, for some reason, took it into his head
to wear full evening dress. Andrews told his colleagues and
friends that he had been asked to dine at the Viceregal table
and as he did not want to disgrace the college, he wanted to be
correctly dressed. They took up the challenge enthusiastically
and rigged him out suitably in tailcoat, stiff shirt and white tie,
and a top hat which they hunted out for him. Immaculately
dressed, Andrews stepped into the car which the Viceroy had
sent for him. It caused a stir in the Viceregal household when
he reached there. Andrews came in and was introduced to the
other guests. He seemed quite unaware of his own appearance
or that of the others and chatted away in his friendly way with
all present. He was gayer than usual, but it would be difficult to
say he noticed even this.

Andrews had not kept very good health all along in India.
Once he had cholera. Sleeplessness was a chronic problem with
him. Over the years he had become quite lean and thin. He
passed away in Calcutta on 5 April, 1940.

In his will, he had written: “I wish to be buried in the
Christian faith as a Christian, near St. Paul’s Cathedral,
Calcutta— if possible with the blessing of the Metropolitan—
as a priest of the Christian Church and minister of the Christian
Faith which I hold with all my heart.”
His last wishes were fully carried out.
ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

"Today, if India takes her due rank as a first class artistic power, it is in large measure owing to Ananda Coomaraswamy."
— Rothenstein

ANCIENT INDIAN ART was considered primitive and even childish, by many of the Western scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A typical example is that of Vincent Smith, who said: "After A.D. 300, Indian sculpture, properly so-called, hardly deserves to be reckoned as art. The figures of both men and animals become stiff and formal, perception of the facts of nature almost disappears, and the idea of power is clumsily expressed by multiplication of members. The many-handed, many-armed gods and goddesses whose images crowd the walls and roofs of many a temple, have no pretensions to beauty and are frequently hideous and grotesque."

Impressions such as the above, about Indian art were based on a superficial and cursory glance. As we know so well, a proper assessment of the art of a country or civilisation cannot be made unless it is related in time and space to its traditions, religion, culture and social environment.

These erroneous impressions about Indian Art would have continued in the West, but for the work of Ananda Coomaraswamy. He interpreted Indian art in relation to its tradition, religion and culture and brought forth various points explaining why the Indian artists had adopted certain peculiar forms and techniques. He educated the Western mind to appreciate the Indian artistic traditions and consequently was instrumental in providing for the greater exposure and recognition of Indian
art. Replying to critics such as Vincent Smith, Coomaraswamy said: "It is no criticism of a fairy tale to say that in our world we meet no fairies. We should rather, and do actually, condemn on the score of sincerity, a fairy tale which should be so made as to suggest that in the writer's world there were no fairies. It is no criticism of a beast fable to say that after all the animals do not talk English or Sanskrit. Nor is it a criticism of an Indian icon to point out that we know no human beings with more than two arms.

"To appreciate any art, we ought not to concentrate our attention upon its peculiarities—ethical or formal—but should endeavour to take for granted whatever the artist takes for granted. No motif appears bizarre to those who have been familiar with it for generations: and in the last analysis it must remain beyond the reach of all others so long as it remains in their eyes primarily bizarre."

Furthermore, he added: "Different artists are inspired by different objects. What is attractive and stimulating to one is depressing and unattractive to another, and the choice also varies from race to race and epoch to epoch. As to the appreciation of such works, it is the same: for men in general admire only such work as by education or temperament they are predisposed to admire. To enter into the spirit of an unfamiliar art demands a greater effort than most are willing to make. The classic scholar starts convinced that the art of Greece has never been equalled or surpassed and never will be. There are many who think, like Michelangelo, that because Italian painting is good, therefore, good painting is Italian. There are many who never yet felt the beauty of Egyptian sculpture or Chinese or Indian painting or music: that they have also the hardihood to deny their beauty, however, proves nothing.

"Too often, we pretend to judge a work of art in the same way, calling it beautiful if it represents some form of activity of which we heartily approve, or if it attracts us by the tenderness or gaiety of its colour, the sweetness of its sounds or the charm of its movement."

Explaining the Hindu view of art, Coomaraswamy said: "Let us observe here that the purpose of the [Hindu] imager was neither self-expression nor the realization of beauty. He did
not choose his own problems, but like the Gothic sculptor, obeyed a hieratic canon. He did not regard his own or his fellow’s work from the standpoint of connoisseurship or aestheticism, not, that is to say, from the standpoint of the philosopher, or aesthete, but from that of a pious artisan. To him the theme was all in all, and if there is beauty in his work, this did not arise from aesthetic intention, but from a state of mind which found unconscious expression.”

Coomaraswamy, by thus explaining the objectives of the ancient Indian artists and analyzing their art objects properly, not only increased the prestige of Indian art in the eyes of the Western world, but also succeeded, to a large extent, in recreating faith and love in the minds of educated Indians about Indian art and its traditions.

Early Life

Ananda Coomaraswamy was born on 22, August 1877, in Colombo, Ceylon. His father Mutu Coomaraswamy, was a Ceylonese and his mother Beeby, an English lady of Kent. Ananda’s father had the distinction of being the first Asiatic to receive knighthood and the first Ceylonese to be called to the Bar in the reign of Queen Victoria. He, unfortunately died when Ananda was barely two years old.

Ananda had his education in England. At the age of twelve, he joined Wycliffe College at Stonehouse in Gloucestershire. In the beginning, he experienced some difficulties, mainly because he belonged to a different nationality. But later, he adjusted. Soon it became apparent to all that he had intellectual gifts. He was a House Monitor by 1892 and became Curator of the Field Club and a Prefect in 1893. He was interested in fossil collection and geology and took part in college debates and games. Describing him as he was during those days, one of his classmates said: “Coomaraswamy was respected by the boys of Wycliffe College, partly on account of his scholastic ability, but no less by his powers in kicking up his leg level with or above his head.... He had his ordinary share of ‘teasing’ by his school-mates, based in part on his being of different nationality and colour. This, however, could only be done in safety when out of reach of his arms and legs. In his first years at school his temper was a very quick one.... He left
school with the affectionate regard of his contemporaries who have followed his distinguished career with the greatest interest and little surprise."

After having done Inter-Arts in the year 1895, Coomaraswamy joined University College, London. From here he took his Doctor-of-Science degree in Geology. Thereafter at the young age of twenty-five, he was appointed Director of Geological Survey, in Ceylon.

His background of the East and familiarity with the West, opened up newer and broader horizons of ideas and ideals before him. After having lived in the West for over two decades, he had come to appreciate the value and need of preserving the Eastern traditions. When in Ceylon, he was pained to see the youth of his country turning away from their own culture and traditions and blindly following the Western way of life. There were others also who felt the same way. Thus was initiated a movement for a system of national education, teaching of Sinhalese and Tamil in all schools and encouragement of national culture, history and art in Ceylon. Coomaraswamy got interested in the cultural history of Ceylon and he made elaborate studies in Sinhalese art traditions. He published a monumental work, *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, in which he faithfully recorded the folk-art forms of the Sinhalese.

*Interest in Indian Art*

The study of Ceylonese art took him into the broader field of Indian art which had much in common with it. Gradually his interest, in the traditions of Indian art, increased. He visited India thrice to study, at first hand, Indian art and monuments, and to collect material and data for a proper understanding of its evolution and history. During his tour of north India in the autumn of 1910, he collected an enormous quantity of the finest specimens of Indian paintings and drawings and other master-pieces, which presented Indian art in hitherto unknown phases and expressions. This huge collection he magnanimously offered to present to the Indian nation, on the condition that an adequate museum and gallery be built at Benares, of which he himself offered to act as the curator. When this offer failed to elicit any favourable response, he approached the trustees of the Museun of Fine Arts, Boston, who readily agreed to accept
the collection and to build up a worthy gallery to house and
to present the collection for the benefit of students and connois-
seurs from all parts of the world. The collection now stands as
the most comprehensive and unique presentation of all the
phases of Indian art, brought together under one roof in any
part of the world. Coomaraswamy was appointed Keeper of the
Collection and a research-fellow in Indian art, at Boston,
in 1916. While it is a pity that India could not provide a place
to house its own art, it is gladdening to know that another
country appreciated its significance fully.

At Boston, Coomaraswamy devoted all his time and energies
to the study, understanding and interpretation of different as-
pects of Indian art. His articles and books which included: The
Aim of Indian Art, Indian Drawings and Paintings, Viśvakarma,
Dance of Śiva and Rajput Paintings, created an awareness
in the minds of the European scholars about the art of India,
and made many critics change their opinion of it for the better.

Dance of Śiva, one of the most widely read of his books,
reveals the magnitude of his interpretative genius on all aspects
of Indian art and culture. In his book, History of Indian and
Indonesian Art, he follows the trail of Indian art over the great
passes to Central Asia. He describes how it takes new forms
and breaks into new beauties as it spreads over Tibet, China,
Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Java, Sumatra and Japan. In each of
these countries, it takes a unique garb, assimilating influences
from foreign environments and traditions. Giving examples
from each of these countries, Coomaraswamy lucidly illustrates
the historical phases through which the Indian art passed,
against each foreign background.

His interpretation of Buddhist iconography is still considered
unsurpassed. His books on the subject, Buddha and the Gospel,
Elements of Buddhist Iconography and Buddha, The Gospel of
Buddhism, Nature of Buddhist Art, are witness to that. In them,
he surveys the whole Buddhist culture, and analyses and traces
the origin of Buddhist art to Vedic sources and supports his
thesis by illuminating references, displaying his astounding
grasp of the whole of Pali literature. On many points, he cites
parallel ideas from Greek, Latin and mediaeval Christian
literature to elucidate the basic ideas underlying Buddhist
iconography.
His scholarship was equally penetrative as regard the Muslim paintings. This is clearly indicated by his various essays and articles, richly documented at every step, and especially by his small monograph on the *Treatise of Al-Jazari on Automata*. His series of illustrated articles in *Moghul Iconography* (Artibus Asiae, 1927) is replete with new information and data, throwing a flood of light on its little known aspects.

Coomaraswamy worked not only towards the exposition and interpretation of Indian art, but also towards compiling, indexing and cataloguing the available Indian art objects. He compiled four voluminous catalogues of the collection of the Boston Museum, on sculpture, Rajput painting, Jaina painting, Moghul painting. All of these, for accuracy and scholarship, stand as unsurpassable models of museum inventories. The introductions to these catalogues and the bibliographies annexed to them, are mines of information and permanent guides to the study of these subjects. He contributed two important volumes to the series of *Arts Asiatics* : one on the *Oriental Miniatures* and the other on *Sculptures of Bodh Gaya*. For the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th Edition), he wrote eight articles on Indian art; Indian and Sinhalese Art and Archaeology, Indian Architecture, Indonesian and Further Indian Art, Iron in Art, Textiles and Embroideries in India, Bronze and Brass Ornamental work in India and Indonesia, Dance in India and Yakṣas. Prior to his contribution, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* had entirely ignored Indian and Asian Art. For the *National Encyclopaedia* of America, he wrote on Indian Dance, Architecture and Art.

Such a vast amount of material and knowledge, Coomaraswamy collected through his own unassisted hard labours. He possessed a working knowledge of many of the classical and modern languages and hence the literatures of many lands was accessible to him. As for his daily routine, he began work at five-thirty in the morning and continued till nine, after which time he left his home for the Museum where he worked till four-thirty in the afternoon. In the evening, after dinner, he returned to his books and typewriter, staying at his desk until ten o'clock. This routine he followed regularly for years together.
Personal Glimpses

"A slim and stately figure of six feet two inches, a crop of flowing white hair, a clean olive complexion, a prominent nose and a short grey beard— a combination of Mahatma Gandhi and Bernard Shaw...," this is how he has been described by an interviewer in his later years. Describing his characteristic habits, his wife once said: "He gets along beautifully with simple people. I mean, those whose minds have been unclouded by the folklore of our so-called Western culture. They understand him perfectly. The handyman around the house, I mean, or the cobbler, or almost anyone. Really learned people understand him, of course; and he understands them. But with what you might call middle-brows, there is no point of contact.

Coomaraswamy was not accustomed to observing formalities. Once while sitting in his home with his wife and having tea with a press reporter, he left the place all of a sudden. "The Doctor has an idea," explained Mrs. Coomaraswamy, "He is always like that." When she thought that the press reporter might have felt hurt, she added, "I tell you, if you had been the President of the Harvard College, he still would have left. He does that all the time."

Coomaraswamy detested publicity and was totally disinterested in establishing an identity for himself or in setting forth his own particular philosophy. He was also against the concept of raising the standard of living endlessly. He said, "Life is larger than bath-tubs, radios and refrigerators. I am afraid, the higher the standard of living, the lower the culture."

After his retirement, he was planning to return to India, to settle down here and to enter into what he called "this vanaprastha and sanyasa ashramas". Asked where he was likely to settle, he said: "Perhaps at the foot of the Himalayas or in Tibet. Some spot where I shall be least accessible." On being asked whether after having lived thirty years in Boston, accustomed to all the myriad comforts and conveniences of the American way of life, he would not find life in the Himalayas difficult, he answered: "These comforts are beneath contempt."

He passed away suddenly at his home in Needham, Massachusetts, on 9, September, 1947, a little more than two weeks after his seventieth birthday.
"He [Romain Rolland] has been the most successful worker, in the spiritual sphere, for a closer union between India and France."

— Prof. Louis Renou

"We take within our own, this hand which India extends to us. Our cause is one: the saving of human unity and its full accord. Europe, Asia, our strengths are different. Let us unite them for the accomplishment of a common task, for the achievement of human genius. Teach us to understand all things, Asia, teach us your knowledge of life! And learn of us action, achievement." This in a nutshell, expresses the objective which Romain Rolland strived after for the greater part of his life.

Early Life

Romain Rolland was born at Clamecy, Nievre, in the centre of France, on 29 January, 1866. He had his early education at Clamecy and in Paris. In 1886, he was admitted to the Ecole Normale Superieure where he took up the study of history, had a distinguished career there and in 1889 succeeded at the ‘Aggregation’. Between 1889 and 1891, he was a member of the French School of Rome.

After his marriage with Clatilde Breal in 1892, he with his wife, went to Rome to collect material for his thesis, On the Origins of the Opera. In 1893, he returned to Paris and started writing his thesis and in 1895, he was awarded the degree of Docteur-es-Letters. The same year he was appointed at Sorbonne University as a teacher of the History of music.
His Universalism

Romain Rolland's interests were, however, much wider than the subject he taught at the University. He was interested in the moral uplift of man everywhere. National boundaries, he thought, restricted and hindered the progress and development of man. He wrote about his conviction, uninhibitedly, in different journals and books. Many of his articles appeared during the pre-First World War days, when there was tension between his country, France, and Germany. These articles written more in the spirit of internationalism than nationalism, made him unpopular in his own country.

Above the Battlefield became his most controversial work. With its publication, Rolland, almost overnight, appeared to most of his countrymen as anti-national. Many of them called him names, such as, 'renegade', 'traitor', 'sold to Germany' or 'German Rolland'. In this book, all that Rolland had done was to suggest to his countrymen to rise above the prevailing, frenzied hatred for Germans in his country, which, he said, however, understandable in a situation of war, did little credit to a civilized nation like his. He advised them to cultivate, above all, the good human sense of justice and brotherhood. He said: "A great nation, assailed by war has to defend not only its frontiers, but also its reason. A day will come when every nation that ever went to war will be accounted for before history. The sum total of errors, lies, and grievous stupidities of such nations will then be weighed. We must try so that our sins of today are judged light on that historic day."

Unfortunately, Rolland was never properly understood or liked in his own country; his only 'fault' being that his horizons were far too wide. He did not belong to a party, a country or a single civilization. "Above religions, countries and conflict of ideas," he said, "I have a faith, a passion. It is love for life and independent mind. I believe it to be the duty of the European elite to defend this light which dominates and illumines as a beacon, the small world in which we struggle in the night.... The more I advance in life the more I feel that my role is to keep my spirit clear and independent, in the midst of all moral tempests affecting humanity.... I am religious in my own way; but my religion embraces all religions and all negations. I am not going to confine it to only one man or only one dogma, to
one transient form of this immensity of life." In 1913, he wrote "All limits suffocate me.... I have to feel around me the open, vibrant space in its entirety. Europe to me, is already a too small country."

Attraction towards India

Rolland saw an optimistic future for the world in the philosophic-religious paths shown by some of the great men of modern India. He was greatly impressed by the thoughts and ideals of Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. He not only exchanged thoughts with some of them, and read their writings but also wrote about them for the Western readers, thereby letting their message be known throughout the world.

Rolland met Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, when the latter visited him on 17 April 1921. They met because they knew they had similar ideal—universalism. Two years earlier Rolland had written to Tagore about his dream of the 'Union of Europe and Asia: the two hemispheres of the spirit', and had admired the poet "for having contributed towards this more than anyone else."

Rolland had been greatly impressed with the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1924, he wrote, "Gandhi is one of the highest moral personalities, one of the most disinterested and purest that I know in the world. I know him well. I have closely followed his life and action for the last 40 years. Never has his great character failed. Gandhi is not only for India a hero whose legendary memory will be incorporated into the thousand-years old epic of that nation's history. He has not only been the spirit of active life which has blown into the people of India the proud awareness of their unity, their power and their craving for independence, for the people of the world, he has renewed the message of Christ, forgotten or betrayed. He has written his name among the sages of humanity; the radiance of his figure has penetrated all the regions of the earth."

Rolland met Mahatma Gandhi in December, 1931, when the latter was on his way home from London, after the Second

1 Romain Rolland's Biography of Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most widely read books on the subject. It has lately been reprinted in India.
Round Table Conference. Rolland describes how Gandhi flung his arm around him and “leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his grizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of St. Dominic and St. Francis.” Gandhi in turn writing about the visit, said, “Could I have left India just to visit him... I would have undertaken the voyage.”

How well he understood, both Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore, is indicated from the way he summed up their characteristics. He said, “On the one side, we have the spirit of religious faith and charity seeking to found a new humanity, on the other, we have a new intelligence, free-born, serene and broad, seeking to unite aspirations of all humanity in sympathy and understanding.” Rolland valued both and he thought both must go into the composition of a healthy and creative human society.

Rolland was also attracted towards the spiritual teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. After having read and grasped their teaching and personalities, he wrote their biographies, quoting profusely from their teachings so as to let the Western readers know about them. These biographies have in them more of the living breath of the religious life of the Indian people than there is in many learned treatises on our religion. He said: “The giant banyan [India], too often considered by the West to be dried up and withered, still continues to shoot out great flowering branches.”

In the Biography of Ramakrishna, he wrote: “The man whose image I evoke here was the crowning of two thousand years of the inner life of three hundred million people. Though he died forty years ago, he is an animator of the contemporary India. He was neither a hero of action like Gandhi, nor a genius of art or thinking like Goethe or Tagore. He was a little Brahmin peasant from Bengal whose outer life unfolded itself in a limited sphere, without any striking happenings, outside the political and social action of his time. But his inner life embraced the multiplicity of men and gods.”

In the Biography of Vivekananda, he wrote, “I consider Swami Vivekananda to be a blazing fire of spiritual energy.” Rolland called him, “The St. Paul of this Messiah of Bengal” who travelled throughout the world and was the aqueduct, akin to those red arches which span the Roman campagna,
along which the waters of the spirit have flowed from India to Europe and from Europe back to India joining scientific reason to Vedantic faith and the past to the future."

Writing about Rolland's interest in the contemporary India and Indian thought, Prof. R.K. Dasgupta says: "What is particularly striking about Rolland’s response to India and what makes him almost unique amongst the Western exponents of her culture is that he was the first great European thinker to fully appreciate the large significance of the true Indian culture. There was not anything in him of the fashionable Indophile who loves to air a fashionable disgust of the West.... He was so earnest about contemporary India because in his mind that India alone could preserve the finest achievements of an ancient civilization. He wrote on Gandhi and not on Buddha, on Ramakrishna and not on a medieval mystic, on Vivekananda and not on Shankara, and on Tagore and not on the Upaniṣads, because he thought the life and work of these great representatives of modern India were important to his age as a significant step towards a universal human society. He believed that to the emergence of such a society the spiritual and moral experiment of modern India could make an important contribution."

**Man of Letters**

Some of the literary writings of Romain Rolland were highly appreciated all over the world. His most famous work is *Romance of Jean-Christophe*, the biography of a German musician. It is in ten volumes; the first one appeared in 1904 and the last in 1912. In 1916, he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature for the year 1915. This great honour was, however, only a by-product of his real work. He confessed that his heart was never in literature; it was only a means to put forward his ideas for his objective of the oneness and well-being of the whole human race. "I don't care for literature. He who tries to read my writings as literature is sure not to understand me at all." In 1933, he was awarded the Goethe Medal by the German Government of the Chancellor Hitler; but Rolland refused to accept it.

It is not really the quality of his literary works, great as they are, that makes Rolland a remarkably great man of recent times. His greatness lies entirely in his bold stand on some of
the vital issues facing his country, Europe and the world during his lifetime, and to the set of ideals he represented and which gave expression to his age.

In 1913, Rolland had gone and settled in Switzerland. When the First World War broke out in 1914, he was still there. Because of his age, he was not called back to France and stayed there till 1937. In that year, he decided to leave Switzerland, where he had spent twenty-six years, and returned to Vazelay, France. In September, 1939, on the eve of the declaration of war, he wrote to President Daladier of France to assure him of his “entire devotion to the cause of the democracies and France.”

Romain Rolland suffered from ill-health all his life because of asthma. He died in Vazelay, France, on 30 December 1944.

Romain Rolland was far ahead of his times. His ideal of universalism could not be appreciated during his time. Consequently, he was a sad man and in despair. He wrote, “I was much read but little understood. Really I have come across so many of them, all companions but for an hour who wished me to be a slave of a particular work and were indignant that my clock-hand, following the rule, should continue to go around the dial.”

Path for the West

Rolland wanted to share his enlightening experience of the Indian religion and culture with his European brethren so that they in their predicament may also find a secure path to travel along. He said: “There are a number of us in Europe for whom European civilization no longer suffices — dissatisfied children of the spirit of the West, who feel ourselves cramped in our old abode, and who, without depreciating the subtlety, the brilliance, the heroic energy of a philosophy which conquered and ruled the world for more than two thousand years, nevertheless, have had to confess its insufficiencies and its limited arrogance. We few look towards Asia.

“... The Western races find themselves trapped deep into a blind alley, and are savagely crushing each other out of existence. The Western world, abandoning itself utterly to its search of individual and social happiness, maims and disfigures
life by the very frenzy of its haste, and kills in the shell the happiness which it pursues. Like a runaway horse who from between his blinkers sees only the blinding road before him, the average European cannot see beyond the boundaries of his individual life, or of the life of his class, of his country, or of his party. Within that narrow pale he imprisons of his own will, the realization of the human ideal.

"Who, amid the disorder in which the chaotic conscience of the West is struggling, has sought whether the forty-century old civilization of India ... had not answers to offer to our griefs, models, it may be, for our aspirations?

"I do not suggest that Europeans should embrace an Asiatic faith, I would merely invite them to taste the delight of this rhythmic philosophy, this deep, slow breath of thought. From it, they would learn those virtues which above all others, the soul of Europe (and of America) needs today: tranquillity, patience, manly hope, unruffled joy, 'like a lamp in a windless place, that does not flicker'."

India owes gratitude to this great man because he presented before the world an image of India which uplifted her not only in the eyes of the West but also of the Indians themselves, who were losing faith in their own way of life because of the glaring impact of the West.
“He is a shining example of heroism in laboratory which can be no less than heroism in battle field.”

—Moynihan

CHOLERA EPIDEMICS HAVE broken out, from time to time, in India and other parts of Asia, for many centuries past. They have annihilated whole families, villages and towns, cutting short millions of lives. The devastation of life caused by them was so large that sometimes there was none available to remove the dead; the resulting stench and pollution made the affected areas uninhabitable, barren and famine-ridden. Such epidemics occurred frequently in Bengal during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Prevention of Cholera

At about this time, in another part of the world — the Pasteur Institute in France — a young Russian-born Jew named Haffkine, was experimenting with cholera vibrio, the germ that had lately been known to cause this disease. He was trying to lessen their disease-producing capacity, so that an injection of them in a normal person, may not cause the disease but confer an added resistance — immunity — against a subsequent accidental infection.

He grew these germs in the laboratory, exposed them to a blast of hot air and then injected them in rabbits. The rabbits showed no signs of cholera. A few days later, he injected the same rabbits with virulent and deadly cholera germs. Yet the rabbits survived. In July 1892, Haffkine
injected himself with his own preparation of this cholera vaccine which contained live but weakened germs. He had slight fever and some discomfort, but that was all. Animal experiments plus this self-inoculation was clear proof of the fact that he had discovered a method by which cholera could be prevented; and that this method was pretty harmless. Later, he inoculated a few of his Russian colleagues and had similar results. At this stage, he was sure of the effectiveness and harmlessness of his vaccine and was ready to try it on other human beings living in cholera epidemic areas.

Having learnt that a cholera epidemic was then prevalent in Calcutta, he approached the British authorities for permission to proceed to the spot. Permission being granted, he arrived in India in March 1893 and at once set to work.

First of all he demonstrated the harmlessness of his vaccine by injecting himself and his colleagues. Then followed rows upon rows of army and civilian officers, whole regiments, jail inmates, tea-gardeners and others. The Indian press gave him wide publicity, with the result that he received invitations from different provinces to come and administer the vaccine there. He travelled through Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province, inoculating over 20,000 persons in the first year and over 40,000 in the second.

In August 1895, Haffkine returned to Europe for a few months. This was to recover his health which, due to the rigours of travel, uncongenial food and sanitation in India, had weakened considerably. When he returned to Calcutta in March 1896, people in their thousands were waiting for the injections. At once, he set to work again and another 30,000 injections were given to people, many of whom had come from different far off places.

As a result of these inoculations, there was a 42 to 80 per cent fall in deaths due to cholera. For the first time in human history, it raised hopes among the people of the ultimate release from this scourge. Haffkine's splendid work won him praises from all over the world. Medical journals of repute, like *Lancet* and the *Indian Medical Gazette*, hailed the discovery as an important land-mark in medical history.

Haffkine taught his methods and techniques to batches of
other doctors, many of whom had come from different provinces. Gradually as the work spread, there were many other hands available to take up the job.

Prevention of Plague

While Haffkine was busy with cholera research work, a severe epidemic of plague broke out in the city of Bombay. A ship from Hongkong harboured at the port there, and some of the plague-infected rats coming with it from the heavily infected areas of Hongkong, landed there and led to a severe epidemic of the disease in Bombay. The Government of India, being thoroughly acquainted with the splendid work of Haffkine in connection with prevention of cholera, requested him to come to Bombay to help prevent the spreading of the plague.

Haffkine arrived in Bombay on 7 October 1896, and set up a small improvised laboratory in one of the rooms of the Patit Laboratory of the Grant Medical College. To assist him in his work, there was a clerk and three peons.

It was already known that plague in man was caused by the bite of rat fleas which had previously fed on the plague-infected rats. Lately, in 1894, the germs that caused the disease had been recognized by Yersin and Kitasato in Japan. Haffkine grew plague germs in the laboratory and then tried different methods to weaken these germs so as to make a vaccine out of them that was effective and harmless. He ultimately succeeded in making one after working for fourteen hours a day for many weeks at a stretch.

He injected ten rats with this vaccine. After a few days, when he thought the vaccine should have produced its protective effect, he let loose in their cage one plague-infected rat and another ten uninjected, but otherwise healthy rats. Plague at once spread in the cage and within twenty-four hours nine of the ten uninjected rats died. All the ten injected ones survived!

This was clear demonstration of the fact that he had discovered the method of plague-prevention. In December 1896 and January 1897, he performed further animal experiments until he was fully convinced of the efficacy and harmlessness of the vaccine.

On 10 January 1897, he inoculated himself — the first human being thus inoculated — with 10 ml. of his own vaccine. He
had fever and some discomfort but he kept working in spite of that. It proved that the vaccine was harmless and had not many side-effects in human beings.

Thus equipped, he called for volunteers for the injections. From the neighbouring localities where plague was raging, some people responded. There were many more who were sceptical and did not come forward. Yet even they served a useful purpose as controls. A total of 2,200 people got the injection and 6,000 refused it in an epidemic area. After a few weeks, when the results were evaluated, it was found that of the 2,200 inoculated, only 36 died (mere 1.6 per cent), while of the 6,000 uninoculated 1,482 (24.7 per cent) died. In another series, in which H.H. Aga Khan and many of his followers of the Khoja sect were inoculated, the results were even better. Of the 3,184 people inoculated, only 3 died of plague, while there were 77 deaths among 9,516 who had refused injection. When these results were made known to the public, the enthusiasm for the vaccine gradually increased.

Haffkine’s work on plague received all the honour that was due to it from all over the world. Queen Victoria decorated him with the Order of Companion of the British Empire. Soon he was made Director-in-Chief of the Plague Research Laboratory.

While his marvellous success in the prevention of cholera and plague won him honours from different parts of the world, in India it created jealousy in the hearts of many of his working colleagues.

Victim of Jealousy

Haffkine was a Jew and as such was not well-received in many places. Being a Russian he was suspected of being a spy in India; the relations between England and Russia being anything but friendly at the time. Furthermore he was a non-medical man and the military medical personnel in India was greatly jealous of his success. While the British Government as such honoured his efforts and successes, many British officers did not hesitate to put hurdles in his way. They were always on the look out to let him down and to underrate his efforts and achievements. Indeed they wanted to make a case against him so as to get rid of him. And they nearly succeeded
at least once.

In November 1902, out of the 107 people inoculated with anti-plague vaccine at the village Malkowal in the Punjab, nineteen developed tetanus and died. The Government of India, as usual, appointed a Commission of enquiry to investigate the cause. Haffkine told the Commission that along with the bottle whose contents caused tetanus, there were four others also which were filled with the same material at the same time. They had caused no untoward reaction at all. During the course of inquiry another fact came to light. While giving the injections, the cork of the incriminated bottle had fallen down on the ground accidentally but the English doctor named Elliot who was giving the injections put the same cork on the bottle without much care. This could indeed have been the cause of the tetanus, as the contaminated cork could lead to the entry of these germs in the vaccine and subsequently into the inoculated persons. The Commission ignored these glaring facts but held Haffkine guilty of the charge that he had stopped using carbolic acid as an antiseptic in the preparation of the vaccine. Haffkine had stopped using carbolic acid so as to make the vaccine more effective.

As a consequence of the judgement of the Commission, the Government of India relieved him of the post of Director-in-Chief of the Plague Research Laboratory. Disappointed, Haffkine left for Europe to visit several famous laboratories there. In the meanwhile, the findings of the Commission were submitted to the Secretary of State in London, who referred them to the scientists at the Lister Institute for opinion. They exonerated Haffkine and blamed Elliot, the doctor through whose negligence the injection material had got contaminated. The Secretary of State reported his finding to the Government of India and reinstated Haffkine.

Haffkine agreed to return. He was, however, posted not at Bombay but at Calcutta, as the Bombay post had already been occupied by another person in the meanwhile. Haffkine worked in Calcutta till 1914 and then retired.

*Victim of Prejudice*

Born on 15 March 1860, at Odessa (then known as Novo Rossisk, a prosperous Black Sea port at the time of Tsarist
Russia), Haffkine was the son of a school-master named Aaron, a Jew. After his mother, Rosalic Chavkin, died in his childhood, his father moved to Berdiansk, on the sea of Azov. In 1870, Haffkine joined a local county school and in 1872, another school (Gymnasium) where he learnt German and Russian. In 1879, he completed his studies here and entered the Faculty of Natural Science at Odessa. Here he learnt physics, mathematics and zoology, and matriculated in 1882. Later he presented a dissertation in zoology and was awarded the degree of Candidate of Natural Sciences.

Haffkine joined the Zoological Museum at Odessa as its Curator. Here he worked on the nutrition and heredity characters of the smallest forms of life, the unicellular organisms.

Haffkine, being a Jew, had to face a lot of prejudice in Russia. After assasination of the Tsar Alexander, he was arrested, alongside many others of his community, on the pretext that he was a member of the Jewish Self-Defence Organization. He was released only after Professor Metchnikov, his teacher and an eminent scientist, appeared as a defence witness in his case.

Haffkine thought he had not much chance of promotion or progress in Russia. So like many of his Jewish colleagues, he migrated to Switzerland in 1888. Here he worked as an Assistant in physiology under Professor Schiff at Geneva Medical School for one year. In 1889, he shifted to Paris with the idea of working under the world famous bacteriologist, Louis Pasteur. It was here that he conducted his initial researches on the cholera vaccine before coming over to India.

After he retired from service in India, Haffkine went back and settled in France, at Boulogne-sur-Seine. He had stopped doing any active research work but did write occasionally for some of the medical journals. Being a bachelor, away from the country of his birth, rather disappointed by the shabby treatment that he had received at the hands of his professional colleagues in India, he now devoted his time and energies mainly to religious pursuits to seek peace of mind. He revisited Odessa in the U.S.S.R in 1927, but this caused him further disappointment, as tremendous changes, not to his liking, had occurred there in the meanwhile.

After his return from Russia in April 1928, he settled down.
in Lausanne, in Switzerland. He died there on 20 October, 1930.

Tributes

The Plague Research Laboratory at Bombay, whose name subsequently was changed to Bombay Bacteriology Laboratory, in 1904, was renamed the Haffkine Institute in 1925, in honour and recognition of the well-deserved efforts and achievements of its founder. When Haffkine was informed of this news, while he was living in retirement in France, he wrote: "I am very greatly indebted to Col. Mackie for the name given to Parel Laboratory and to you for the terms in which you have written to me. Very much do I appreciate also your mentioning of the friendly attitude towards me of the other members of the Institute staff. The work at Bombay absorbed the best years of my life and I need not explain how much I feel everything connected therewith. I wish the Institute prosperity as an active centre for work on behalf of the health organization of the country and I send blessings to the whole of the staff."

India owes special gratitude to Haffkine because it was through his efforts that during his lifetime and after, thousands of human lives were saved from the dreaded scourges of cholera and plague. While plague has been completely eradicated from India, cholera is still on its way out.
This day designing God
    Hath put into my hand
A wonderous thing. And God
    Be praised. At his command,
I have found thy secret deeds
    Oh million-murdering Death.
I know that this little thing
    A million men will save ...
Oh death, where is thy sting ?
Thy victory, oh grave.

Ronald Ross, on 20 August, 1897, just after he had discovered the cause of malaria.

Malaria, through the ages, has killed and incapacitated mankind, more than perhaps any other disease in the world. It had annihilated civilizations and brought doom and defeat to otherwise competent armies and their generals. It led to the abandonment of many a useful endeavour because it devoured armies of workers. In India, it has killed, and sucked the energies of millions of people for centuries. Malaria fevers are described in the Atharvaveda, the Charaka and the Susruta samhitas. The Atharvaveda even describes the regions in India where malarial fevers were commonly prevalent.

Hippocrates and some other Greeks, associated malaria with marshy areas and said that it was caused by the bad air (malaria) arising from the stagnant water in the marshes. Later, a Roman agriculturist named Palladius, confirmed that draining away the marshes, reduces the incidence of the malarial fevers. He even suggested that the disease might be caused by drinking water containing mosquito larvae.
Early in the nineteenth century, when medical scientists examined under the microscope blood from patients suffering from malaria, they noticed the presence of a large number of minute black specks. In 1878, Alphonse Laveran, a French doctor, serving with the army in Algeria, noted that occasionally in the red blood cells of these patients, there was a tiny pulsating colourless blob from around whose edges the black specks emerged. Periodically, this blob broke up and from it tiny organisms were discharged into the blood stream. Some of these attached themselves to other red blood cells, while the unattached ones brought forth tiny threads on their surface like the feelers of an octopus; these latter organism were present only in people suffering from malaria.

These observations of Laveran were useful in that they indicated an association between the organisms and malaria; but how did they get into the patient’s blood was not known at all. Examination of the stagnant water from the ponds and ditches revealed no sign of them. Injection of such water in the volunteers did not lead to their appearance in the volunteer’s blood either.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there were scores of scientists in various countries working on this problem. Only Ronald Ross succeeded in it. The story of his researches in this regard is very interesting — more interesting than many a mystery novel.

Initial Failures

In 1890, when Ronald Ross was posted at Bangalore — his first regular appointment after having been in the Indian Medical Service for nine years — he got the opportunity of working on malaria. He started looking in the blood of malaria patients for various organisms that had been described previously by Laveran. However, he did not succeed in finding them and so became rather sceptical about them. Not knowing how else to proceed, he left India in 1894 and went back home where he consulted Patrick Manson, the well-known expert in tropical diseases. The latter had no difficulty in demonstrating to him these organisms in the blood of malaria patients. Manson also made him aware of his own hypothesis that these organisms were transmitted to the human beings by the
mosquitoes. Ross had also been lately thinking more or less along these lines; so in the views held by Manson, he found confirmation of his own views.

_A Ray of Hope_

On his return to India in 1897, Ross rejoined his regiment at Secunderabad, and immediately set to work. He found five malaria patients in the hospital and in the blood of three of them, he found the typical organisms. He surrounded these patients with nets and released mosquitoes within. After the mosquitoes had drawn blood, he captured and dissected them with a view to discovering the parasites within. He repeated these experiments many times. He frantically laboured at this job in the summer heat of Secunderabad. Examination of each one of the mosquitoes took him two to three hours of intense peering through the microscope. At this stage of his work, he wrote: "The screws of my microscope were rusted with sweat from my fore-head and hands, and its last remaining eye-piece was cracked...." Search for the parasite inside the body of the mosquito was a tedious and time-consuming task. Ross wrote that under a microscope, "a mosquito appears as big as a hippopotamus is to the naked eye, and the object I am looking for need not necessarily be larger than, say, a nut or an apple, and, moreover, we had no clue at all as to the position, the parasite would take up in the enormous mass of cells of which a mosquito is composed."

In the course of these experiments, Ross observed that the blood he withdrew from the patients contained crescent-shaped organisms, but the stomach of the mosquitoes contained only spherical objects. From this, he concluded that the objects in the mosquito's stomach were a further stage of the organisms present in the patient's blood.

This was an important observation in that it clearly associated the mosquito as a factor in the causation of malaria. But there were still many unanswered questions: How did the organism get into the human blood and how did it get out of the mosquito? And which mosquito was it that was associated with malaria; there being at least two thousand different kinds of them known already.
"Eureka"

On 20 August, 1897, while he was tired and his eyes were hurting, Ross decided to look at the last but one specimen. He took the stomach out and searched the remainder of the body and again found nothing. He could scarcely bring himself to look at the numerous cells of the stomach tissue, which under the microscope looked like a collection of flag stones. He had done it a thousand times before, without any convincing result.

"But the Angel of Fate fortunately laid his hand on my head...," he wrote. He saw a circular object which could not be one of the cells of the stomach tissue of the mosquito. In it were black granules exactly like those seen in the malarial blood. It at once dawned upon him that the organisms associated with malaria had gone into the walls of the mosquito’s stomach. He laughed and shouted for his assistant, but he had gone for his seista. "No, No", Ross cried to himself, "Dame Nature, you are a sorceress, but you do not trick me so easily...."

Ross now made careful notes and drawings, went home for tea and slept soundly for an hour. He awoke refreshed, his mind full of brilliant ideas. It occurred to him that if the cells he had seen were indeed a stage of the developing parasite, those in his last remaining mosquito should have grown during the night.

Next morning, he arrived at the hospital in intense excitement. He examined his last specimen. There indeed were the peculiar cells, and they were much bigger!

From this point on, the elucidation of the details of the complete life-history and mode of transmission of the malarial parasite was a matter of technical skill and patience.

While he was posted at Calcutta, Ross started using birds for his experimental work because birds get malaria just as human beings do. Mosquitoes released under the netting, sucked blood from birds having malaria and then Ross examined the stomachs of these mosquitoes for any change occurring in the malarial organism (parasite). He noticed that on the sixth day, the malarial parasites were fully grown but on the seventh day, they were just not there; they had
disappeared! Where had they gone?

After long and tedious search, Ross located a hair-like duct leading from the mosquito’s throat right down inside the sharp point of its proboscis, used for piercing a hole in the victim’s skin. This duct, Ross observed, was teeming with tiny rods — the same rods that were seen in the red blood cells of the malaria victim. Later, Ross discovered the particular mosquito that harboured malaria parasites — it was the female Anopheles. With this discovery, the whole life cycle of the malaria parasite was revealed and also its mode of transmission into the blood-stream of human beings.

Ross found out that when an infected mosquito bites a man, it injects some of its saliva into his blood. This saliva contains the malarial parasites in needle-shaped form. These make their way into the red blood corpuscles and begin to grow inside them. They develop into crescent-shaped bodies of two kinds, one male and the other female.

If at this stage, a man is bitten by a female Anopheles mosquito, some of his blood containing the two kinds of crescent-shaped bodies, is sucked into the insect’s stomach. There they develop and then mate together, forming an offspring which acquires a dagger-like shape. This organism goes through the wall of the mosquito’s stomach and gets lodged there and starts forming a cyst around itself. Within the cyst, the organism multiplies into a large number of needle-shaped forms of the parasite. The cyst then bursts and the needle-shaped forms find their way into the salivary gland of the mosquito, ready to be injected into a man, and repeat the same life-history.

Ross sent an account of his work, together with slides and specimens to Manson and to Laveran at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. He also requested Manson to publish an abstract of his work. This appeared in June, 1898 and in it Manson mentioned that he wished “to place on record Ross’s claims to priority in discovery.” He also added to it a statement he had received from Laveran in which the latter had said that “the discovery of Dr. Ross appears ... to be of very great importance .... I have shown the preparations to M. Metchnikov, who shares my opinion.”

In July, 1878, Manson described Ross’s result to the British
Medical Association. It produced a profound sensation. When Manson had finished, the whole audience rose and cheered. The venerable Lord Lister, President of the Royal Society, then seventy-one years old, came to Manson's house and inspected Ross's material, and expressed the opinion that it was of "remarkable interest and value."

Early Life

Ronald Ross was born at Almora, a hill station in Uttar Pradesh, on 13 May, 1857. His father Campbell Clays Grant Ross (who later became a general and was knighted) of Scottish ancestry was an officer in the Indian Army. Ross was the eldest of ten children.

At the age of seven, Ronald was sent to England for his education. He was fond of literature and poetry. He wanted to become an artist but his father wished him to become a doctor. So, contrary to his own aptitude but obeying the wishes of his father, he entered the medical school at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London at the age of seventeen and completed his studies in six years. He intended now to get into the Indian Medical Service but for that he still had to fulfil two more requirements, namely, to get membership of the Royal College of Surgeons and of the Society of Apothecaries. He sat for and got through the former examination in 1879, but failed in the latter. Being unable to join the Indian Medical Service immediately, he took the job of a ship's surgeon in one of the trans-Atlantic lines with the intention of preparing in the meanwhile for the examination in which he had failed. In 1881, he sat again and got through. Shortly afterwards he competed for the Indian Medical Service and was declared successful. After attending a short course in Tropical Medicine at Netley Hospital, he sailed for India in the autumn of 1881.

His first appointment in India was at the Station Hospital, Madras. Here he came face to face with the poverty, misery and ill-health of the Indian masses and was thoroughly shocked. He expressed his horror at the time in the form of the following verses:

Here from my lonely watch-tower of the East
An ancient race outworn I see
With dread, my own dear distant Country, lest
The same fate fall on thee.

Lo here the iron winter of curst caste
Has made men into things that creep;
The leprous beggars totter trembling past;
The baser sultans sleep.

Not for a thousand years has Freedom's cry
The stillness of this horror, cleaved,
But as of old the hopeless millions die,
That yet have never lived.

Man has no leisure but to snatch and eat,
Who should have been a god on earth;
The lean ones cry, the fat ones curse and beat,
And wealth but weakens worth.

O Heaven, shall man rebelling never take
From Fate what she denies, his bliss?
Cannot the mind that made the engine make
A nobler life than this?

In 1884, Ross was transferred to Bangalore and in 1885 to the Andaman islands. In 1888, he took leave and returned to England. This was mainly with the intention of pursuing a study course on sanitation, as by now he had come to see and realise that much of ill-health in India was due to the total lack of a sanitary environment. In England, he took a course in Bacteriology which provided a rational system of sanitation. He sat in the examination and was awarded a Diploma in Public Health.

In 1889, he returned to India, along with his newly-wedded wife, Rosa Bloxam. He was posted in Burma. There again he busied himself with the usual routine work. He carried on this work but it did not provide him any satisfaction. Routine work and frequent transfers resulted in his making no headway in any direction even after having spent many years at the job. He was a dissatisfied man at the time and seriously thought of retiring from the Indian Medical service as soon as possible.

*Hurdles in His Way*

Ross achieved success inspite of all the difficulties and hurdles put in his way. Nearly all of his medical colleagues in India regarded him as a crank flying in the face of thousands of years
of authority, which laid down that malaria was due to bad air from marshes. They regarded his passion for mosquitoes as a crazy fixed idea. His officers also thought like-wise; so much so, that he was usually the last to be promoted and was always on the lowest rung of the salary scale. His requests for special leave to pursue his research were rejected, while a colleague was granted six months leave for the training of race horses! No sooner had Ross made his momentous discovery, he was ordered to proceed for active military duty on the borders where there was no opportunity to resume malaria work as the place was free of mosquitoes. At this juncture, Manson who had been appointed Medical Advisor to the Colonial Office, intervened on Ross’s behalf to get him six months leave to investigate malaria. The leave was granted but Ross was saddled with another problem, namely, investigation of Kala-azar disease. At Calcutta, a small laboratory consisting of two rooms and a verandah was placed at his disposal. Here while he was on the threshold of making momentous discoveries, he was asked to go to Assam to investigate Kala-azar over there. He left Calcutta with a heavy heart and with the remarks: “Columbus having sighted America, was ordered off to discover the North Pole.”

After he had discovered the cause of malaria, when he asked for more facilities to combat the menace of malaria in India, the authorities proved entirely unhelpful. Consequently, he retired in 1899 from the Indian Medical Service and left India.

After a short visit to West Africa in connection with the study of malaria-bearing mosquitoes there, he went back to England. He was appointed lecturer at the School of Tropical Medicine at Liverpool.

Recognition

One day in 1902, while Ross was showing a visitor around his laboratory at Liverpool, he went into his office for some papers and noticed a letter which had just arrived from Stockholm. He opened it and was happily surprised to find that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine.

Subsequently, Ross became Professor of Tropical Medicine at Liverpool University. In 1913, he became Physician for Tropical Diseases at King’s College, London. During World
War I, he was appointed to the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.) and became War Office Consultant in Malaria for the Ministry of Pensions. His later work of carrying out sanitary expeditions to West Africa, Ismailia, the seat of the Head Quarters of the Suez Canal, Malaya and Panama for the destruction of mosquitoes and their breeding places proved extremely rewarding. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1901 and was knighted in 1911. In 1912, he retired from service at Liverpool. In 1926, the Ross Institute was founded in his honour and he was elected its Director-in-Chief. He died on 16 September, 1932.

The honours bestowed upon him were very well deserved indeed. He was instrumental in saving millions of people in India and other parts of the world from the clutches of deadly malaria. The disease has since been eradicated from most parts of the country.
"Mrs. Annie Besant was a great woman, a warrior, a patriot and a priestess ... Many creeds were reconciled in her. Her essential qualities were her unquenchable thirst for freedom, her warmth of love and the radiant spirit with which she inspired her followers. Whenever I think of Mrs. Besant, I am reminded of the following line of Keats:
‘Eternal beauty wandering on her way’.

— Sarojini Naidu

One June evening in 1888, a group of people gathered at a house in Bloomsbury for the usual fortnightly meeting of their Fabian Society. The subject before them was the maltreatment of the female workers in the match factories in London. After due consideration, they resolved that Mrs. Annie Besant, one of the members, should study the case thoroughly and write up an article on it in the monthly magazine, The Link, of which she was the editor.

Later, the following afternoon, Annie Besant went down to Bryant and May’s Match factory and waited outside the gates. When the factory girls came out at the end of the day, some of them at once recognized her, for Annie Besant with her red skirt and her tam-o’shanter [a cap] perched on top of her mop of dark curly hair, was a well-known speaker at dock-gates and street corners in the East End. They crowded excitedly round her. She told them that this time she had not come to speak, but to listen; she wanted them to give her details about their working conditions. The girls poured forth before her all their complaints and sufferings.

The next issue of The Link carried an article entitled ‘White Slavery in London’. It began: ‘Born in the slums, driven to
work while still children, undersized because underfed, oppressed because helpless, flung aside as soon as worked out, who cares if the Match Girls die or go on the streets, provided that the Bryant and May share-holders get their 23 per cent?"

Mrs. Besant sent a copy to Mr. Theodore Bryant, one of the Company's directors, along with a letter asking if the allegations she printed were correct. Pat came the reply through telegram: "Letter received this morning. Nothing but a tissue of lies. Article will receive legal attention. Bryant."

Three days later, three of the girls who were known to have talked to Annie Besant were dismissed for 'disobedience'. The others were asked by the management to sign a statement to the effect that the working conditions in the factory were not as Mrs. Besant had described them, and that they were happy to work there. When the girls flatly refused to do so, many more of them were dismissed from service. Thereupon the whole staff of the factory struck work, walked out in protest and marched down to the office of Mrs. Besant to inform her of the happenings and to further seek her guidance and support.

Mrs. Besant immediately organized their Strike Committee empowered to draw up and submit to the management a complete list of the girls' demands, and to negotiate on their behalf.

As knowledge of the strike spread through letters written by Mrs. Besant to all the newspapers, public sympathy for the girls increased gradually. Some of the important newspapers opened subscription lists for a Strike Fund. The match-girls marched to the House of Commons also. Under Mrs. Besant's guidance, the girls formed a properly constituted trade union, and soon the London Trades Council took up their case for them and approached the employers, demanding that they should negotiate.

In the face of such obvious and growing public sympathy for the girls, the directors of Bryant and May, had no other course left but to accept all their conditions for returning to work. They also agreed that regular consultations would take place between the newly-formed union and the management so as to avoid such incidences in future.

The part played in the match-workers strike by Mrs. Annie Besant was typical of her activities in her early forties.
Annie Besant was born in London on 1 October, 1847. She was the only daughter of her father, William Persse Wood, an Irish businessman. Her mother, Emily Mary Roche, was also Irish. Annie was educated privately and was married in 1867 to Frank Besant who later became Vicar of Sibsey in Lincolnshire. They had a son and a daughter. In 1873, they were divorced from each other.

Mrs. Besant joined the National Secular Society in 1874 and later became its Vice-President. She developed a close friendship with Charles Bradlaugh, Member of the British Parliament, to whose paper she contributed articles and acted as co-editor also. In 1877, she wrote a provocative book Gospel of Atheism, and in 1885, she joined the Fabian Society and the Social Democratic Federation. Later, she announced her conversion to theosophy, developed an interest in India and the Indian people, and came over to this country.

Arrival in India

Mrs. Besant landed at Tuticorin, India, on 16 November, 1893. She started propagating theosophy by opening many theosophical centres at different places in India, herself preaching from the pulpit. Her zeal and sincerity attracted many educated and influential Indians towards this movement. Lokamanya Tilak paid a handsome tribute to her work by writing in the newspaper, The Kesari, on 29 March, 1904: “Theosophy is not an independent religion. Theosophy preaches that Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, Jainas and Buddhists etc. should conduct themselves according to their beliefs in every-day life but should recognize the fundamentals of all religions to be the same and live in peace with one another. Theosophy does not ask any person to give up his or her ancestral faith. It is an institution of well-meaning, benevolently-minded persons, which preaches brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.”

During the course of her theosophical preaching, Mrs. Besant travelled throughout India, spoke before large gatherings, in cities and towns, and met people in different walks of life. She noticed that through Western education, the educated Indians were actively adopting Western ways and ideas, and being ignorant of their own glorious cultural traditions, were
moving away from them. She felt that the educated classes, though a small fragment of the total, were yet an influential part of the Indian society. They ought to be made proud of their own country so that they could help in its social uplift. Consequently she addressed large gatherings of the educated classes and talked of the glorious past of the Indian civilization and the ethical basis of Indian culture, philosophy and religion. Her unrivalled oratory, accompanied as it was by vast knowledge and sympathetic understanding, succeeded, to a large extent, in crying halt to the process that was taking influential and educated people away from the Indian masses.

She opened schools and colleges in different parts of the country wherein the education imparted was a good harmonious blend of both the East and the West. The curriculum included ancient Indian religion, philosophy, ethics, modern science and the teaching of active social reform. Central Hindu College at Benares became the nucleus of her educational activities.

She established girls’ schools also, with the intention of bringing literacy and enlightenment to that illiterate half of the Indian population which could play a very significant role in the uplift of the family and the nation. She did not admit married students in her schools as she discouraged early marriage.

Annie Besant encouraged social mix up of her European colleagues who came to India from time to time, with the teachers and students of her schools, and actively helped her students in going abroad for further studies and for the broadening of their mental horizons. She thus succeeded, to a large extent, in bringing about some of the social reforms about which she was much concerned and about which she had talked about on platforms earlier.

*Freedom for India*

Mrs. Besant spent the first twenty years of her time in India in the pursuit of social and educational uplift of the Indians; in the course of these years she gradually became convinced that British rule put a lot of hindrance in the way of progress in India. She felt that nothing short of complete political freedom, from British domination could help India solve her problems and provide her a suitable place in the
comity of the world’s nations. In her book *England, India & Afganistan*, published in 1879, she outlined a solution to this problem. She said: “Few records of conquest show stains so foul as the story of the subjugation of Hindustan by this originally merchant association [East India Company]. What is our duty to this great land and how may we best remedy our crimes of the past? The answer comes in one word: Liberty. The work cannot be done in a day, but it must be begun by slow stages. Let a system of representative government gradually replace the centralized despotism of our present sway.” In her Queen’s Hall lectures, in England, during April 1914, she proposed that the reward for India’s loyalty to England in the war (First World War) should be her freedom from British domination. After her return to India three months later, she kept up her vigorous campaign for India’s freedom in her recently started paper, *New India*.

In September 1916, when Lord Chelmsford succeeded Lord Hardinge as Viceroy, Mrs. Besant further intensified her campaign for India’s freedom. She initiated Home Rule for India League and travelled throughout India; through speeches, pamphlets and newspapers, she exhorted the Indian masses to liberate their own country. Her writings in her newspaper were considered inflammatory and objectionable by the British authorities and she was made to deposit a heavy security of Rs. 40,000 against repetition of similar acts. This security was soon forfeited as she continued writing what she considered was helpful to the cause of India’s freedom. Her persistence led to her internment at Ootacamund, along with her other colleagues. The Governments of Bombay and the Central Provinces passed orders prohibiting her entry within their jurisdiction.

These restrictive measures against her, however, had just the opposite effect than that desired by the authorities. Her Home Rule for India movement became even more widespread and popular. A number of influential Indian leaders who so far, were sympathetic to the movement but were not its members, joined in their hundreds, prominent among whom were Tej Bahadur Sapru, Jinnah, Jayakar and Sarojini Naidu, Moti Lal and Jawahar Lal Nehru had already joined it.

As a result of these efforts, the British authorities seemingly
yielded to an extent. On 20, August, 1917, the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu stated that "The policy of his Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire". It was also announced that immediate steps to that end would be taken and that the Secretary of State would tour India and meet leaders of public opinion.

Demands were made by Sapru, Sastri and Jinnah to release Mrs. Besant and her other colleagues so as to create a suitable atmosphere for meeting the Secretary of State. It was, however, only after President Wilson of the U.S.A. intervened that this was done. As soon as she was free, Mrs. Besant toured around the whole country addressing meetings and calling on leading men everywhere to enroll their support for presenting a common political demand to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy.

President of the Congress

In December 1918, she was elected President of the Congress and in her Presidential Address she called upon the British Government to take immediate steps towards the freedom of India. She also declared that her year of office would be one of work all the year round. Later as a step towards her resolve, she reorganized the working of the Congress so that it functioned as a body of enthusiastic workers throughout the year.

When Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford began their round of visits to all provinces and received deputations of political bodies of all shades of opinion, Montagu had a private, unscheduled talk with Mrs. Besant in which she frankly put forward the plea for an immediate equal status for India in the British Empire.

The year 1919 was packed with momentous events. Gandhi's Civil Disobedience movement against the Rowlett's legislation and the subsequent events leading to the Jallianwala massacre of the unarmed men and women, engulfed the whole of India in anger and grief. Influence of Gandhi and his supporters, on the point of complete freedom from British rule, increased tremendously. Mrs. Besant and the Moderates in the Congress who,
keeping in view the immediate future, wanted sovereignty for India within the British empire, were hurled in the background.

A further decline in Mrs. Besant’s influence in Indian politics occurred when after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Act was passed, she remained its staunch supporter and in the midst of the Non-cooperation Movement stood by it. It was characteristic of her, never to hesitate in doing what she consciously considered right, and never swerved from it whoever the adversary.

She continued working along the lines which her conscience indicated were in the best interests of India and the Indians. In 1931, her health broke down and thereafter she lived in retirement in Adyar. She died in Adyar on 20 September, 1933 and was cremated on the sea-shore.

Even while Gandhiji did not agree with her politically, he held her up as an example before others, for her indomitable courage, unflinching determination, sincerity of purpose, and the ceaseless energy with which she applied herself to work in India. He once said: “As long as India lives, the memory of the magnificent services rendered by her, will also live. ...She loves India with the devotion of a daughter. Her industry and application are the envy of us all. ...She is one of the greatest orators of the world, because she speaks what she believes and acts according to what she speaks. ...Imitate her unflinching determination and simplicity of life. ...Obtain the same strength and indomitable will that she possesses which alone will bring Swaraj. India is not fit for Swaraj without these qualities.... It is Dr. Besant who has awakened India from her deep slumber and I pray that she may live long to witness a free India.”

Tributes

After Mrs. Besant passed away, tributes were paid to her memory all over the world. For her services to the cause of Indian freedom, Sarojini Naidu said: “Had it not been for her and her enthusiasm, one could not have seen Mr. Gandhi leading the cause of Indian freedom today. It was Mrs. Besant who laid the foundation of modern India.... Dr. Besant was a combination of Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati—Parvati for power, Lakshmi for love and Saraswati for wisdom.
“Today, pondering over her incomparable devotion and her incalculable service to the Indian cause, I can pay no finer tribute to her manifold greatness than to acclaim the sweet miracle wrought by her transcendent and transfiguring love for India, whereby she who came into our midst a stranger, has created for herself an honoured and legitimate place in the annals of the glorious and heroic women of our own race and tradition.”
NIVEDITA

“She was, in fact, a mother of the people.”
— Rabindranath Tagore

On his lecture tour in England in 1895, when Swami Vivekananda spoke before different religious and social audiences in different parts of the country, there was a young, attractive Irish lady who attended many of his lectures. She listened eagerly and attentively, trying to understand and grasp the significance of what the Swamiji said. After the lecture was over, she would come up with different questions and argue with him on various points. Occasionally she felt convinced, but generally speaking, clouds of doubt and uncertainty were visible on her fair-complexioned face. This lady was Miss Margaret Noble.

Gradually as Margaret attended more of his lectures and had personal discussions with him, she began to appreciate and understand Swamiji’s ideal of service to suffering humanity as being the highest form of devotion to God. In fact, she became so overwhelmed and convinced that she requested Swamiji to give her permission to go and live in India to serve the people over there. Swamiji was hesitant because he knew well the difficulties of an alien social environment, climate and food that a young European lady would have to endure in India, and he was not sure whether Margaret would be able to stand all that.

But when she persisted in her requests and even sought the help of mutual friends, Swamiji, who in his programme of things, had already included education of the Indian women
as an important item, saw in her a providential opportunity, as in spite of his best efforts he had not succeeded, so far, in finding a dedicated Indian woman teacher. Accordingly, he wrote her a letter, stating: "I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love and above all, the Celtic blood makes you just the woman wanted."

**Early Life**

Margaret Elizabeth Noble was born at Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, in north Ireland on 28 October, 1867. Her father, Samuel Richmond, was a minister of the church. Her maternal grand-father had participated in the Home Rule Movement for Ireland. It is essentially through these two, her father and her maternal grand-father, that she inherited her inclination of service to the people—though with a characteristic touch of her own personality. Margaret had a sister and a brother but she was the favourite of her father and generally accompanied him when he conducted services or visited the poor. Her father, unfortunately, died at the early age of thirty-four.

Margaret was educated at Halifax college, an institution run by the Chapter of the Congregationalist Church. In 1884, at the age of seventeen, after passing her final examination, she joined as a school teacher in Keswick. In 1886, she changed over to Wrexham, and in 1889 to Chester. She liked teaching but she was not satisfied with the old system of laying all the stress on the three R's. According to her, developing the personality of the student by making him think for himself was more important. She studied hard and tried new methods of teaching the young children. In 1890, she left Chester for London to teach in a school that advocated 'new ideas'. Not being satisfied here either, in the way in which the 'new ideas' were followed, and wishing to have full freedom for her own way of providing 'the fullest possible latitude to the young students' in learning through mediums such as games, drawing and painting, she opened her own school in 1892.

Gradually Margaret grew into an experienced teacher and educator. She became acquainted, in London, with some of the most learned and influential people of the time; George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Huxley being a few among them.
Change in Faith

Just as she probed different methods of teaching and found many of them wanting, so also, her critical approach compelled her to question the basis of her faith in religion. She found that she was uncertain and unsatisfied about her faith in the traditional religion of the church, Christianity, though she was deeply devoted to Christ and His services to humanity. Having come to this conclusion, she groped about for a ray of hope and faith from some other direction. She read books on different religions and faiths. Of this difficult and painful period and her feelings at the time, she said: "I was born and bred an English woman and upto the age of eighteen, I was trained and educated as English girls are. Christian religious doctrines were, of course, early instilled into me. Even from my girlhood, I was inclined to venerate all religious teachings and I devotedly worshipped the child Jesus, loved Him with my whole heart for the self-sacrifices. He always willingly underwent, and I felt I could not worship Him enough for His crucifying Himself to bestow salvation on the human race. But after the age of eighteen, I began to harbour doubts as to the truth of Christian doctrines. Many of them began to seem to me false and incompatible with truth. These doubts grew stronger and stronger and at the same time my faith in Christianity tottered more and more. For seven years I was in this wavering state of mind, very unhappy and yet, very eager to seek the Truth. I shunned going to Church and yet sometimes my longing to bring restfulness to my spirit impelled me to rush into church and be absorbed in the service in order to feel at peace within, as I had hitherto done, and as others round me were doing. But alas! no peace, no rest was there for my troubled soul all eager to know the truth.

"During the seven years of wavering, it occurred to me that in the study of natural science I should surely find the Truth I was seeking. So I began ardently to study how this world was created and all things in it and I discovered that in the Laws of Nature, at least, there was consistency, but it made the doctrines of the Christian religion seem all the more inconsistent. Just then I happened to get a Life of Buddha, and in it I found that here also was a child who lived ever so many centuries before the child Christ, but whose sacrifices were no
less self-abnegating than those of the other. This dear child
Gautama, took a strong hold on me and for the next three
years I plunged into the study of religion of the Buddha, and
became more and more convinced that the salvation he preached
was decidedly more consistent with the Truth than the
preachings of the Christian religion.

“And now came the turning point for my faith.... The Swami
I met was no other than Swami Vivekananda who afterwards
became my Guru and whose teachings have given the relief
that my doubting spirit had been longing for so long.”

Arrival in India

On 28, January, 1898 — three years after she had met Swami
Vivekananda—Miss Margaret Noble landed at Calcutta. Swamiji
was at the docks to receive her. Arrangements were made for
her to stay in a home at Chowringhee. During the first few
days, she got acquainted with some of the well-known Indian
families, like that of Dr. J.C. Bose, the Tagores and others.
She went to the temple at Dakshineswar where Swami Rama-
krishna had lived and prayed, and there she met Saradamani
Devi and other members of the Ramakrishna Order.

On 25th March, after proper ceremonies, she took the vow of
remaining a brahmacharini (celibate) all her life and entered
the Ramakrishna Order. She was given the name of Nivedita,
the dedicated. These ceremonies being over, she went alongwith
Swamiji and his party to a tour of various places in north
India including Almora, Srinagar and Amarnath in Kashmir.

On her return from this tour, and after due consultations
with Swamiji, on the auspicious day of Deepavali festival in
November 1898, Nivedita started her school in an humble
quarter of Calcutta. A few children of the neighbouring
locality attended this small, modest institution run by the
expert educationist and teacher. But here she did not try her
own modern methods. She sought guidance from the Swamiji,
who told her a general rule that “to teach against the
aspirations of the taught was to cor−t ill-results instead of
good, and that new ideals had to be approached through the
old, the unfamiliar through the familiar.” She made herself
familiar with the aims and aspirations of the people and struck
to the general guidelines enunciated by Swamiji. This was also
a new experiment needing all her efforts and ingenuity.

The school curriculum that she thus evolved included teaching of Bengali, English, arithmetic, geography and history. Drawing from observation, brush-work, clay-modelling, mat-weaving, paper-cutting, sewing and games were some of the other subjects that were introduced gradually. The students loved this general and practical education. Even their parents welcomed it. The result was that Nivedita soon won the hearts of the children and the appreciation of their parents, mothers particularly.

Encouraging results with the children’s school emboldened Nivedita to open a women’s section as well in November 1903. Educating the illiterate house-wives, Nivedita felt, was even more essential as they could then make use of their education by helping their children as well. The time fixed for this school was between the hours of 12 and 4 in the afternoon. This was for the convenience of the ladies, as they were generally free from household work only then. The guiding principle for the curriculum of this section of the school was “to educate the Indian girl as to enable her to realise those ends which are themselves integral aspirations of her life.” By means of her own customs and traditions, efforts were to be made to see that she developed in harmony with Indian ideals; the teachers themselves following those ideals as far as possible.

From its very beginning, Nivedita had realized that to meet the financial needs of the school would be a tough job. She had soon used up even her personal money and there was no hope of its coming from any other source in India. The choice before her was either to close the institute or to go abroad and collect donations from there. In the June of 1899, when Swami Vivekananda was going on a tour of the U.K. and the U.S.A., she decided to accompany him.

Champion of Indian Womanhood

As Nivedita came more and more in direct contact with the Indian women, she was struck by their shy, retiring, gentle and dignified nature. A deep religious training and culture of the mind and heart pervaded them, she felt. Their manners and bearing were quite in contrast to the rather aggressive nature of the women of the West. She was so much impressed with the ideas and the ideals of Indian women that she
remarked: "She [India] is, above all others, the land of great women."

When somebody described Indian women as illiterate and ignorant, Nivedita retorted: "When we come to the charge that Indian women are ignorant, we meet with a far deeper fallacy. They are ignorant in the modern form, that is to say, few can write, and not very many can read. Are they then illiterate? If so, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, every grand-mother tells to the babies, are not literature. But European novels and the Strand Magazine by the same token are. Can anyone accept this paradox! The fact is, writing is not culture though it is an occasional result of culture.... To those who know Indian life, it is easy to see that an Indian woman, who has the education of Indian home, the dignity, the gentleness, the cleanliness, the thrift, the religious training, the culture of mind and heart which that home life entails, though she cannot, perhaps, read a word of her own language, much less sign her name, may be infinitely better educated in every true sense and in literary sense also than her glib critic."

"Was she then to teach them or to learn from them," Nivedita occasionally put this question to herself. She, however, felt that over and above all the praiseworthy ideals and qualities, the Indian women needed to cultivate among themselves a wider and broader concept of the nation above the concept of home and family so that they may participate alongwith men, in building a free and strong India.

On her tour abroad, Nivedita lectured before different audiences in various cities of the U.K. and the U.S.A. She spoke of India and the things Indian. She talked of the praiseworthy ideals of the Indian womanhood and the need to educate them in the broader concepts of humanity so as to raise their mental horizons and outlook. By her lectures and enthusiastic appeals for donations, she succeeded in catching the attention of the press. A London correspondent, wrote: "There has arisen a champion for India from an unexpected quarter, as was the way with champions of old. Not from a far country, however, nor from a strange people, nor from masculine ranks, has this new champion come. She is a lady, belonging to the Ruling Power in India, a lady of exceptional ability, who has given up a promising career in England to
devote herself to the service of the women in India. ... She is a striking figure of English people, garbed in a gown of white flannel, graceful in cut but of extreme simplicity; the beads round her neck suggest a rosary. She speaks without notes, animated simply by an intense sympathy for the people of India and the desire to break down some of the false ideas which have been associated with Indian ladies by English people."

While Nivedita did catch the attention of the press, the public, in general, remained cold and even hostile to her. Nivedita felt depressed. Such an attitude on the part of the 'superior race' of the white people was, however, not particularly aimed against Nivedita. Other people, before her, who had tried to speak well of India had received a similar reception. Bipin Chandra Pal, an eminent Indian leader, while lecturing in America, was told: "Let your country achieve independence first. Then come and talk to us about your religion and philosophy. Then we shall listen to you." The experience of J.C. Bose had not been different. This eminent Indian scientist had faced the collective campaign of the British scientists against him just because he was an Indian.

**Broader Horizons**

Her experiences of this tour abroad, awakened Nivedita to the broader needs of India. She had seen for herself the working of prejudice against the Indians. Because of this prejudice and the self-interest of the foreign rulers, the Indians were being kept back from total emancipation. Until and unless this oppressive foreign rule ended, Nivedita realized, other objectives of social, spiritual, cultural or economic regeneration of India, could not be achieved. In a letter, in 1901, she admitted the change of emphasis in her work. She wrote, "...I belong to my work to the women and to the girls and I belong to Hinduism more than I ever did. But I see the political need so clearly too! That is all I mean and to that I must be true. I believe now that I have something to do for grown-up India and for Indian men."

With these objectives in view, speaking before a large gathering in Madras in February 1902, she exhorted Indians to try for and to bring about a change in their social environments. They, she said, needed nobody's help in it and were competent
to do that by themselves. She said, "Just as it has been realised already that in religion you have a great deal to give, and nothing to learn from the West, so also in social matters, it will be well to understand that what changes are necessary you are fully competent to make for yourselves, and no outsider has the right to advise or interfere. Changes no doubt there will be. Change is probably inseparable from the process of life. But these changes must be original, self-determined, self-wrought. What! Does the civilization of three thousand years mean nothing that the young nations of the West should be in a position to lead the people of the East."

This speech got her into the bad books of the Government. Witnessing the change that had come over in Nivedita's attitude and the political complications and consequences that it could bring about, the Government started keeping a strict watch over her movements and activities. Even her letters were censored. The Government felt even more perturbed when it noticed that her residence was frequented by many national leaders like Gokhale, R.C. Dutt etc. Even Gandhiji, when he came to Calcutta for the Congress session in 1901, had met her.

Indian Nationalism

The political leanings of Nivedita, which were held in check, by her association with Swami Vivekananda, became stronger and more apparent after he passed away on 4, July, 1902. After he was no more, Nivedita clearly felt that the principles of the Ramakrishna Order, of which she was a member, were different from what she intended to do now in India. Hence she severed all her connections with the Order. Henceforth, from Nivedita of the Ramakrishna Order, she changed her name to Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.

Thus freeing herself from the obligations of the Order, she decided to travel in different parts of India. This was to create a sense of national awareness and unity among the people. In December 1902, in Madras, speaking on the subject of 'The Unity of India', she predicted: "Yet again shall come the great re-establishment of Dharma when the whole of the nation shall be united together not in a common weakness, not in a common misfortune or grievance but in a great, over-flowing, complex, actual, ever-strong, ever-living consciousness of the common
nationality, the common heritage, the common struggle, the common life, aye! the common destiny and the common hope. And so let me in all reverence and in all grateful memory and love, repeat to you again those words that were spoken here in our midst a few years ago by a voice so dear [Vivekananda], so well remembered by you all, 'Arise, awake struggle on and rest not till the goal is reached'."

Political turmoil in India had gathered momentum by the beginning of the twentieth century. A fresh wave of nationalism among the Indians was met by the ruthless power of the British rule. The government took direct and indirect measures to kill this feeling of nationalism. People and leaders who propagated it were beaten up, imprisoned and tortured. Through the University Commission Act of 1902, the Government sought to have control over the type of education imparted to the Indians and thus to impart to the students only that knowledge which the authorities considered safe.

An incidence which provoked the Indian educated classes most at the time, was the address delivered by Lord Curzon, as Chancellor of Calcutta University, at the time of its convocation in February 1905. He remarked that truth took a higher place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East. Some of Indian educationists and Nivedita, present at the occasion, felt furious about this insult. Nivedita, who had read some of the writings of Lord Curzon in his book Problems of the Far East got hold of the book and sent extracts of his own writings and speeches at different times, to the press, for the public to make their own estimate, as to who appreciated more the ideals of truthfulness. Published in the Amrita Bazar Patrika on 13, February 1905 and reproduced in the Statesman the following day, it read as follows:

**Lord Curzon in Various Capacities**

*As Chancellor of the University of Calcutta: Address in Convocation, 11, February, 1905:*

Untruthfulness consists in saying or doing anything that gives an erroneous impression either of one's own character or of other people's conduct or the facts and incidents of life. I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent
a Western conception.

Undoubtedly, truth took a higher place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East.

Flattery may be either honest or dishonest. Whichever it may be, you should avoid it. If it is the former, it is nevertheless, false; if it is the latter, it is vile.

From *Problems of the Far East* by George N. Curzon (pp. 155-65)

Before proceeding to the Royal audience, I enjoyed an interview with the President of the Korean Foreign Office.

I remember some of his questions and answers. Having been particularly warned not to admit to him that I was only 32 years old, to which no respect attaches in Korea, when he put to me the straight question (invariably the first in an oriental dialogue) "How old are you?", I unhesitatingly responded, "Forty."

"Dear me," he said "you look very young for that. How do you account for it?"

"By the fact," I replied, "that I have been travelling for a month in a superb climate of His Majesty's dominions."

Finally he said to me, "I presume you are a near relative of Her Majesty, the Queen of England."

"No," I replied, "I am not."

By observing the look of disgust that passed over his countenance, I was fain to add, "I am, however, as yet an unmarried man," with which unscrupulous suggestion, I completely regained the old gentleman's favour.

This exposure of the contrariness in the preaching and conduct of a Viceroy was a timely direct hit by Nivedita that was thoroughly relished by the educated Indians.

Later in the year 1905, Nivedita whole-heartedly supported the *Swadeshi Movement* started by the Indian leaders to show their resentment on the partition of Bengal. Boycott of the foreign goods and the use of indigenous ones, not only proved successful but it also made the Indian masses aware of the national needs. Nivedita appreciated the idea and the approach very much. This, according to her, was a positively courageous and manly act very much needed to be inculcated among the Indians. She said: "The note of manliness and self-help
sounded throughout the Swadeshi Movement. There is here no begging for help, no cringing for concessions.... There will yet come a time when in India a man who buys from a foreigner what his own countrymen would by any means supply, will be regarded as on a level with the killer of cows today....It is precisely in a matter like the keeping of the Swadeshi vow that the Indian people especially can find an opportunity to show their own mettle."

In 1902, Nivedita had met Sri Aurobindo at Baroda where he was a Professor in the Baroda College. Ever since she had nursed an attraction towards his revolutionary ideals. While he was away at Pondicherry, she had edited his paper Karma Yogan. He not only trusted her completely but also drew inspiration from her.

In 1907, Nivedita went to England and later to the U.S.A. She kept herself busy writing and talking of what India was and what it could be. Her mother, who had been ill for quite sometime, died in July 1909. Just after her death, Nivedita came back to India.

On her return, she found that the ruthlessly repressive measures of the British rule, had succeeded outwardly in putting an end to the revolutionary activities of some of the Indians. But the Indian nationalism which she had fed and whipped up had become stronger and firmer. In the years to come, it engulfed the whole country and welded it into a nation, as it never was before.

Personal Glimpses

Tall and fair, clad in a white silk gown with a rosary of rudraksha beads around her neck, Nivedita naturally drew the attention of everyone. The deep blue eyes lit up her whole countenance. But meekness or tolerance was not for her. She could be terribly angry if the occasion demanded and in such a state, a close observer said: "There was, indeed something flame-like about her, and not only her language, but her whole vital personality often reminded of fire. Like fire, and like Shiva, Kali and other Indian powers of the spirit, she was at once destructive and creative, terrible and beneficent."

She was quick and strong in responding to any injustice or wrong that came to her attention. One early morning, she was seen walking on the Strand at Baghbazar. A neighbour greeted
her and asked her if it was usual for her to take early morning walks. She replied in the negative, but explained that some ladies had complained to her that certain rogues always insulted them when they went to the river for their morning ablutions. So now she was going with them to see that they did not misbehave in future.

In 1904, while she was returning from Boon Gaya with a big party which included Rabindranath Tagore, Dr. Bose and their families, as the train arrived, two Englishmen who were occupying a first class compartment did not want the Indians to get in. Nivedita rebuked them thoroughly for their air of superiority which, she said, smelt of ill-breeding. Thus rebuked they had to open the gate to let the people get in. When the train left, Nivedita was still fuming with anger and could hardly restrain herself. It looked as though, the ousting of the English from India, alone, could quell her anger at that moment.

Immersed as she was in the ideals of service to the downtrodden, her gentle and understanding heart looked for opportunities everywhere. During the plague epidemic of 1899, in Calcutta, she went all out to serve the ailing poor. To the ill, she provided nursing care; and to the dying, courage. She helped in disposing of the bodies of the dead with due regard to rituals. The civic authorities, the patients and the doctors, all felt grateful to her. A doctor, who saw her quite often at this time, described her activities typically as follows. “...When I went to visit the patient again in the afternoon, I saw Sister Nivedita sitting with the child [patient] in her lap in the damp and weather-beaten hut in that unhealthy locality. Day in and day out, night after night, she remained engaged in nursing the child in that hut, having abandoned her own house. When the hut was to be disinfected, she took a small ladder and began white-washing the walls herself. Her nursing never slackened even when death was a certainty.”

Nivedita found time to write a few books on different aspects of India and the Indians; among them, The Master, As I Saw Him, Notes of Some Wanderings With the Swami Vivekananda at Kedarnath and Badrinarayan, A Pilgrim's Diary, Kali The Mother, The Web of Indian Life, Studies From An Eastern Home, Cradle Tales of Hinduism and Myths of Hindus and Buddhists, are noteworthy. They reveal not only how well she understood
India but also the greatness of her mind and ideals of her selfless service.

*Tributes*

Nivedita was not keeping good health for quite some time, but had, nevertheless, carried on her work. In October 1911, while she was in Darjeeling, she had a severe attack of dysentery. On 13, October 1911, she passed away. She was cremated at Darjeeling according to Hindu traditions.

Heart-felt tributes were paid to her by all the Indians, high and low. Condolence meetings were held all over India. Rabindranath Tagore said: "The life which Sister Nivedita gave for us was a great life. Every moment of every day she gave whatever was best in her, whatever was noblest...She was in fact a Mother of the People." G. K. Gokhale, speaking on the occasion, eulogised her work and said: "Sister Nivedita’s personality was a wonderfully striking personality—so striking indeed, that to meet her was like coming in contact with some great force of nature. Her marvellous intellect, her lyric powers of expression, her great industry, the intensity with which she held her beliefs and convictions, and last but not least, that truly great gift—capacity to see the soul of things—all these would have made her a most remarkable woman of any time and in any country. And when to these were joined—as were joined in her case—a love for India, that overflowed all bounds, a passionate devotion to her interest and an utter self-surrender in her service and finally a severe austerity of life accepted not only uncomplainingly but gladly for her sake, is it any wonder that Sister Nivedita touched our imagination and captured our hearts, or that she exercised a profound and far-reaching influence on the thoughts and ideas of those around her, and that we acclaimed her as one of the greatest men and women that have lived and laboured for any land? Sister Nivedita came to us not to do good to us, as some people somewhat patronizingly put it; she came to us not even as a worker for humanity moved to pity by our difficulties, our shortcomings and our sufferings. She came to us because she felt the call of India. She came to give India the worship of her heart on one side and to take her place among India’s sons and daughters in the great work that lies before us all. And the beautiful comp-
leteness of her acceptance of India was indeed what no words can express—not merely her acceptance of the great things for which India has stood in the past or of those for which God willing she shall share again in the future—but of India as she is today with all her faults and shortcomings undeterred by the hardships or difficulties, unrepelled by our ignorance, superstition and even our squalor." Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh summed up her life-work by saying: "If we are conscious of a budding national life at the present day, it is in no small measure due to the teaching of Sister Nivedita."

In reverential memory of Sister Nivedita, the public raised a *samadhi* over the sacred spot where she was cremated. On it, very appropriately, is written:

'Here Reposes Sister Nivedita
Who Gave Her All to India.'
“No Indian could have started the Indian Congress.... If the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishman....such was the official disgust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or other to suppress the movement.”

— G. K. Gokhale

The later half of the nineteenth century was a period of turmoil in India. The illiterate peasantry in the villages was scourged by poverty, famine and pestilence; the literate in the cities were clamouring for liberty and equality. Recent awareness of the glorious ancient civilization of India had acted as a booster to the aspirations of freedom from foreign rule.

The British bureaucratic administration, however, was turning deaf ears to the cries for humane and liberal treatment of the millions. The gulf between the Indian and the British points of view was widening.

A few keen observers of the scene, who cared for the welfare of the Indian masses and at the same time hoped for a continuance of British rule in India, saw the need for making the foreign rule palatable to the Indians. This, they felt, could only be done by associating the Indians in ruling their own country. They also knew that the British authorities by themselves would never initiate such a thing unless they were coerced into it. Only a broad-based organization backed by powerful elements in India and England, in their opinion, was competent to take up the Indian cause and put it before the British authorities.

This was the task initiated and undertaken by Allen Octavian Hume, a retired British officer of the Indian Civil Service. His
untiring efforts in bringing about the formation of the Indian National Congress and subsequent fight for the rights of the people, forms a glorious chapter in the history of the struggle for Indian freedom.

Allen Hume, son of Joseph Hume, was born on 6, June, 1829. He inherited his attitude of fighting for the rights of the downtrodden from his father who was a prominent Scottish reformer and patriot. Allen interrupted his studies at the age of thirteen and joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman. After serving there for sometime, he resumed his studies at Hacleybury College and London University.

Civil Servant

Hume came over to India in 1849 when he was just twenty, and joined the Bengal Civil Service. He was posted as a Mohurrer, a clerk, in a police station. This was the lowest job in the Service. Two months later, he became Naib Daroga, a Sub-Inspector, in another large police station and then for a short period held charge of a small police station as Thanadar, an Inspector. It was not until he had gone through these preliminary small jobs and had gathered sufficient experience that he was promoted to the post of an Assistant Magistrate and later a Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Etawah district in Uttar Pradesh.

His hard work, administrative capability, self-confidence and sympathetic attitude towards the Indian masses, brought him kudos from the Government and the public, alike. The effective measures that he took for maintaining law and order in his district at the time of the 1857-uprising, were highly approved by the Government. He earned public praise by bringing about certain social reforms such as popularising education, police reform, checking liquor traffic, and the creation of juvenile reformatories.

Hume was moved by the deplorable plight of the ignorant Indian masses. It occurred to him that education alone could uplift their moral, social and economic status. Consequently, he opened in the district, under his jurisdiction, a total of 181 primary schools, wherein as many as 5000 children were admitted. Later, an English and a Vernacular school were also opened for grown up children and these were linked up with the Agra College.
All this he achieved in spite of financial stringency and official antipathy towards such schemes. He firmly believed that the spread of literacy among the Indians was as good for the masses as for the rulers; moreover, it was the duty of the rulers to see that the masses progressed in every possible way. In a note sent to the Government on 30, March, 1859, he wrote: "I cannot but found hopes of indulgence on the intense interest that I feel in the subject, and the ceaseless attention that I have paid it. For years past it has been the dream of my leisure moments, the object of my hopes, and although I have achieved little as yet, I cannot, as I watch the feeble beginnings, avoid recalling an Alpine scene of happy memories, when I saw the first drops of a joyous stream stricking through the huge avalanche that had so long embayed it, and feeling confidence from that augury that day by day and month by month that tiny rill gathering strength and size will work out its resistless way, and at last dissipating the whole chilling mass of ignorance, the accumulations of ages, pass on unobstructed to fertilize and enrich our empire. History alas! presents us with too many examples of the long obstructed stream hurling aside at last roughly its opposing barriers and sweeping onwards an ungovernable flood heaping up desolation where it should have scattered flowers. Let it be ours to smooth and not impede its path, ours not by cold explanations of policy but by enlisting the sympathies and affections of the people in the cause, to watch and direct its progress and turn it, under God's blessing, to good alone."

For further enlightenment of the boys turning out each year from these schools, and for the public, Hume started a vernacular paper, The People's Friend. He had persuaded one of his Indian friends to take up this job. This paper was quite inexpensive and widely read by the public.

His attention was next drawn towards the evil of alcoholism among the Indian masses. Illiterate people who could hardly provide two square meals for their families, were falling prey to this obnoxious addiction. Hume was greatly distressed and annoyed when he observed that the Government instead of restricting its sale, was, in fact, promoting it because it meant an increase in its revenue. In a note to the Government dated 14, September, 1860, Hume gave vent to his wrath by saying: "Financially speaking, bearing in mind the almost unexampled
distress in the face of which this settlement was concluded, it may be regarded as eminently successful. To me, however, the constant growth of the Abkaree revenue is a source of great regret. Year after year, but alas in vain, I protest against the present iniquitous system which first produced and now supports a large class whose sole interest is to seduce their fellows into drunkenness and its necessary concomitants, debauchery and crime. Unfortunately, these tempters are too successful, and year by year the number of drunkards and the demand for drugs and spirituous liquors increases. Those only who like myself take great pains to ascertain what goes on amongst the native community, really have any conception of the frightful extent to which drunkenness has increased during the last twenty years. Moreover, while we debase our subjects, we do not even pecuniarily derive any profit from their ruin. Of this revenue, the wages of sin, it may, in the words of an old adage, be truly said that ill-gotten wealth never thrives, and for every rupee additional that the Abkaree yields, two at least are lost to the public by crime, and spent by the Government in suppressing it. I fear that it is useless saying more now on this subject, —for five years I have yearly but without avail protested against the present system, and though I, at this moment see no hopes of reform, have no doubt whatsoever that if I be spared a few years longer I shall live to see effaced in a more Christian-like system, one of the greatest existing blots on our Government of India.”

Hume, in spite of his best efforts, did not succeed in this regard; nevertheless, he did his best to get this evil suppressed. Hume noticed with distress some of the young boys committing crimes and then being locked up in the company of hardened criminals in the same prison cell. By the time these young boys came out of the prisons, they themselves had hardened and turned into regular anti-social elements. He felt that these young criminals ought to be confined separately and treated differently. In 1868, he succeeded in establishing a Juvenile Reformatory, where the young criminals were given a chance to amend themselves by discipline and had training in useful handicrafts as well; the latter helped them in earning money after they had come out of the reformatory. Such reformatories are now spread all over the country and have proved very useful.
Hume worked for the abolition of the vast Custom’s barrier across the country, after he was promoted to the post of Commissioner of Customs, in July 1867. This barrier had hitherto been put up so as to exclude the cheap salt produced in the Rajputana States from being exported to other parts of the country where the Government had the monopoly in its trade and charged a higher price for it. This step resulted in a fall in the price of common salt, and the public was grateful to him for it. It also ended the corruption which such barriers generally lead to.

Hume’s hard work, honesty and integrity, led him to the post of Secretary in the Home Department of the Government of India, in 1870. This was a very important job which could offer him opportunities for further advancement. Yet Hume was not interested in it. He was more interested in the agricultural development of India and for some years past had studied the subject thoroughly and had become familiar with it. Hence he got himself transferred on an equivalent post to the Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce.

In a pamphlet entitled *Agricultural Reforms in India*, published by him in 1879, Hume outlined the problems of the poor, ignorant, superstitious and tradition-bound peasants living in more than 500,000 villages and constituting more than 80 per cent of the total population of India. In order to improve their lot, he suggested that at the Government level, agriculture in India should be dealt with by a specialized staff familiar with the subject. Only such a staff, well-equipped with agricultural know-how, could realize the problems of the agriculturists and help them, as and when necessary; the usual bureaucratic administrative department could hardly do justice to their needs. Furthermore, he stated that entanglement and gradual strangulation of the petty farmers at the hands of the money-lenders was another perpetual evil. To minimize this, he recommended that rural debt cases should be disposed of summarily and finally on the spot by selected Indians of known honesty and intelligence, who should be “sent as judges from village to village, to settle up, with the aid of the village elders, every case of debt of the kind referred to, in which anyone of its inhabitants was concerned.” Even though the Governor-General concurred with his views, Hume could scarcely carry out the
reforms and measures he had envisaged.

Removal from Secretary-ship

His interest in the welfare of the Indians by way of different reforms that he brought about or wanted to bring about, was not looked upon favourably by his colleagues and senior officials. He thus brought down upon himself the wrath of the superior bureaucratic machinery. He was removed from the Secretary-ship of the Government of India and was transferred to a rather insignificant post in the Revenue Board at Allahabad. The reason assigned for this transfer, according to a letter dated 17, June 1879, by Lord Lytton’s Private Secretary, was that “the decision was based entirely on the consideration of what was most desirable in the interest of public service.”

Such an indecent removal of an important, hard-working, honest and public-minded official, perturbed many a fair-minded Englishman and all the educated Indians. The contemporary Anglo-Indian press, even though never overtly friendly to Hume, gave vent to the public feelings once. The Pioneer characterized the whole proceeding as “the grossest jobbery ever perpetrated”; The Indian Daily News said, it was “a great wrong”, and The Statesman’s comments were, “undoubtedly, he has been treated shamefully and cruelly.” The Englishman of 17, June 1979 expressed its views even more pungently. It said, “The plea advanced in justification of this arbitrary act was that Mr. Hume habitually, in his minutes on measures coming up for discussion in his department, expressed his views with great freedom, without regard to what might be the wishes or intentions of his superiors. If he believed a particular policy to be wrong, he opposed it without hesitation, using plain language for the expression of his view. We cannot find that any other charge has been brought against him. He is notoriously a very hard worker, and Government will not easily find his equal in knowledge of the special subjects dealt with in his department. But he is what according to the present ‘Imperial’ phraseology is called ‘insubordinate’; this is the alleged ground of his transfer and this is the point which to us appears most seriously to call for consideration. By ‘insubordinate’ the Government appears to mean, not that an officer refuses to obey orders, not even that he neglects to carry out
in the best possible way, orders which he does not himself approve of, but that he refuses to join in the cry of 'Peace, Peace' when Government says it is peace, but when it is really war."

Exhortation to Indians

Three years after his transfer, Hume retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1882. In the meanwhile his determination to pursue the objective of helping Indians to stand on their own feet, had become all the more firm. Now that he was free from bondage that Government service had obliged him to observe, he exhorted the educated Indians to make a united effort to get their rightful demands met by the British authorities. On 1, March 1883, he addressed a circular letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University, who were considered to be the most forward looking and literate group in India at that time. In it, he said: "Constituting, as you do, a large body of the most highly educated Indians, you should, in the natural order of things, constitute also the most important source of all mental, moral, social and political progress in India. Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within, and it is to you, her most cultured and enlightened minds, her most favoured sons, that your country must look for the initiative. In vain may aliens, like myself, love India and her children; in vain may they, for her and their good, give time and trouble, money and thought; in vain may they struggle and sacrifice; they may assist with advice and suggestions; they may place their experience, abilities and knowledge at the disposal of the worker, but they lack the essential of nationality; and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves.

"Every nation secures precisely as good a Government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends are wrong, and our adversaries right, then are Lord Ripon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary; then, at present, at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an
end, and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she now enjoys. Only if this be so, let us hear no more fractious, peevish complaints that you are kept in leading strings, and treated like children, for you will have proved yourselves such. Men know how to act. Let there be no more complaints of Englishmen being preferred to you in all important offices, for if you lack that public spirit, that highest form of altruistic devotion that leads men to subordinate private ease to the public weal, that true patriotism that has made Englishmen what they are,—then rightly are these preferred to you, and rightly and inevitably have they become your rulers. And rulers and task-masters they must continue; let the yoke gall your shoulders never so sorely, until you realize and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that, whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness."

He became even more provocative towards the end of his letter, which he concluded by saying: "You are the salt of the land. And if amongst even you, the elite, fifty men cannot be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heart-felt patriotism to take the initiative, and if needs be, devote the rest of their lives to the cause — then there is no hope for India."

*Foundation of Indian National Congress*

Such an outspoken and sincere appeal had its desired effect. Enlightened and leading people from all over India responded heartily. An organization called the Indian National Union was created, whose fundamental objective was to seek justice for the Indian masses through constitutional means. It clearly stated that: "The Union, so far as it has been constituted appears to be absolutely unanimous in insisting that unswerving loyalty to the British Crown, shall be the key-note of the institution. The Union is prepared when necessary to oppose, by all constitutional methods, all authorities, high or low, here or in England, whose acts or omissions are opposed to those principles of the Government of India laid down from time to time by the British Parliament, and endorsed by the British Sovereign, but it holds the continued affiliation of India to
Great Britain, at any rate, for a period far exceeding the range of any practical political forecast, to be absolutely essential to the interests of our own national development."

A Union with such "unswerving loyalty to the British Crown" and resolved to adopt only "constitutional methods" for attaining justice from the rulers, may appear to us now to be too inadequate, but it must be realised that only an organisation, so qualified, was allowed to come into existence by the British authorities.

Membership of this Union was restricted to only those who possessed (1) an unblemished record, public and private; (2) an earnest and unavailing desire to improve the status — material, mental, moral or political of the people of India; (3) had marked natural intelligence, adequately developed through education; (4) were willing to sacrifice personal comforts for public considerations, and (5) had independence of character coupled with sobriety of judgement.

Preparations were made to hold the first meeting of the Union at Poona. Local select committees in all the important towns of India were formed. A General Secretary was appointed and who could it be but Hume! As part of these preparations, Hume travelled to England with the intention of presenting the Union before British public and influential members of the British Parliament, from as favourable an angle as possible and also to elicit their support for it. He knew well that, after everything is said and done, all Indian affairs would be ultimately settled by the British Parliament.

The First Conference that was initially scheduled to be held is Poona, was, however, held in Bombay, on 27, December 1885, as cholera had broken out in the former city. W.C. Bannerjee was chosen the President and its name was modified to, The Indian National Congress.

The most important resolution that the Conference passed, related to the substantial popular representation on the Indian Legislative Councils. It "resolved that this congress considers the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing Local Legislative Councils, by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members (and the creation of similar Councils for the North-West Provinces and Oudh, and also for the Punjab) essential, and holds that all budgets should be referred
to those Councils for consideration, their members being, moreover, empowered to interpellate the Executive in regard to all branches of administration, and that a Standing Committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and to consider any formal protest that may be recorded by majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power which would be vested in it, of overruling the decisions of such majorities.”

Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy was well-disposed towards the first conference; in fact, it had his blessings. Official blessings and sympathies were freely available at the time of the second and the third annual conferences as well. At the time of the second conference held at Calcutta, Lord Dufferin invited the members of the congress, as ‘distinguished guests’ to a garden party at the Government House. The third time at Madras, Lord Connemara, Governor of Madras, repeated the previous year’s gesture. But these were mere gestures, and the blessing and sympathies, just platitudes.

Resolution passed by the Congress, urging the Government to associate Indians with the administration of the country, went entirely unheeded.

Hume kept cautioning the Government to take action while there was still time. On 30 April, 1888, while addressing a public meeting at Allahabad, he said: “It is the British Government, in their noble enthusiasm for the emancipation of this great people—God’s trust to them—from the fetters of ignorance, who by the broadcast dissemination of Western education and Western ideas of liberty, the rights of subjects, public spirit and patriotism, have let loose forces, which unless wisely guided and controlled, might, nay sooner or later certainly must, involve consequences, which are too disastrous to contemplate.” He sent an appeal to the English people in England also as they could, he thought, if they liked, intervene on behalf of the Indians. He wrote to them: “Ah men! well fed and happy! Do you at all realize the dull misery of these countless myriads? From their birth to their deaths, how many rays of sunshine think you chequer their gloom-shrouded paths? Toil, toil, toil; hunger, hunger, hunger; these, alas! are the key-notes of their short and sad existences.”

When all the efforts of Hume and his Indian colleagues failed
to move the British bureaucracy in India, they tried to increase the tempo of their campaign in England where they thought they might get some justice from the British people and the Parliament. Dadabhai Naoroji, W. C. Bannerjee, Eardley Norton, Charles Bradlaugh, W. Digby etc. participated in this effort. Reports of the Congress resolution, its aims and objects, and the deplorable state of the Indian people were widely circulated in England, particularly among Members of Parliament. Gokhale and Lajpat Rai went to England and the former made a very good impression there. In 1890, a Journal entitled India was established to place before the British public the Indian view of Indian affairs. It was distributed free to Members of Parliament, journalists, political associations, clubs, reading rooms etc. With the help of the enthusiasts for the cause of India an ‘Indian Parliamentary Committee’, was formed, which in 1906, had the support of two hundred Members of the British Parliament.

In spite of all these efforts, both in India and England, Hume and his colleagues did not succeed in making the British rulers associate Indians in ruling the country. Nevertheless, he succeeded in awakening and organizing the Indians to agitate for their rights, and also succeeded in letting the English people know the plight of the Indians.

Fare-well to India

In 1894, at the age of 65, when Hume was leaving India, in a fare-well meeting presided over by Pherozesheh Mehta at Bombay, he again exhorted the Indians to continue in their efforts even though so far they had come across nothing but disappointments. He said: “Let nothing discourage you; hold fast to that conviction which all the best and wisest share: that right must and ever does triumph in the end, and that nations have only to deserve to secure all that they aspire to. Checks to progress may come — alas, I fear, must come — as I have warned you, and many years may pass during which apparently you gain no single inch — nay, it may be, even lose ground, but throughout it all, work on dauntlessly, preparing for the good time assuredly coming — work on ceaselessly, and India shall one day reap a glorious harvest of your labours. Let nothing—no temporary checks, no temporary losses — dishearten you.
The spirit of the age is behind you, and win you must before the end comes — No matter how impossible immediate progress may, owing to the tyranny of circumstances, appear, you are bound as true men to hammer on — hammer, hammer, hammer— never relaxing your efforts and so gradually acquiring that habit of unwavering presistence that as a nation you so sadly lack. You can work at high pressure for a week, but to run at low pressure, uniformly and unwearingly for a year, is beyond most of you, and yet this power of sustained continuous exertion is the very first requisite for political success, and if these anticipated checks only teach you this, they will prove not misfortunes but blessings in disguise.”

After his departure from India, Hume settled in Upper Norwood a few miles from London. From here he carried on his efforts for the cause of India — the cause, for which he had already spent more than forty years of his life.

While he was in India, Hume spent his spare time and his own precious money in the collection of birds of India and Asia. He had made a large collection and had prepared voluminous manuscripts. When he was transferred from Simla to Allahabad in 1879, he could not take care of the huge collection at Simla. He gifted away this rare and huge collection of eighty-two thousand birds and eggs to the British Museum of Natural History on Cromwell Road. This collection is still gratefully studied by all those interested in Indian ornithology.

He gifted away a large collection of the heads and horns of Indian big-game to the Natural History Branch of the British Museum.

Hume had started a Journal of ornithology called, *Stray Feathers*, and continued editing it till 1899. Amongst his publications on the subject were *Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds* and *The Game Birds of India*; the latter being produced in collaboration with C.H.T. Marshall.

While in England, he developed a keen interest in the collection and preservation of the plants of England. This ultimately led him to establish, at his own cost, the South London Botanical Institute which included a herbarium, a library and a garden.

*Tributes*

Hume passed away peacefully on 31, July 1912, at Norwood.
He was eighty-four then. His funeral was simple in England, but many a heart wept in India. Tributes were paid to him by leaders and common-folk alike. R.N. Mudholkar, speaking at Amraoti at the occasion, said: “Misunderstood, misrepresented and reviled by short-sighted or perverse men, he was one of the most potent friends of the British rule, a veritable pillar of strength to it. Directing the mind and energies of the thinking portion of the Indian community into the channels of constitutional agitation, he and his co-workers effectually minimized the chance of its flow into unsafe and dangerous courses, while his intense humanity and abiding sympathy for the Indian people deepened their faith in British justice. He was more than a far-sighted and noble British friend and benefactor of India. He was a saint, one of those beings sent now and then on earth to rouse men to a due recognition of the higher and brighter side of human nature. In him India has lost a guide, a teacher, a leader, whose every act was instilled with wisdom and deep affection; England, a loyal high-minded and far-seeing son; the Empire, a statesman-like citizen, and human race an ardent striver after great ideals.”

Speaking about the help rendered by him towards the freedom struggle in India, Gokhale said: “No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress. Apart from the fact that any one putting his hand out to such a gigantic task had need to have Mr. Hume’s commanding and magnetic personality; even if an Indian had possessed such a personality and had come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence. If the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the official disgust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or other to suppress the movement.”

*Leader*, a newspaper of Allahabad, wrote: “The sorrow and grief of the hundreds of millions who inhabit this vast and great and ancient land for the venerable departed can be given no adequate expression. An Englishman and a member of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Hume, with a freedom from prejudice, rare as it was glorious, founded the Indian National Congress, an organization of which no Indian can be too proud. If a new
life is visible in India today, if the Indians have a national self-consciousness which was non-existent before the year of the first Congress, if their national self-respect is higher, if the esteem in which they are held by the civilized world is greater than it was, if with determination and self-confidence with which they look forward to the day when their country will have responsible government such as is enjoyed by the self-governing dominions of the Empire, the credit for all this is, to no small extent, is due to the Congress that was founded by Mr. Hume and therefore, to Mr. Hume himself."
HENRY DEROZIO

"He used to impress upon them [students] the sacred duty of thinking for themselves, to live and die for truth, to cultivate all the virtues, shunning vice in every shape. He often read examples from ancient history of the love of justice, patriotism, philanthropy and self-abnegation; and the way in which he set forth the points, stirred up the minds of his pupils."

— Peary Chand

DEROZIO LOVED INDIA, the country of his birth. Seeing the deplorable plight of nineteenth century India, he felt sad even in his early school days. He expressed his feelings, in the form of many a poem, like the following:

My country : in thy day of glory past
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,
And worshipped as deity thou wast
Where is that glory, where that reverence now?
The eagle pinion is chained down at last,
And grovelling in the lowly dust art thou:
Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee
Save the sad story of thy misery:
Well — let me dive into the depths of time,
And bring from out the ages that have rolled
A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime,
Which human eye may never more behold;
And let the guerdon of my labour be
My fallen country : One kind wish from thee:

Derozio fervently desired to raise India and the Indians from the superstitious traditionalism of past centuries and to expose
them to the fresh breeze of rational thinking embodied in the ideas blowing from the West.

*Ideal Teacher*

And what better way could there be of achieving this objective than moulding the malleable minds of young students through the medium of modern education! When an opportunity arose, Derozio at once grasped it and became an Assistant Master in the Hindu College, Calcutta.*

Besides teaching English literature and history, which he knew and taught so well, he inculcated in his students the habit of independent thinking, and endeavoured to bring about their social and moral uplift. How much he cared for his students, is amply demonstrated by the following poem that he composed about this time:

Expanding like the petals of young flowers  
I watch the gentle opening of your minds,  
And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds  
Your intellectual energies and powers,  
That stretch 'like young birds in soft summer hours'  
Of circumstance, and freshening April showers  
Of early knowledge, and unnumbered kinds  
Of new perceptions shed their influence;  
And how you worship truth's omnipotence:  
What joyance rains upon me, when I see  
Fame in the mirror of futurity  
Weaving the chaplets you have yet to gain;  
Ah: then I feel I have not lived in vain.

In his father's house in Lower Circular Road, evening after evening, Derozio gathered the most eager of his pupils. He discussed and debated with them on social evils, the need for moral integrity, proper understanding of religious faith and

* Hindu College was then one of the most famous educational institutions of Calcutta started in 1817, through the exertions of Ram Mohan Roy, Baidyanath Mukerjee, Dwarka Nath Tagore and David Hare. It was the first college, in the modern sense of the word, to be founded in India. Its chief aim was to impart education on modern and Western lines to the youth of India.
thinking in terms of rationalism rather than traditionalism.

These informal gatherings soon became well-known and popular. Besides the young students, many prominent men, both Indians and Europeans, were attracted to them. They eagerly welcomed this opportunity of friendly social intercourse which promised to raise a new intellectual bond of sympathy between different races.

As the number of participants in the debates increased greatly, and there were many more who sought permission to join, Derozio thought of putting the whole thing on a more formal and definite basis so as to ensure its continuance. Thus evolved the Academic Association — the first of its kind in Bengal — whose meetings were held in a garden house in Manicktolla. Its object was to provide a common meeting-ground, outside the restrictions of the classroom, where young men of whatever creed or caste they may be, might gather to discuss the multifarious topics of current interest, mainly with the idea of uplifting the social and moral status of the society.

Many important and influential Europeans like Sir Edward Ryan, the Judge; Dr. Mill, Principal of Bishop's College; David Hare, the distinguished educationalist; Captain Bryne, A.D.C. to the Governor-General; and Colonel Beatson, who later became Adjutant-General; and Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the great reformer; Mohes Chandra Ghose, Ram Ghose, Dakhinaranjan Mukharjee, K.M. Banerjee, all important members of the Bengali community, were frequent participants in these meetings. They all sat together in friendly conversation and criticism and sorted out their thoughts on different matters. The students had the opportunity to participate in these discussions and listen to the views expressed by these eminent men. With Derozio's wonderful gift of organization and inspiring enthusiasm, these meetings were a marvellous success.

Opposition from Orthodoxy

While such meetings of the young and the old, the East and the West, were popular and had many enthusiastic supporters, they, nevertheless, had many antagonists as well. It had become well-known that in these meetings, among other things, the superficial rituals, superstitions and many traditions of the
Hindu religion were discussed and condemned, the practice of suttee was vigorously denounced and female education was warmly advocated. It was also noticed that as a result of participation in these discussions, many upper-caste Hindu students, were ignoring caste distinctions and were eating and drinking with the fellow-students without due regard to the latter's religion or caste. Some of them, in their over-enthusiasm for the new, had started drinking and eating meat; they even denounced and jeered at their gods and goddesses. Though such things were never advocated or encouraged by Derozio, yet they did happen and parents of such and other students were alarmed.

They blamed Derozio for all this and strongly protested before the managers of the Hindu College against the views taught and advocated to the students. Many of the parents threatened to withdraw their wards from the College in case they did not take strict action against Derozio.

The managers found themselves in a fix. On the one hand, they were threatened with withdrawal of students and consequent loss of prestige of the college which they had laboured so hard to establish, and, on the other, they were faced with criticism from the progressive elements of society, in case they attempted to check the flow of free thought and discussion.

After considering various pros and cons, the managers decided that the interests of the institution had priority over all other considerations. Consequently they issued a warning circular to the students, saying: “The managers of the College, having heard that several of the students are in the habit of attending societies at which political and religious discussions are held, think it necessary to announce their strong disapproval of the practice and to prohibit its continuance. Any student being present at such a society after the promulgation of this order will incur their serious displeasure.”

This warning aroused a storm of criticism both from the parents who wanted a stronger action to be taken and from the progressives who considered it a hinderance to the free flow of knowledge. The matter came to a head when twenty-five students of the most respectable Hindu families were withdrawn from the college as a protest against the latitude allowed. Another hundred and sixty boys took sick-leave, though it was
obvious that they had been temporarily kept back from attending until it was seen what definite steps the managers took to restrict the college training merely to secular subjects, sternly repressing those unauthorised discussions on religious and social subjects which had caused them alarm.

Dismissed

An emergency meeting of the managing committee of the college was demanded by the influential and orthodox members. In it, Derozio was accused of propagating ideas detrimental to Hindu beliefs and traditions. One of the most orthodox among the managers proposed that Derozio, "being the root of all the evils and cause of public alarm, should be discharged from the college and all connection between him and the public cut off." There were many managers who spoke in favour of Derozio. But as the majority was against him, his dismissal from the post was decided upon and the decision was conveyed to him.

Derozio had not been unaware that such a thing could happen; he had been acting according to his convictions in spite of it. But when the proceedings of the meeting were made known to him, he felt that the accusations brought forth against him were unjustified. Consequently, to clear his position, he replied to the accusations made against him. His letter, written on 26, April 1831, indicates clearly his faith in what he preached: rational thinking against traditionalism. It is also a clear witness to the high calibre of the thought processes of the twenty-two year young Derozio. He wrote: "I have never denied the existence of God in the hearing of any human being. If it be wrong to speak at all upon such a subject, I am guilty; but I am neither afraid, nor ashamed to confess having stated the doubts of philosophers upon this head because I have also stated the solution of these doubts. Is it forbidden anywhere to argue upon such a question? If so, it must be equally wrong to adduce an argument upon either side. Or is it consistent with an enlightened notion of truth to wed ourselves to only one view of so important a subject, resolving to close our eyes and ears against all impressions that oppose themselves to it?"

"How is any opinion to be strengthened but by completely
comprehending the objections that are offered to it, and exposing their futility? And what have I done more than this? Entrusted as I was sometime with the education of youth, peculiarly circumstanced, was it for me to have made them pert and ignorant dogmatists, by permitting them to know what could be said upon only one side of grave questions? Setting aside the narrowness of mind which such a course might have evinced, it would have been injurious to the mental energies and acquirements of the young men themselves. And whatever may be said to the contrary, I can vindicate my procedure by quoting no less orthodox authority than Lord Bacon: 'If a man', says this philosopher (and no one ever had a better right to pronounce an opinion upon such matters than Lord Bacon), 'will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubt.' This, I need scarcely observe, is always the case with contented ignorance when it is roused too late to thought. One doubt suggests another, and universal scepticism is the consequence. I, therefore, thought it my duty to acquaint several of the college students with the substance of Hume's celebrated dialogue between Cleanthes and Philo, in which the most subtle and refined arguments against theism are adduced. But I have also furnished them with Dr. Reid's and Dugald Stewart's more acute replies to Hume — replies which to this day continue unfutted. This is the head and front of my offending. If the religious opinions of the students have become unhinged in consequence of the course I pursued, the fault is not mine. To produce convictions was not within my power, and if I am to be condemned for the atheism of some, let me receive credit for the theism of others. Believe me, my dear Sir, I am too thoroughly imbued with a deep sense of human ignorance and of the perpetual vicissitudes of opinion, to speak with confidence even of the most unimportant matters. Doubt and uncertainty besiege us too closely to admit the boldness of dogmatism to enter an enquiring mind, and far be it from me to say 'this is' and 'that is not', when after the most extensive acquaintance with the researches of science, and after the most daring flights of genius, we must confess with sorrow and disappointment that humility becomes the highest wisdom, for the highest wisdom assures man of his ignorance.'

Derozio felt deeply the manner in which he was made to
leave Hindu College, yet it was, by no means, his first encounter with ill-luck and sorrow. He had courageously and determinedly faced many ordeals in his personal life before.

*Early Life*

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was born in Calcutta on 18 April, 1809. He had two brothers and two sisters. His elder brother, Francis, said to be a musical genius, died at the age of twenty at Calcutta. The younger one, Claude, died at twenty-two. His sister Sophia died at seventeen, while Amelia, to whom Henry was devoted, died at twenty-two. His mother Sophia Johnson, an English lady, died nine years after her marriage, and his father, Francis Derozio, (son of a Portuguese merchant) who had remarried, died leaving behind his widow. Such tragedies, rare as they are, do leave a tremendous adverse effect upon the mind. Yet in the case of Henry Derozio, their impact made him even more sympathetic to the people.

At the age of six, Derozio joined David Drummond’s Academy, one of the best private schools in Calcutta. He participated in all the activities of the school and was generally considered a lovable child, sympathetic and tolerant except in the face of injustice.

Derozio was interested in English literature and within a short time, he came to possess a deep knowledge of the subject. He won a few prizes and medals. He was the most popular student in the school, both with his school-fellows and the masters. There is a story that one day he returned to school unexpectedly, after a few week’s absence on account of illness. The news of his arrival spread immediately. Next to his own class room, Mr. Drummond was taking the class. But in spite of his awe-inspiring presence, all the students of Mr. Drummond class ran out to welcome their friend. Derozio had indeed become the leading spirit behind all the activities of the school.

But in spite of his brilliant record at the school, his father thought it fit to take him away from the school and to fix him up in the firm of which he had now become the chief-accountant. He wanted to see Henry well-settled there before he himself retired. Thus at the age of fourteen, only after eight years of schooling, he left to join service.

Derozio could not bring himself to like the clerical job that
he was given in the office; it was against his inclinations and temperament. He, however, pulled through it in order to please his father. Two years later when he fell ill, his father allowed him to relinquish this job and sent him to one of his uncles in Bihar, who had an indigo factory. Work here was no different, yet the calm soothing surroundings on the banks of the Ganges proved beneficial to Henry's body and mind, and he started putting forth his sensitive thoughts on paper in the form of poems.

Sensitive Poet

He sent his poems for publication in different journals and newspapers. They were readily accepted and printed because of his original and brilliant style. Later on, a collection of these poems was published in the form of a book which was very well received and appreciated. The extreme youth of the poet—he was only eighteen then,—his personal charm, and the promise of his poetry, all combined to win immediate notice and fame for him; his achievement was soon the talk of the town. He was now counted among the little inner circle of mature scholars and intellectuals.

Soon he was offered the job of an Assistant Editor of the India Gazette. He accepted it and set to work with full youthful enthusiasm. This was an excellent opportunity for him to display his special talents and he fully utilized it. He was not only doing the greater part of the editorial work of the Gazette, but was also contributing articles to almost every paper in Calcutta.

Having worked and gained experience, a few months later, he started his own paper, The Calcutta Gazette. He was himself the editor and chief contributor to it, writing on every aspect of life and literature. His versatility and genius—while he was yet in his teens—was recognized and noticed widely. In fact, it was this recognition that offered him the job of an Assistant Master at the Hindu College, Calcutta—a job which was dear to his heart but, unfortunately, he was not able to retain for long.

After he was dismissed from the college service, Derozio again took up journalism. He started a paper The East Indian in the spring of 1831. He soon felt that he could now write
even more freely and his thoughts about the social and moral
uplift of the Indian masses were propagated more widely than
was possible within the four walls of the college campus.
During those days, there were many private educational
institutions in Calcutta, in only a few of which children from
the European families and from the enlightened upper-strata of
Hindu families studied together. In others, the European parents
objected to their wards studying with the native children. To
Derozio this objection of European parents looked detrimental
to the social well-being of both the communities and he never
hesitated to express his views on this topic.

Tragic End

The end of such a brilliant career and life came rather
suddenly. On December 17, Derozio was stricken down with
cholera, which was then prevalent in an epidemic form in
Calcutta and had already killed thousands of people. For over
a week, Derozio pulled through and it seemed that he may
after all survive the attack. But nature willed otherwise. On
26 December, 1831, he passed away surrounded by his former
students, friends, admirers and the family members. He was
not yet twenty-three. He was buried in the Park Street cemetery
in Calcutta.

Through the short period of life allotted to him, Derozio did
his best to arouse Indians to stand upon their own feet and to
leave aside the shackles of the past. Many of his students and
associates, later on, attained high positions and carried forward
the ideals which he had propagated with so much enthusiasm
and fervour.
CAREY set out for Calcutta in 1793, to preach Christianity to the Indians. But when he reached here, he found that any communication with the people was impossible — they did not know English and he did not know Bengali. In the circumstances, his mission could be achieved only if he learnt Bengali.

He was prepared to do it, but there was a hitch. The Bengali language at the time was rather a group of dialects spoken differently in different parts, with no precise grammar. It was obvious that by learning a few dialects, he could reach only some sections of the population; but if his plans were more ambitious, he could carry them out only if he himself evolved a broader, grammatically correct language, out of the different dialects then prevalent. This he set out to do, and ultimately it was this which brought him the greatest recognition and earned for him the gratitude of the Bengali-speaking people.

With nothing else to go by — there were no printed books; even manuscripts were rare — but his missionary zeal, Carey started picking up first the nouns and then the verbs of the language. As he gathered experience, he found that many of the Bengali words were derived from Sanskrit; and as the latter language had a good systematized grammar, he realized that if he could learn and apply Sanskrit grammar to the Bengali language, he would be able to remove the age-old cobwebs from it and give it a fresh and comprehensible shape.

This was, by no means, an easy job; it took him over two decades to achieve it. The result, however, was worth all the
efforts that he made. He succeeded in giving the Bengali language a systematic grammar and an enriched prose. The face-lift that he thus provided it, made it a refined and comprehensive medium of expression.

*Early Life*

Born on 17 August, 1761, in Paulesbury village in England, William Carey was the son of a weaver. He worked as a shoemaker till he was twenty-eight. The whole family depended on his meagre income, he being the eldest of the five children.

Poor, young Carey was interested in reading, and the books that he loved most were on the subjects of travel, adventure, history and the natural sciences. When he was about eighteen he joined a small church group at Hackleton and later the Baptist congregation at Moulton, of which he eventually became pastor. He was thoroughly convinced that by following the Christian teachings, human beings everywhere could better their lot, and he also knew that there were large areas on the earth where the teachings of Christ were neither known nor practised. Hence he thought of going to a foreign country and establishing a Christian mission there. On the basis of his own knowledge and on the advice of his colleagues, he selected India as the place of his work. With some of his other colleagues, he set out for India, Bengal, on 13 June, 1793.

*Hurdles*

He arrived in Calcutta on 11 November, 1793. No body noticed his arrival which is what he himself desired, since, generally speaking, the clergy as a class in India, was not considered respectable in those days and the East India Company discouraged their coming here; so much so that even the Governor-General in 1795, wrote to the Court of Directors, saying, “Our clergy in Bengal, with some exceptions are not respectable characters.”

Lack of funds and constant fear of deportation to England, if his missionary activities were detected, plagued him all the time. He looked out for a job but could get none even after several attempts. At last, he was offered the job of an assistant in charge of some indigo factories at Madnabati, thirty miles north of Maldah. He accepted the job and started work. He
also started devoting more time to Bengali as he had set his mind on translating the Bible into Bengali so that the teachings of Christ could be understood by the people in their own language.

Madnabati, at the time, consisted only of a few mud-hut villages. It was too small a place to fulfil Carey’s ambitious plan of spreading Christianity far and wide. He stayed there for six years but made no headway at all. Hence he wanted to make a move, but he did not know where—a large place had also the disadvantage and danger of attracting the attention of the Company. The problem perplexed him much, but was ultimately settled providentially.

Four missionaries from England arrived and proceeded, not to Madnabati where Carey was stationed, but to Srirampur, a Danish territory. Here, they knew, they were safe under the protection of the Danish flag. Later Carey also moved over to the same place. About the advantages of this shift, he later wrote: “At Serampore we can settle as missionaries...and the great ends of the mission, particularly in the printing of the scriptures, seem much more likely to be answered in that situation.... In that part of the country inhabitants are far more numerous and other missionaries may be there permitted to join us, which here it seems they will not.... Had we stayed at Mudnabutty or its vicinity, it is a great wonder we could have set up our press. Government would have suspected us, though without reason to do so, and would, in all probability, have prevented us from printing; the difficulty of procuring proper materials would also have been almost insuperable.”

Feeling safe and secure, Carey tried to understand the needs of the people in the area. Activities that were directed towards the welfare of the local population, such as, the opening of a school where the children could get a free education and a small dispensary for the leprous patients, were soon started. Gradually Carey won full confidence and respect of the local population.

Here he completed the translation of the Bible. The New Testament in Bengali was printed in February 1801 and the Old Testament between 1802 and 1809. This was a major achievement and it brought him fame and prestige. He was by then considered the foremost British scholar of Bengali.
Scholar of Bengali Language

On the basis of this, Carey was appointed teacher of Bengali in Fort William College, in April 1801. This institution, newly established with the efforts and inspiration of Lord Wellesley, aimed at imparting Western as well as Eastern education to its students and had official backing and patronage, and had already attracted prominent scholars in different disciplines of knowledge on its staff. Initially as a teacher and later, from 1 January, 1807, as a professor, Carey got the maximum opportunity to further the cause of the Bengali language, "the beautiful language of Bengal", as he used to call it.

Carey had by now ample opportunity of, "studying the language with more attention and of examining its structure more closely than had been done before"; he also had some knowledge of its progenitor, the classical Sanskrit. He put in efforts to compile a systematic grammar of Bengali. In this he succeeded marvellously. His grammar proved very useful for the teachers and writers of the language.

Another of his major contributions was the preparation of a Dictionary of the Bengali language, in two quarto volumes, published between 1815 and 1825. This was the culmination of his thirty years of labour and deserved all the praise that was bestowed upon it. It proved useful in properly fixing the forms and expressions of the language, so that the literature that evolved, later on, was more uniform and consistent in the words that it used to express particular thoughts and ideas. In the compilation of this Dictionary, his knowledge of the Sanskrit language helped him very much because, as he said, "considerably more than three-fourths of the words are pure Sanskrit and those composing the greatest part of remainder are so little corrupted that their origin may be traced without difficulty." The English equivalents of the Bengali words he chose carefully and they were of unquestionable accuracy.

His knowledge of the customs and manners of the people and his long stay amongst them had enabled him to understand the precise denotation and connotation of the local terms and this helped him in fixing the meanings of words. Not infrequently he devised characteristic denominations for the products of the animal and vegetable world peculiar to India. The result was
that the Dictionary for long remained a standard and useful work on the subject and many of the later dictionaries were based on this. Later on, an abridged version of it, prepared under Carey’s own supervision by Marshman, was printed in 1827. This abridgement, however, did not do away with the need for the original.

*Kathopakathan* (The Dialogues) published by him in 1801, exhibit Carey’s extraordinary command over colloquial Bengali. The extent and variety of topics, the different situations and the different classes of men dealt within these dialogues, show not only meticulous observation and familiarity with the daily occupations of the people, their manners, feelings and ideas but also a thorough acquaintance with the resources of the language in its difficult colloquial forms. The class of men who are supposed to carry on these dialogues or colloquies range from that of a Shahib, a respectable Bengali gentleman, a merchant, a Zemindar and Brahmin-priest to that of a peasant, low-class women, a day-labourer, a fisher-man and a beggar. The more regular and measured language of the upper classes is put side by side with the loose style and talk of uncultured women and the lower classes in different situations. *Kathopakathan* presents in many respects a curious and lively picture of the manner of life led by different classes of people in Bengal.

In contrast to *Kathopakathan*'s colloquial prose, a dignified, chaste and simple style of language is seen in the *Ithasamalo*, another of Carey’s works published in 1812. As its name implies, it is ‘a collection of stories in the Bengali language’, sorted out from various sources.

*Impetus to Others*

Besides his own work, huge, laborious and useful that it was, Carey had from the outset drawn around him a band of enthusiastic writers, pundits and other teachers who aimed at enriching the Bengali language. He had over a dozen junior colleagues who taught Bengali in the Fort William College and whom Carey induced to work on different aspects of its language and literature; one of them Mrityunjay, became famous for his scholarly works.

Carey aided and encouraged the publication of many of the older Bengali classics and other useful texts from the Mission
Press at Srirampur, between the year 1801 and 1825.

By his own exertions as well as those of others whom he encouraged or induced, Carey not only provided the students of the language with elementary books, but also supplied standard compositions in prose for the scholars.

Carey has thus rightly earned the gratitude of all the Bengali-speaking people. It was to the foundations laid by him that a rich super-structure of literature was added later on, which brought to the language a well-deserved recognition from all over the world.
William Dwight Whitney
Max Müller

Sir John Marshall
WILLIAM JONES

"If Europeans could be led to understand Indian customs and culture, there would inevitably he improved personal relations between the two people."

— William Jones, at the time of the formation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

During the later half of the eighteenth century, while many of the British officers of the East India Company firmly believed that the Indians had always been uncivilized barbarians, there was one amongst them who thought otherwise. This was William Jones who through his study of ancient Indian literature, had become conversant with the glorious cultural past of India, and keenly felt that the British ruling class and other Europeans ought to know about it. This was, in his opinion, one of the ways in which a better understanding could be created between the two peoples.

Early Life

Born on 28 September, 1746, at West Minster in London, William Jones was the second son and third child of his parents. His father who was an eminent mathematician and a Fellow and later Vice-President of the Royal Society, was 66 years old when William Jones was born. He died three years later. The young child was looked after by his mother, Mary Nix, daughter of George Nix. She was a virtuous, sensible and well-informed lady, interested in reading books. She encouraged and helped her son to do the same. The result was that at the age of four, William Jones was able to read and understand any book in English that was given to him.
In 1753, William Jones entered the newly-started school at Harrow. During the first few years he showed no distinct abilities; in fact, he fell back for a year in his class, but that was mainly due to an accident in which he broke his leg and was confined to bed. Gradually he picked up in his studies and became the top-most student of the class. He won a few prizes and during his later years at school, became a sort of legend for precocity in his studies. He learnt as many as half a dozen languages: Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish and Hebrew. His teachers held an high opinion of him and he was sometimes addressed as a ‘Great Scholar’. He matriculated in 1764 and then joined Oxford University after winning a scholarship in 1766. In 1768, he was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree and in June, 1773, the degree of Master of Arts.

While still in the University, Jones picked up a few oriental languages, namely: Arabic, Persian and Turkish. The first outward mark of recognition came when King Christian VII of Denmark asked him to translate the *Tariikhi-Nadiri* (Mirza Mahdi’s official history of Nadir shah), from the Persian into French. Initially, William Jones refused to undertake this work as he knew that it would leave him little time for any other work; but later he relented. His mastery over both the languages — French and Persian — resulted in his producing such a fine and beautiful translation that it received immediate acclaim. It brought him honours and enhanced his reputation as an oriental scholar.

In 1771, he published his *Grammar of the Persian language*. This book was very well received and proved useful; it was subsequently reprinted many times and long remained a standard work on the subject.

He translated some of the Arabic classics as well: Ferdousi’s epic, *Shah-namah* (Book of Kings), Arabic anthologies of poetry, *Moallaqat* (Suspended) and *Hamaara* (Bravery), Attar’s *Pendhama* and Abul Ala’s *Eulogies*. The European readers for whom these works were prepared liked them very much and greatly appreciated his efforts in this direction.

On the basis of his original works and translations, William Jones was now considered the foremost exponent of oriental studies in England. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society
in 1772, when he was only twenty-five years of age.

While studies in orientalism may bring one all the honours yet one could not make it a career in those days. William Jones knew it only too well. His mother was also keen that he should take up the study of law, with which one could attain a good career and aspire for the highest political office in the country. Consequently, William Jones joined Middle Temple for law studies in September, 1770, after leaving the job of private tutorship to the son (later Lord Althorp) of the wealthy and well connected First Earl Spencer; a job he had accepted and enjoyed performing.

After completing his law studies, William Jones was appointed a Commissioner of Bankruptcy. This, however, was not the job that could satisfy him financially or intellectually; nevertheless, he stuck on. During this time, he published a book on ancient Greek Property Laws which brought him fame in legal circles as well.

William Jones, at this time — like any other ambitious youth — desired to have money and social position; over and above, he wanted to keep pursuing his studies in orientalism. It occurred to him that he could have all these if he got the position of a Judge in India. He threw in all his energies and influence in order to get it and it took him four long years to succeed. He cleared different political hurdles and also made an unsuccessful attempt to enter the British Parliament.

Appointment as Judge

His appointment as a Judge was publicly announced on 4 March, 1783, in the London Gazette. Then things started moving: he was knighted on 20 March; he proposed to Anna Maria, whom he had loved since many years, and his proposal having been accepted, the marriage took place on 8 April; the newly-married couple boarded the frigate, Crocodile, on 12 April, and set sail for Calcutta.

His appointment and departure for India was the news of the day. London Magazine, observed: "He is now on his passage for India, and from the ideas which we have formed of his character, and from the opportunities which we have had of contemplating with admiration his exquisite taste, his extensive and diversified erudition, we may venture, without incurring
the censure of rashness, to presage that his conduct, in the character of a Judge, will render him even a great ornament to his country."

Not to waste any time, William Jones, while on his way to India, was making plans about the work he intended to do there. As a Judge in India, he knew, he had to know the Muslim and Hindu laws, because the Indians were judged according to their own, and not the British, laws. About Muslim law, he expected no difficulty as he knew Persian very well. The position about Hindu laws was difficult and unsatisfactory. These laws were available in ancient Sanskrit manuscripts and for their application and interpretation, the British Judges had so far depended upon the Brahmans. The latter, on their part, observed the British Judges, read the laws differently in different cases and had made a mockery of the law. So the situation as it existed then was that if Jones wished to know the laws of the Hindus correctly, he would have to translate and assimilate them himself. This arduous task he resolved to do.

Besides, his professional work, he thought of studying different aspects of ancient India, namely, Indian medicine, anatomy, surgery, chemistry, botany, arithmetics, geometry, music, poetry, etc. In fact, everything Indian was of interest to him. He had, no doubt, realized that he could not possibly undertake this enormous task single-handedly; but he had his own plans.

After reaching Calcutta towards the end of September, 1783, and getting familiar with his working environments, he took up court duties, for the first time, in the month of December. His first Charge to the Grand Jury, which was published, was long regarded a model of eloquence and propriety. In his official duties and conduct, he was at once a success.

*Asiatic Society of Bengal*

When he was well established in his official duties, William Jones turned his attention to the plan that had long been at the back of his mind: the study of different aspects of Indian culture. This was the formation of a Society, on the pattern of the Royal Society of England, to undertake work on different unexplored disciplines and to present its findings before Europeans interested in India and the Orient in its own journal. He put forward this plan before Sir Robert Chamber, a member
of the Supreme Court who applauded it greatly and responded by inviting a group of European scholars to a meeting, in January, 1784. After this meeting, the participants requested the Members of the Governor-General’s Council to become the patrons of the Society. They all accepted. Lord Hastings, the Governor-General, himself a promotor of Persian and Sanskrit studies, was then requested to become its first president. Hastings felt honoured but declined the offer, yielding to Jones, who, he said, was most capable of guiding the society towards its splendid objectives. Jones was unanimously elected the first president and the society was named the Asiatic Society of Bengal. It came into being on 15 January, 1784.

Initially, a weekly meeting of the society was held in the Grand Jury room for the purpose of presenting and discussing papers on history, antiquities, arts, sciences and the literatures of India and Asia. Later on, these meetings were held monthly, and later, once every three months. Many of the papers presented in these meetings were published in the *Asiatic Researches* and *Asiatic Miscellany*, of which William Jones was the editor and chief contributor. In 1782, a journal called the *Journal of The Asiatic Society of Bengal* was started, which the society later adopted as its own, in 1843.

Through the untiring efforts of William Jones, its founder president, and later through others who followed him, the Society succeeded in its objectives of exploring and investigating Indian culture and history. The proceedings of the society, which were published from time to time, were keenly read by Europeans and Indians.

*Sanskrit Scholar*

William Jones had planned on learning Sanskrit long before his arrival in India. The urgency to do so, however, dawned upon him when he saw that no worthwhile study of any aspect of ancient India could be undertaken without knowing this language. After he had resolved to do so, a difficulty cropped up from an unforeseen though not unexpected quarter: Who would teach him? One or two European Sanskrit scholars, like Charles Wilkins, could only impress upon him the need to learn the language but had no time to teach him. No Brahmin teacher was readily available, as according to them, he was
impure, a mlechcha, and did not deserve to know the language; and certainly should not be allowed to touch their religious manuscripts.

At long last, William Jones acquired the help of a Vaidya, a non-Brahmin medical practitioner to teach him, and made a beginning in this direction in the summer of 1785. Daily at 7 o’clock his teacher came and found his student ready. In fact, by that time in the morning, William Jones had already completed most of his morning chores: He rose about an hour before sunrise and walked three miles to Fort William, from where he was carried on a palanquin to the court house; a cold bath, dressing up and breakfast took another hour and it was only then that his teacher arrived and taught him for about an hour. After that, writes Jones: “At eight came a Persian and Arab alternately with whom I read till nine except on Saturday, when I gave instructions to my Mogul secretary on my correspondence with the Musalman scholars. At nine came the attorneys with affidavits. I am then robed and ready for court, where I sit on the bench daily for five hours. At three I dress and dine and till near sunset, am at the service of my friends, who choose to dine with me. When the sun is sunk in the Ganges, we drive to the Gardens either in our port-chaise, or Anna’s phaetan drawn by a pair of beautiful Nepal horses. After tea-time we read, and never sit up, if we can avoid it after ten.”

If the Brahmin teachers thought that without their help he would not be able to learn Sanskrit, they were badly mistaken, and they soon realized it. With his usual enthusiasm, Jones picked up the language and was soon able to speak and converse in it with the Brahmins themselves. Seeing his unselfish interest and devotion to their language, they came round to help him. They began to trust, even to love him, and were eager to procure for him rare manuscripts of their literature. That he was a Christian was no longer a hindrance; in fact, between themselves they called him a Kshatriya, second only to them!

William Jones composed a series of hymns on the Hindu gods such as Kama, Narayana, Sarasvati, Ganga, Indra, Surya, Lakshmi, Durga. These and some others were published in 1785 and 1786. To assist the European readers in understand-
ing them, he added explanatory notes. The hymn to Kamadeo was the first accurate specimen of Hindu mythology in English poetry. Jones' attempt to acquaint the West with Hindu mythology thus succeeded admirably.

Gradually as he became well-versed in Sanskrit grammar, Jones noticed certain forms in it similar to those found in European and other classical languages such as Greek and Latin. He was greatly impressed with these phonetic and structural similarities and thought of a possible parallel development between them. In fact, he was finding now for himself the confirmation of the belief which his vast studies had brought to his attention and about which he had said many years before that "many learned investigators of antiquity were fully persuaded, that a very old and almost primateval language was in use among these northern nations, from which not only the Celtic dialects, but even the Greek and Latin are derived." *

Further studies led him to conclude that these languages were divergent later forms of one single prehistoric language. Speaking about this subject at the time of the Third Anniversary Discourse, delivered before the Society, on 2 February, 1786, he stated: "The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source which, perhaps, no longer exists; there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothik (i.e., Germanic) and the Celtic, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanskrit, and the old Persian might be added to the same family."

Further researches by other scholars have substantiated the

* Much earlier than William Jones, a few scholars like Filippo Sassetti (1585), Benjamin Schultze (1725) and Father Coeurdoux (1767) had suggested that Sanskrit had a definite affinity with Greek and Latin. None of them, however, suggested any reason for this affinity and their suggestions had remained unnoticed till William Jones' studies indicated the definite relationship between them.
above-mentioned hypothesis of William Jones, needing only a few minor modifications.

Discovery of this common source* of the origin of Sanskrit and many of the classical and modern languages of the West, the whole group being called the Indo-European languages, was an epoch-making event. It revealed the movement of different races in prehistoric and early historic times — an event of great significance in the history of mankind.

During the course of his literary activities, Jones came upon an ancient Sanskrit drama Shakuntala in a Bengali manuscript. After translating it, he found it to be a pleasing and authentic picture of ancient Hindu manners, a glorious picture of ancient Hindu womanhood and one of the most valuable discoveries of oriental literature yet brought to light. A keen judge of literature, he knew he had discovered a play which could stand among the world’s best drama. He called its author, Kalidasa, an Indian Shakespeare. Shakuntala was enthusiastically received by the Western world, particularly by Goethe, the German genius. Here was incontestable proof to the world of the ancient glory of India.

After having mastered Sanskrit, William Jones came to grips with Manu Samhita, the codification of Hindu law. He knew this would involve many people, thus necessitating a large outlay in expenditure. In 1788, he acquainted Lord Cornwallis with this problem, appraising him, at the same time, about the need for the execution of his scheme. Cornwallis readily agreed and in an explanatory note to the Court of Directors in England, he wrote: “The thorough knowledge which Sir William has acquired of the Eastern language, joined to the extent of his

* Before William Jones made his discovery of the Indo-European group of languages and up till the 1780’s, different European languages were grouped by scholars into three categories: Germanic (English, German, Dutch, Danish and Swedish), Romance (French, Italian and Spanish) and Slavic (Russian, Polish, Bohemian and Serbian). Besides these, Greek was considered to have had a larger relationship with other languages since it was not Germanic, Romance or Slavic. Latin was regarded as a kind of corrupted Greek. The resemblances between Latin and other European languages were explained as the result of the preponderant cultural influence of Latin in the area. William Jones’ discoveries led to marked changes in the inter-relationship between these languages.
literature and the strength of his abilities, constitute qualifications for executing the work that he has undertaken, which perhaps cannot in any other man be paralleled .... If it can be accomplished according to the original plan, it will justly render the name of its author dear to the natives of this country by enabling their European rulers to govern them according to their own ideas of humanity and justice."

Six years later, in 1794, a significant part of the work was going into print. Unfortunately, Jones was not destined to see the completion of this work, inspite of his most unremitting attention to this great enterprise. It was left to Henry Colebrook to complete it later.

Illness

After his wife, Anna, left India in November, 1793, because of her continued and persistent ill-health, Jones felt lonely and his health deteriorated. He, however, continued to stay in India as he did not want to leave his work incomplete. He noticed a swelling that had gradually appeared on the right side of his upper abdomen. He was losing weight and appetite. The swelling was painful but Jones refused to let his mind bow to physical pain and continued his work. In April, he was so ill with this swelling that he had to be confined to bed. On the evening of 20 April, 1794, he had fever and from then on the disease, which was diagnosed as an inflammation of the liver, deteriorated rapidly. A week later, on 27 April, he was dead. Death snatched him away when he was only forty-eight.

Shortly before he expired, Sir William Jones composed the following epitaph which was subsequently inscribed on his tomb.

Here lies deposited,
the mortal part of a man,
who feared God, but not death;
and maintained independence,
but sought not riches:
who thought

None below him, but the base and unjust,
None above him, but the wise and virtuous;
who loved
his parents, kindred, friends, country,
    with an ardour
which was the chief source of
    all his pleasure and all his pains;
    and who, having devoted
his life to their service,
    and to
the improvement of his mind,
    wishing peace on earth
    and with
good-will to all creatures.

William Jones had laboured hard during his leisure hours, to bring forward before the European people, the life and literature of India and the East, so as to create a better understanding between them. He not only interpreted Indian culture to the West but also brought it to the attention of the Indians themselves. He succeeded in his efforts even though he lost his life in the process. One of his friends paid him the following tribute:

"It is happy for us that this man was born."

These same words would appropriately describe the feelings of millions of Indians as well.
It was he who first brought Sanskrit literature within the ken of the West and threw open the doors through which many scholars have passed during the last two centuries.

Incentive for the study of Sanskrit language among the British officers in India, arose out of a practical, administrative need. The Hindus were governed by the Hindu laws so far as civil cases were concerned. The British judges, being poorly informed on the subject, had to depend upon Brahmin scholars to read out their laws from ancient Sanskrit scriptures and then to interpret them. They noticed that the interpretations of the Brahmins differed from person to person and from case to case. But in the absence of an authoritative English translation of these texts, the British judges were helpless.

Lord Hastings was well aware of this problem. On his initiative, one of the Company's officers, Halhed, collected Persian translations of some of the Hindu laws and re-translated them into English. But unfortunately, this third-hand method of translation from Sanskrit to Persian and then into English, proved to be unsatisfactory as many errors crept into the final text.

Halhed, however, picked up some Sanskrit while engaged in this work. Though he did not attain much proficiency in this language, he understood the need for learning it and even developed an enthusiasm for it; the same he passed on to a young Company officer named Charles Wilkins.

Early Life

Charles Wilkins was born at Frome in Somerset around 1750.
His father’s name though not known with certainty is variously described as Walter / William / Huge and his mother’s Martha (nee Wray) or Mary. Charles Wilkins was married twice and had three daughters.

He arrived in Bengal in the service of the East India Company on 5 June, 1770, as a writer and was later promoted as Superintendent of the Company’s factories at Maldah. In 1782, he was appointed Printer to the East India Company.

Studies Sanskrit

Charles Wilkins writes: “About 1778, my curiosity was excited by the example of my friend Halhed to commence the study of Sanskrit.” This was eight years after his arrival in India. But there was a wide gulf between ‘curiosity being excited’ and the actual learning of the language. Who would teach him? Not the Brahmmins for whom he was ‘impure’. With no printed texts, no dictionaries, no grammars and no teachers, how could he learn an entirely new language? It needed a lot of sweating and persuasion to ultimately procure the services of a Hindu Sanskrit scholar, a Bengali who would initiate him in the subject.

His Bengali teacher pronounced Sanskrit words with a peculiar accent. The nouns he would pronounce all ending in ‘o’, such as, ‘Beeshmo’, ‘Beecheetrobeerjo’. And Wilkins followed suit. It was only when he went to Benares in 1783, and was himself ridiculed by the demonstration of his language, and later heard the language being spoken by the Pandits that he came to know of his fault in pronunciation and tried to correct it.

Slowly but steadily, as Wilkins made progress in the language, he started translating the ancient Hindu manuscripts into English. He translated the Bhagavadgita in 1784 and sent it to Warren Hastings, the Governor-General. The latter was so impressed by it that he forwarded it to the Court of Directors which permitted it to be published at once. For orientalists its appearance marked an epoch — the real beginning of Sanskrit studies by Europeans. It revealed to them the treasures that could be expected from ancient India.

Wilkins also translated the first four books of the Manu Samhita, the ancient Hindu law scriptures. This he gave to Sir William Jones who was keenly interested in it for professional
reasons. Later on, he translated the *Hitopadesa* in 1787 and *Shakuntala* in 1794.

From his work on manuscripts, Wilkins gradually turned his attention to ancient Indian inscriptions. In 1781, he read out a copper plate inscription of king Devapala of Bengal. In 1785, he worked out four more inscriptions: one of Pala, two of Anantavaraman in the Barabar hills of the Gaya district and the last one said to be from Bodh-gaya. By reading and interpreting these inscriptions, he provided material for the study of ancient Indian history.

It was after he returned to England where he worked as a teacher of Sanskrit that he brought out a *Sanskrit Grammar* in 1808. This was the first to be published in England; Colebrooke's and Carey's Grammars having been published in India. This was a great improvement over the former works in regard to the lucidity and arrangement of the subject matter. About it Wilson said that it was "undeniably a work of great merit and utility, and must even be regarded as of standard authority." It received enthusiastic support from all quarters and was warmly greeted in the continent. It provided an impulse to Sanskrit studies in Europe.

*First Printer in Bengali*

Before Charles Wilkins' time, while some manuscripts in Bengali were available, no book in this language had ever been printed. It was he who, for the first time, made the printing of books in that language possible. It is difficult to exaggerate the services thus rendered by him not only to the cause of vernacular literature but also to the general culture of the people.

The oldest specimen of a printed book in Bengali that we have is Halhed's Grammar, printed at Hooghly in 1778. The fount for this book was prepared by Charles Wilkins himself. In the preface to this book, the author sets forth some interesting details about the difficulties that Wilkins had to overcome, and how with patient perseverance, he ultimately succeeded: "Public curiosity must be strongly excited by the beautiful characters which are displayed in the following work; although my attempts may be deemed incomplete or unworthy of notice, the book itself will always bear an intrinsic value from its
containing as extraordinary an instance of mechanical abilities as have, perhaps ever appeared. That the Bengali letter is very difficult to be initiated in steel will be readily allowed by any person who shall examine the intricacies of the strokes, the unequal length and size of the characters and the variety of their positions and combinations. It was no easy task to procure a writer accurate enough to prepare an alphabet of similar and proportionate body throughout, and with that symmetrical exactness which in necessary to the regularity and neatness of a fount.... The advice and even the solicitation of the Governor-General prevailed upon Mr. Wilkins, a gentleman who has been some years in India Company’s Civil Service in Bengal, to undertake a set of Bengali types. He did and his success has exceeded every expectation. In a country so remote from European artists, he has been obliged to charge himself with all the various occupations of the metallurgist, the engraver, the founder and the printer. To the merit of invention, he was compelled to add the application of personal labour. With a rapidity unknown in Europe, he surmounted all obstacles which necessarily clog the first rudiments of a difficult art as well as the disadvantages of solitary experiment, and has thus singly on the first effort exhibited his work in a state of perfection which in every part of the world has appeared to require the united improvements of different projectors and the gradual polish of successive ages.

Wilkins unhesitatingly taught the art of making fount and printing therefrom to some of his assistants, one of whom, later went to Srirampur just at the time when Carey and his colleagues were in search of a man who could make founts of Bengali and Sanskrit types. Wilkins’ efforts and work thus gradually took roots and had a lasting impact.

Wilkins’ success led to his being asked to produce founts for printing Persian as well. This he did in 1780 with strikingly beautiful results.

In 1785, when Wilkins’ health broke down, he returned to England and settled initially at Hawkhurst, Kent and later in Baker street, London. After he recovered, he made a Devanagiri fount and started printing Sanskrit Grammar with it. Before he had gone far with it, his house burnt down and though he succeeded in saving the matrices, his types were
scattered and ruined. With a fresh start, the Grammar was completed in 1808; its 'distinct and elegant typography' being highly praised by Wilson.

In the year 1800, Wilkins was appointed the first Librarian and Custodian of oriental manuscripts, at the library situated in Leadenhall street, London. This library was subsequently, renamed India Office Library in 1801. It contained a large number of manuscripts that were taken at the fall of Seringapatam and the others that were collected from individual donors in response to an invitation by the Governor-General to submit books and works in Asiatic languages. Paradoxical as it may seem, the best sources for research on Indology are still located not in India but in England, in this very library.

In 1805, Wilkins was appointed Visitor to the newly founded Haileybury College. He retained his job as librarian as well.

Recognition

In appreciation of his scholarly pursuits he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1788, an LLD. of Oxford in 1805 and an Associate of the Institute of France. The Royal Society of Literature awarded him its medal in recognition of his Sanskrit learning. He was knighted in 1833. He died in London on 13 May, 1836 and was buried at the Chapel in Portland town.

Charles Wilkins was the first Sanskrit scholar of the English race whose personal influence on his contemporaries was of enduring importance. While he was in India, he enthused Sir William Jones to learn Sanskrit and later co-operated with him in the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. It was he who first brought Sanskrit literature within the ken of the West and threw open the doors through which so many scholars have passed during the last two centuries. His fame has been eclipsed, no doubt, by the more imposing work of his successors, but that was made possible only by his labours as a pioneer.
"He is distinguished as one of the greatest scholars of medieval times, a polymath who was equally at home in mathematics and theology, astronomy and philosophy, chemistry and chronology, history and ethnography, and medicine and cosmography, and whose special pre-eminence was that he was the first of scientific Indologists and one of the greatest of all times."

— S. K. Chatterji

We owe as much tribute to a friend of India who projects a favourable image of a certain aspect of Indian life before the world as to a friend who is able to point out our weaknesses and faults to us; thereby enabling us to know ourselves better, and consequently providing us with an opportunity to become what we really should be.

Such a friend of India was Alberuni.

Writing about the Hindus in general, in his book, *India*, he said, "...There are other causes, the mentioning of which sounds like a satire — peculiarities of their national character, deeply-rooted in them, but manifest to everybody. We can only say, folly is an illness for which there is no medicine. Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolish, vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no country on earth but theirs, no other race of man but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any
knowledge of science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persia, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is."

What Alberuni wrote about the Hindus seems fairly unpalatable to a modern Hindu, but if we keep in view the times in which he wrote, we are unlikely to doubt his statements. Wave after wave of Muslim invasions had emasculated and enervated Hindu society and brought about a general decadence in life and character. Alberuni himself noticed and described the effect of these invasions: "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country and performed there wonderful exploits by which the Hindus became atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old." It would, in fact, be unusual if under such crushing circumstances, a decadence in character and spirit had not set in. The pity is that this decadence continued too long.

Versatile Scholar

Alberuni was the most versatile scholar of his time. He was as familiar with Kapila, Vyasa and Brahmagupta as he was with Plato and Aristotle, as knowledgeable about both East and West as about his own Islamic culture and literature. He was well-versed in Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Khwarizmi (his own dialect) and Sanskrit.

Knowledge of Sanskrit and familiarity with its literature, was in itself a unique feature, almost unheard of during those days, when Islam was at its height and the sword of Mahmud Gaznawi was all powerful. Yet Alberuni had more to his credit than that alone. He was unbiased, broad-minded and dispassionate in his studies. He had the true scientific temper; he was more interested in observation than in passing judgement.

Alberuni made a thorough study of Hindu sciences, particularly astronomy. About Hindu sciences in general, he wrote: "The number of sciences is great, and it may be still greater if the public mind is directed towards them at such times as they are in the ascendency and in general favour with all, when people not only honour science itself but also its representatives. To do this, is, in the first instance, the duty of those who rule
over them — of kings and princes. For they alone could free
the minds of scholars from the daily anxieties for the necessities
of life, and stimulate their energies to earn more fame and
favour, the yearning for which is the pith and marrow of human
nature.

"The present times, however, are not of this kind. They are
the very opposite, and therefore, it is quite impossible that a new
science or any new kind of research should arise in our days.
What we have of science is nothing but the scanty remains of
bygone better times.

"The science of astronomy is the most famous among them
since the affairs of their religion are in various ways connected
with it. If a man wants to gain the title of an astronomer, he
must not only know scientific or mathematical astronomy but
also astrology."

Alberuni adds, "I can compare their mathematical and astro-
nomical literature, as far as I know, to a mixture of pearl shells
and sour dates, or of pearls and dung, or of costly crystals and
common pebbles. Both kinds of things are equal in their eyes.
Since they cannot raise themselves to the methods of a
strictly scientific deduction. If Brahmagupta teaches two
theories of the eclipses, the popular one of the dragon Rahu,
devouring the luminous body and the scientific one, he certainly
committed the sin against conscience from undue concessions
to the priests of the nation, and from fear of a fate like that
which befell Socrates when he came into collision with the
persuasions of the majority of his countrymen."

Comparing such beliefs of the Hindus with those of the
ancient Greeks, Alberuni wrote: "The Greeks, however, had
philosophers, who, living in their country, discovered and
worked out for them the elements of science, not of popular
superstition; for it is the object of the upper classes to be guided
by the results of science, whilst the common crowd will always
be inclined to plunge into wrong-headed wrangling, as long as
they are not kept down by fear of punishment. Think of
Socrates when he opposed the crowd of his nation as to their
idolatry and did not want to call the stars the gods! At once
eleven of the twelve judges of the Athenians agreed on a
sentence of death, and Socrates died faithful to the truth.

"The Hindus had no men of this stamp, both capable and
willing to bring sciences to classical perfection. Therefore, you mostly find that even the so-called scientific theorems of the Hindus are in a state of utter confusion, devoid of any logical order, and in the last instance always mixed up with the silly notions of the crowd, e.g., immense numbers, enormous spaces of time and all kinds of religious dogmas, which the vulgar belief does not admit of being called into question."

*Early Life*

Alberuni or Abu Raihan, as he was called then, was born in September 973 in the territory of Khiva, a Khanate of Turkistan in Central Asia, now part of the U.S.S.R. (Khiva was then known as Khwarizm and it was the centre of an old culture). He was a Sunni Muslim and his family can be traced to have originated from Iran. Avicenna (Ibn-Sinha), the famous Arabic medical man was his contemporary.

Early in life, Alberuni distinguished himself in scholarly pursuits. He studied mathematics, astronomy, medicine and chronology of all civilizations, including those of the Hindus. He learnt Indian science, philosophy and literature by studying Arabic translations of the Sanskrit classics, which had become freely available in the Arab world.

Alberuni's vast knowledge and high reputation won him the favour of the ruling prince of Khiva who appointed him Councillor at his court. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, a powerful neighbour of Khiva, had been displeased for sometime with the policies followed by the ruler of Khiva. As a consequence, he invaded and annexed Khiva and took as prisoners to Ghazna, in Afghanistan, many prominent citizens; one amongst whom was Alberuni. This happened in A.D. 1017.

Ghazna, the seat of the greatest Islamic state of the East and capital of a powerful ruler, had a cosmopolitan population. There were soldiers, literary men and artisans from different parts of the world, including India, many of whom had been brought there as captives because of their learning or proficiency in the arts.

In such a city and environment where the vast wealth of India in terms of material and human resources was adding to the prosperity of the country, Alberuni's attention was diverted more and more towards India and things Indian. Here he could
learn directly from the Indians themselves as well as from Hindu manuscripts that were available in abundance. Alberuni made full use of these resources. Soon he was considered a great scholar, and because of his particular leaning towards the study of astronomy, he was called a great munnaifim (astrologer-astronomer).

Visit to India

When Mahmud annexed the province of Punjab to his empire of Ghazna in 1021, it provided Alberuni with an opportunity to study Hindu culture in India. He came and stayed for some time in Multan, the sacred place of Hindu pilgrimage with its temple of the Sun god.

Alberuni met with difficulties and hurdles but he persevered and struggled through them. For a Muslim to learn Sanskrit was made difficult both by the Muslims as well as by the Brahmins who regarded each other as impure. Alberuni wrote: “I found it very hard to work my way into the subject, although I have a great liking for it, in which respect I stand quite alone in my time; and although I spare neither trouble nor money in collecting Sanskrit books from places where I suppose they were likely to be found, and in procuring for myself even from remote places Hindu scholars who understand them and are able to teach me.”

His preliminary studies had indicated to him that there was a huge misconception in the minds of his own people about the Hindus. He thought of correcting these misconceptions by writing a book on different aspects of life in India. Such a book, he knew, would serve a useful purpose in creating an understanding among the two peoples, particularly at a time when the Muslims were actually occupying a part of India and were coming in daily contact with the Hindus.

India

As a result of his observations and studies, there emerged from his pen, a book called Tahir (or Tahqiq) ma lil Hind min maqala Maqboola fil-aql ao marthula commonly referred to as Tarikh al Hind or India. The importance of this work was realized by the German scholar, Edward Sachau who edited its text and translated and published it in English in two volumes
in the years 1887 and 1910.

This book contains, after a general preface, chapters on: the Hindus in general, their beliefs in God, soul and its migration; creation of things, social castes, idol-worship, Vedas, Puranas and other religious scriptures; grammar, sciences, astrology and astronomy including planets and their distances, signs of the zodiac, shape of the earth, seven *dvipas* (islands) mount Meru, eclipses and the ebb and flow of oceans, heliacal rising of stars, ten directions, time and its divisions — months, years, *yugas*, *manvantaras*; creation of the world and its destruction, Narayana, its different names; Vasudeva, wars of the Bharata, sacred places, habits of living, eating and drinking; marriage, law-suits, punishments, inheritance, fasting, festivals, etc.

After his return to Ghazna from India, Alberuni devoted most of his time to the study of and research in, astronomy. In A.D. 1030, he prepared an important astronomical treatise called *Al-Qanun-al Masudi fil Hai wal-Nudjum*. His other works include the *Al-Tafhim li Awall Sina at al Tandjin*, a popular introduction to astronomy and astrology in the form of questions and answers; *Istiab al-Wudjih al-Mumkina fi sanat al Asturlab*, a work on the astrolabe, its manufacture and use; an opuscule on mineralogy and the study of gems; a kind of materia-medica of his days, and many others. A total of over two dozen works of Alberuni are extant to this day, and there are references to many more. It is said that, “if all the books that he wrote (more than 100) were gathered into a bundle, they would exceed a camel’s load.”

Alberuni’s achievements in the field of comparative study of various religions, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Greek, Judaism, the Samaritan faith, Christianity, the beliefs of the Sabians and the Khwarizmians, Arabian, Paganism and finally Islam, are praiseworthy. “It is rare until modern times to find so fair and unprejudiced statement of views of other religions, so earnest an attempt to study them in the best sources, and such care to find a method which for this branch of study would be both rigorous and just. May be his greatest contribution to learning was not in the field of the more exact sciences but in this field of the sciences of the spirit,” wrote Jeffery.

Alberuni died on 13 December, 1048, at Ghazna, at the ripe
old age of seventy-five. He was one of the brightest lamps in the
darkness of the Middle Ages. Modern India owes him special
gratitude because he painstakingly investigated different aspects
of Indian life and wrote about them. His account has not only
preserved much information about our ancient culture and
tradition but even suggests how we may improve ourselves.
HSUAN TSANG

"I would like to spread far and wide the message of Tathagata and kindle the torch of his bequeathed teachings."

— Hsuan Tsang, at the time of becoming a monk, at the age of fourteen

Hsuan Tsang is generally known as the Chinese pilgrim who came to India in search of Buddhist texts. Yet it is not so much as a pilgrim — for there have been many pilgrims to India from China and other countries at different times — but as an interpreter and preacher of the Buddha’s message of peace and good-will among his own people that he deserves to be remembered.

Early Life

Born in the year A.D. 603 at Ch’ in Liu, in the province of Honan in China, Hsuan Tsang was the youngest of the four brothers. His ancestors came from Ing-chuen. Even as a boy, Chin-shi, as he was commonly called, revered all that was sacred and noble. He read books that spoke of righteousness and nobility and whenever a sacred passage was quoted from a book, he would stand up as a mark of respect. He observed the rules of Buddhist dharma strictly and rigorously, and when he attended places of Buddhist worship he became so absorbed in the proceedings that he would never think of departing until the whole ceremony was over. He respected the elders and the sages, whose company he kept in preference to children of his own age. The usual activities and plays of children could never attract or divert his mind.
Hsuan Tsang wanted to become a monk, like his elder brother. At the age of thirteen he presented himself before the official head-priest with this end in view. When the latter asked him why he wanted to become a monk, Hsuan Tsang replied: "I would like to spread far and wide the message of the Tathagata and kindle the torch of his bequeathed teachings." Seeing his enthusiasm, his well-bred manners, his knowledge of scriptures and the nobility of his purpose, the head-priest was so impressed with him that he permitted him to become a monk.

The young monk visited all the well-known places of Buddhist learning in China. After listening to the expositions of the famous teachers, he became perplexed and troubled when he noticed that the teachings of these learned men differed widely from one another and were often contradictory. He became convinced that he would never be able to know the truth about the teachings of the Buddha in his own country. So he resolved to go to India and there seek the truth for himself and then come back and teach it to his own people.

Long Pilgrimage

In the year A.D. 629, at the age of twenty-six, Hsuan Tsang started on a pilgrimage to India from Chang-an, the Chinese capital. He was fully aware of the enormous difficulties and all sorts of hazards that he would have to endure on his way. He did not have the permission of the emperor to leave the country so that there was always the possibility that the border police would catch him and detain him. Outside his own country, there was the danger of the bandits, inhospitable deserts and alien environments.

Having successfully dodged the border police, his path lay in the vast desert that was over-strewn with the bones of animals and human beings. Here he lost his way, stumbled and spilt the precious drinking water he was carrying. He was parched and thirsty for four nights and five days and yet he constantly prayed in the name of the Buddha. On the fifth night, a cool breeze started which refreshed his body and mind and saved his life.

When he reached Turfan, its king invited him to stay with him. Hsuan Tsang agreed and for ten days he enjoyed the hospitality of the king and the queen. After this period, he
wanted to leave, but the king would not hear of it. When Hsuan Tsang expressed his inability to stay any longer, the king obstructed him; and even threatened him. Hsuan Tsang, seeing no way out of this dilemma, resorted to a fast in protest. Ultimately, the king relented as he could not possibly let a monk die.

Crossing over mountains and rivers, through cities and kingdoms, some of which can be recognized as Sinkiang, Kirghiz, Tashkent, Samarkand, Bokhara, Tukhara, Balkh and the Hindu Kush mountains, Hsuan Tsang entered the Indian subcontinent at Lamghan near Peshawar. Here he met many Buddhist monks and visited places associated with the Buddha. He then crossed the Indus and reached Taxila, from where he proceeded to Kashmir, Punch, Rajoori. Then passing through Sialkot, Jullundar, Kulu, Mathura, Haridwar, Ahichhatra near Bareli, Kanauj, Oudh, Allahabad, Kapilvastu, the birth place of the Buddha, and Kushinagara, where the Buddha had passed away, and going through Benares and Patna, he reached Nalanda.

At Nalanda he was warmly and reverentially received by the monks who looked to all his needs and comforts. An elephant was put at his disposal. Shilbhadra, the chief monk helped him in every possible way by getting him rare scriptures, discussing their contents or explaining passages wherever necessary. Hsuan Tsang stayed here for five years.

From here he went to a monastery in Monghyr, Bihar, where he stayed for a year. Then he travelled through Bengal, Orissa, Kalinga, Andhra, Maharashtra, Malwa, Kutch, Gujarat, Ujjayini, Chittore, Sindh and Multan. He stayed at these places of Buddhist worship to meet, discuss and learn Buddhist scriptures and teachings.

Hsuan Tsang then proceeded to the Bodhi monastery at Gaya to see the exhibition of the Buddha’s bone relics. After having worshipped the Bodhi tree and other holy sites for eight days, he returned to the Nalanda monastery.

The Great Debate

King Harsha organized a great debate under the chairmanship of Hsuan Tsang at Kanyakubja (near Mathura) for the purpose of providing Hsuan Tsang an opportunity to challenge all those who slandered Mahayana. Eighteen kings of different
states, 3,000 monks well-versed in both the Mahayana and the Hinayana teachings, more than 2,000 Brahmins and Nirgrantha heretics, and over a 1,000 monks of the Nalanda monastery participated in it. For eighteen days, the debate went on.

On the last day of the debate, when king Harsha himself was among the audience, Hsuan Tsang ascended the pulpit and once more extolled the greatness and excellence of the Mahayana. His eloquence was so decisive, his arguments so convincing that many people gave up their wrong notions and were converted to Mahayanism on the spot. King Harsha was delighted with the outcome of the debate and his praise for Hsuan Tsang knew no bounds. As an expression of his joy and a token of his deep respect, he offered Hsuan Tsang 10,000 golden coins, 30,000 silver coins and 10 robes. The other kings too vied with each other in bestowing offerings upon Hsuan Tsang. The latter, however, declined all the gifts.

By the order of king Harsha, a big elephant was richly decorated with tapestries and banners and Hsuan Tsang was invited to ride it round the place, attended by officials and ministers so that all people might know of his triumph. Being too modest, he declined this offer. But when the king insisted, saying that it was an ancient custom from former times and it ought to be observed faithfully, Hsuan Tsang was left with no option but to comply with the request. After he ascended the elephant and was duly decorated, he was taken round the place and the following proclamation was made: "The Chinese Dharma Master has established Mahayanism and destroyed all heretical views. For eighteen days, no one dared take up the challenge. Let everybody be informed of this fact."

Later Hsuan Tsang attended the great alms-giving ceremony at Prayaga (Allahabad) at the request of king Harsha.

Having by now, learnt all that he needed to, and after visiting the important places associated with the Buddha and collecting the scriptures that could be useful to him, Hsuan Tsang now thought of returning to his own country. The kings, the monks and the people requested him not to go or to postpone it, but Hsuan Tsang having decided it was the right time to leave, stuck on to his decision. At the moment of farewell none could help shedding tears of sadness. King Harsha, keeping in view the convenience that could be provided
to the departing monk, requested the officials of the countries along his route to supply him with horses and escort him till he reached the land of Han (China).

Return to China

While Hsuan Tsang’s return journey was not as tedious as was his coming, yet he did meet with some unforeseen difficulties. While crossing the river Indus, his boat almost overturned because of strong winds, and fifty volumes of scriptures were lost. Their copies were, however, obtained by sending messengers back to the country of Udyana. While Hsuan Tsang thus stayed back, the king of Kashmir hearing the news of his arrival, came personally to pay Hsuan Tsang his respects.

When Hsuan Tsang reached the territory of China, he wrote a letter to the Emperor informing him of his arrival. The Emperor instructed his Prime Minister to make proper and befitting arrangements for his welcome. On the day of his arrival, on the instructions of the authorities, all the monasteries in the capital made the necessary arrangements to welcome Hsuan Tsang and receive the Buddha’s relics, the sacred images and the sacred scriptures brought back by him. “On that day, orders were issued to all the monasteries to bring out precious banners, pennants and other ceremonial articles and to gather at Chu-Chiao street the next day i.e., the 28th day, to welcome the newly arrived scriptures and images and to escort them to Hung-fu monastery. Thus people, with great enthusiasm, vied with each other to make elaborate and exquisite arrangements of banners, streamers, pennants, canopies, precious desks and carriages. When the monasteries had arranged and sent out separately their articles for the procession, the monks and the nuns properly clad in their religious robes followed. Music and decorations were displayed in front and incense-burners behind. When they arrived at the street, they displayed hundreds of ceremonial articles and carried scriptures and images in procession. Everybody in the procession praised this event as unique. They forgot dust and fatigue and regarded the occasion as exceptionally rare. From the Chu-Chio street unto the gate of Hung-fu monastery, for a distance of ten li*, people in the

* Ⅱ is little more than a mile
capital, men of letters, imperial and local officials, lined both sides of the road to witness the procession. As the streets were thronged by people, the authorities, in order to avoid people trampling upon one another, ordered them not to move about, but to burn incense and scatter flowers at their places. Thus clouds of smoke and echoes of praises progressed from place to place without interruption."

Hsuan Tsang had brought back with him 150 grains of the Buddha’s relics, many statues of the Buddha in different poses, made of gold, silver and sandal-wood, and 657 volumes of Buddhist scriptures. He needed twenty horses to carry these precious materials.

Thus ended this wonderful and unique pilgrimage of Hsuan Tsang. He had started on his journey towards the west (India) in the fourth month of the third year of Chen-Kuan (A.D. 629) covered a distance of more than 8,000 miles and spent altogether seventeen years on his pilgrimage, before returning to China.

After his return, Hsuan Tsang devoted most of his time to translating into Chinese the scriptures he had brought with him. He stayed at Hung-su monastery. The Emperor was greatly impressed by the translated scriptures. He instructed his officials to have the newly translated scriptures reproduced in nine copies to be distributed to all the nine states, so that the Buddha’s doctrines could be disseminated throughout the whole country.

Indian monks had already started thinking of Hsuan Tsang as one of themselves. When they saw him making preparations to depart, they suggested that he stay back in India, saying, "India is the birthplace of the Buddha. Although the Great Sage was no more, he still left marks of his holy presence here. To tour the country and to pay homage to them is quite sufficient to satisfy one’s life time wishes. Now you have come here, why do you want to go away again? Moreover, China is but a borderland where people are despised and the doctrine is condemned. So the Buddhas are not born there. Because the people are generally narrow-minded and steeped in impurities, the sages rarely go there. The climate is cold and the land is dangerous. Is it not enough for you to think it over?"

Hsuan Tsang’s reply to such a discourse was full of wisdom and love for China, his motherland. He said, "When the King
of the Dharma founded his doctrine. He wanted it to be widely propagated. Being myself imbued with it, how can I forget those who are not yet enlightened?" "Moreover that country (China) possesses respectable traditions and people behave in a befitting manner. Wise is the emperor, loyal are the ministers; the father acts with compassion while the sons never shirk filial duties. Benevolence and righteousness are extolled and the elders and the sages respected. Besides, they know how to fathom the depth and the secret of nature; and their wisdom can challenge that of the gods. They identify themselves with nature and act in accordance with the Laws. The seven lights could not subdue the brilliance of their culture. They have invented the instruments of music and know how to divide tune into units. The six rules could not overstep their authority; so they are able to enslave the birds and the beasts. Their authority is felt by ghosts and spirits and they know how to harness the principles of negativity and positivity for the benefit of all creatures."

**Personal Glimpses**

Hsuan Tsang is said to have been "more than seven feet tall, of pinkish-white complexion, with broad eye-brows and bright eyes. He deported himself as grave as a statue and was as handsome as a painting. His voice was clear, far-reaching and he always spoke with elegance and distinction; his listeners never felt tired. When he stayed among his disciples or entertained his guests, he sat erect for a long time, without movement. He used to wear a Gandhara garment, made of fine felt, not too large, but just fitting in. He walked gracefully and with poise, always looking forward, not casting any side glance. His manners were smooth like a great river flowing over the earth, and his brilliance was like a lotus in full bloom on the water."

He had in him an inherent trust in the goodness and honesty of people. He never ascribed any bad motives to the people he met. Robbers, cheats and rogues were, in his eyes like other human beings and as such, were not to be treated differently. Once on his way to worship, he was approached by robbers who asked him if he had no fear of them. He replied, "The robbers are also human beings. Now for the sake of paying homage to the Buddha, I am not afraid of wild animals crowded
on the way, what to speak of you disciples, who are after all human beings."

Early in A.D. 664, Hsuan Tsang felt his health deteriorating. He also had dreams and omens that he would die shortly. He said to the monks, "This poisonous body of Hsuan Tsang is really disgusting. Now that the work has been completed, I should remain no longer here. May all my merits and knowledge be offered to all living beings so that we may all be born in the Tushita heaven and be the followers of Maitrey Bodhisattva and serve him. When the Buddha comes down to the world again, we may come down to the world with him so as to perform all the Buddhist duties until we attain the supreme goal." He died at the age of 65 years.

On hearing the news of his death, the Emperor felt sad and dejected. He said, "I have lost a national treasure. I am shocked with grief and emotion, unable to control myself."

Wherever Hsuan Tsang went, he recorded details about, geographical features, soil conditions, agriculture, climate, Buddhist shrines and monasteries, character and customs of the people, their clothing, their mode of education etc., all of which observations have been of great historical value. His writings gave accurate guidance, 1200 years later, to archaeologists like Cunningham and Aurel Stein and a large band of Indian scholars, who could locate and excavate many ancient relics because of the information provided by Hsuan Tsang.

Hsuan Tsang's greatest contribution was his preaching of the Buddha's message of peace and brotherhood in China and other eastern countries.
“Like most other inventions, when once found, it appears extremely simple and as in most others, accident, rather than study, has had the merit of solving the enigma which has so long baffled the learned.”

— James Prinsep, writing about the discovery of the Ashoka pillar script, in 1837.

Many of us have seen, and I am sure, all of us have heard about the stone pillars of Ashoka located in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. Till the early part of the nineteenth century, it was not known what these pillars were, who had erected them, and what was written on them. The engravings on these pillars were indecipherable.

Earlier, Akbar, the great Moghal emperor, was also inquisitive about them, but none in his reign could read the script. When Firozshah Tughlaq, in the fourteenth century, shifted two of these pillars from Topra and Meerut to Delhi, he had also invited a number of Sanskrit scholars to read the script engraved on them, but no one could do it. People, in general, believed in the fanciful legend that these pillars were the staffs of Bhima (one of the Pandavas of the Mahabharata), and the inscriptions on them were taken to be the instructions given to the Pandavas by Lord Krishna.

When the Asiatic Society of Bengal was established in 1784, with the idea of investigating into the past history, literature and other aspects of India and the East, one of the topics it took up, was the study of these ancient scripts. European and Indian scholars devoted their time, energy and thought to decipher these varied inscriptions that had been earlier recovered from different places in India. Scholars like Charles Wilkins,
Radhakant Sharma, James Tod, Captain Troyer, Mill and Bothan succeeded in deciphering inscriptions written in a script designated as the Late Brahmi, by scholars; 'Late, because there were certain inscriptions belonging to still earlier periods which were yet undecipherable. Until these earlier inscriptions were deciphered, the history of India before the Gupta period could not be ascertained with any certainty.

*Momentous Discovery*

The immense contribution of James Prinsep lies in the fact that it was he who successfully decoded the Early Brahmi script, shedding light on the pre-Gupta period of Indian history. A new and glorious period in the ancient past of India was thus made recognizable for the first time.

For seven years Prinsep spread before him, every morning the estampages of the inscriptions collected from different parts of India. He wistfully gazed at the unknown alphabets which concealed the mystery of India's past. At last the numerous short votive records (offerings made as fulfilment of vows) on the famous stupa at Sanchi gave him the key. How he hit upon it, almost by a lucky chance, is best told in his own words:

"In laying open a discovery of this nature, some little explanation is generally expected of the means by which it has been attained. Like most other inventions, when once found, it appears extremely simple, and as in most others, accident rather than study, has had the merit of solving the enigma which has so long baffled the learned.

"While arranging and lithographing the numerous scraps of facsimiles [the exact copy] of the Plate XXVII (the Sanchi inscriptions), I was struck at their all terminating with the same two letters. Coupling this circumstance with their extreme brevity and insulated position, which proved that they could not be fragments of a continuous text, it immediately occurred that they must record either obituary notices or were probably the offerings and presents of votaries, as is known to be the present custom in the Buddhist temples of Ava where numerous dhwajas or flag staffs, images and small chaityas are crowded within the enclosure, surrounding the chief cupola, each bearing the name of the donor. The next point noted was the frequent occurrence of the letter...already set down"
incontestably as $S$, before the final word. Now this I had learnt from the Saurashtra coins, deciphered only a day or two before, to be one of the genitive case singular, being in \textit{ssa} of the Pali, or \textit{syā} of the Sanskrit. 'Of so and so the gift', must then be the form of each brief sentence; and the vowel \textit{a} and \textit{anuswara} led to the speedy recognition of the word \textit{danam} (gift), teaching me the very two letters, \textit{d} and \textit{n} most different from the known forms, and which had foiled me most in my former attempts. Since 1834, my acquaintance with ancient alphabets had become so familiar that most of the remaining letters in the present examples could be named at once on re-inspection. In the course of a few minutes, I thus became possessed of the whole alphabet, which I tested by applying it to the inscription on the Delhi column."

With the help of the newly-discovered alphabet, Prinsep could easily read the inscriptions on the Delhi and Allahabad pillars. But who was their author? The word \textit{Piyadassi} in the inscription did not make it clear. At first Prinsep identified him with a king of Ceylon. But how could a king of Ceylon order the digging of wells and the construction of roads in India which the author of the edicts claimed to have done in the inscription? The confusion was soon sorted out when, later in the same year (1837), two of the early chronicles of the history of Ceylon, namely, \textit{Depavamsa} and \textit{Mahavamsa}, composed by Buddhist monks were studied in Ceylon, and Prinsep was informed that the title of \textit{Piyadassi} was given to Ashoka in those works. Thus was it revealed that the author of these pillar inscriptions was Ashoka, the emperor of India.

In time, fourteen rock and seven pillar edicts of Ashoka, located at prominent places either near the towns or on the important trade and travel routes or in the proximity of religious centres, were identified. They had been so located as to make known the king’s edicts to as many people as possible.

It is through these edicts that we know about the social and political conditions at the time and the achievements and aspirations of the great emperor Ashoka.

Ashoka’s 13th rock edict inscribed after the battle of Kalinga, states: "When he had been consecrated for eight years, the Beloved of the Gods, the king, Piyadassi conquered Kalinga. A hundred and fifty thousands people were deported, a hundred
thousand were killed and many times that number perished. Afterwards, now that Kalinga was annexed, the Beloved of the Gods, very earnestly practised Dhamma, desired Dhamma, and taught Dhamma. On conquering Kalinga, the Beloved of the Gods felt remorse, for, when an independent country is conquered, the slaughter, death, and deportation of the people is extremely grievous to the Beloved of the Gods, and weighs heavily on his mind.

"The Beloved of the Gods believes that one who does wrong should be forgiven as far as it is possible to forgive him:

"...The Beloved of Gods considers victory by Dhamma to be the foremost victory.

"What is obtained by this is victory everywhere, and everywhere victory is pleasant. This pleasure has been obtained through victory and Dhamma — yet it is but a slight pleasure, for the Beloved of the Gods only looks upon that as important in its results which pertains to the next world.

"The inscription of Dhamma has been engraved so that any sons or great-grandsons that I may have should not think of gaining new conquests, and in whatever victories they may gain, should be satisfied with patience and light punishment. They should only consider conquest by Dhamma to be a true conquest, and delight in Dhamma should be their whole delight, for this is of value in both this world and the next."

Further studies by James Prinsep revealed a unity and continuity between the newly discovered Early Brahmi and the Late Brahmi scripts of the Gupta period; previously some scholars had mistaken the Early Brahmi script for some form of the Greek alphabet.

**Early Life**

Born in 1799, James was the seventh son of John Prinsep. Early in his life, he had thought of becoming an architect. But later when he developed an eye-trouble and was advised not to take up that profession, he looked for a suitable alternative. At the age of twenty, after preliminary training, he was appointed to the post of an Assistant Assay-Master at the Calcutta mint. He came to India and joined duty on 15 September, 1819.

Within a short while, James Prinsep was well-acquainted with his job at the mint; in fact, when his chief, Horace
Hyman Wilson, left for Benares to remodel the mint there, James conducted all the work at the Calcutta mint by himself. On Wilson’s return, Prinsep was appointed Assay-Master in the Benares mint and retained that office until that mint was abolished in 1830. He was re-appointed to the Calcutta mint as Deputy Assay-Master under Wilson and on the retirement of the latter in 1832, Prinsep succeeded him as Assay-Master and Secretary to the mint committee at Calcutta. He continued in the job until 1838, when ill-health forced him to return to England.

Recognition

While he was in India, James Prinsep, besides being occupied with the job at the mint, was keenly devoted to the study of ancient Indian scripts and inscriptions. By means of his untiring efforts and zeal, he succeeded in deciphering many important inscriptions which had baffled earlier oriental scholars like William Jones, Colebrooke and Wilson. It was on the basis of his research work in this field that he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society. Subsequently he became a Corresponding Member of the Institute of France and of the Royal Academy at Berlin. His researches in this and other allied fields, when collected and published in 1858, filled two big volumes. He was a frequent contributor to, and later editor of Gleanings in Science, subsequently renamed the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal; he was also Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in succession to Wilson.

Prinsep had been married in 1885 to Harriet, the youngest daughter of Colonel Aubert of the Bengal Army. He had one daughter. He died in London, shortly after his return from India on 22 April, 1840, in his forty-first year.

A memorial to him was erected at Calcutta at the left bank of Hugli below Fort William in the form of a ghat or landing place called Prinsep’s Ghat with a handsome building for the protection of passengers landing or embarking there.
"...famine has never visited India and...there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food."

— Megasthenes

After Alexander's Invasion of the north-western border region of the Indian subcontinent in 326 B.C., and his subsequent death in Babylon in June 323 B.C., Seleukos Nikator, one of his successors, invaded India again in 306 B.C. He was, however, badly defeated by Chandragupta, who had lately, after defeating the Nanda kings with the help of Chanakya (Kauitly), built up a powerful army and a vast empire. In order to seek peace, Seleukos Nikator had to hand over a few provinces and 600 war elephants. Furthermore, in an effort to establish friendly relations with Chandragupta, he married one of his princesses to him and also sent an ambassador to his court. This ambassador was Megasthenes.

Before coming to India in 302 B.C., Megasthenes was at the court of Syburtius, satrap of Arachosis.

Megasthenes lived in India for many years and during this period he had ample opportunities of studying the Indian way of life. On the basis of his observations, he wrote an account of the empire of Chandragupta Maurya, giving details about the king, his capital, court, administration, laws, army and the life of the people. His own work is now extinct but the quotations from it, cited by other authors like Strabo, Pliny, Arrian, Diodorus, Photius and others, give evidence of vast grandeur.

It is on the basis of his account, substantiated now by archaeological excavations, that we know about the Mauryan
empire. Without reference to his writings, we would have remained almost totally in the dark about this vast empire of India, which now forms a glorious chapter in the history of India.

As Megasthenes travelled along the road which extended from Peshawar to Pataliputra (Patna), the capital of the empire, he was greatly impressed by this long and superb highway which connected major Indian towns such as Peshawar, Taxila, Jhelum, Hastinapur (near Delhi) Kanauj, Prayaga (Allahabad) and Pataliputra, crossing as it did, the Indus, Jhelum, Beas, Sutlej, Yamuna and the Ganges. National and international trade and the defences of the empire depended on these roads, as goods and troops could easily be moved along it. This highway was well-kept and was under the charge of the Board of Works. Appropriate marks at regular intervals indicated distances and side-roads along its route.

The Capital

While Megasthenes was greatly impressed by the royal road, on reaching Pataliputra, he was full of admiration for this imposing capital city. He observed that the lay-out of the city was in the shape of a parallelogram. It was surrounded by huge walls made of bricks, in turn surrounded by a wooden palisade which was pierced through by holes for archery. The brick walls were a little less than ten miles on the longer sides and a mile and a half on the shorter. There were a total of sixty gates and 570 towers along those walls. On two of the sides, flowed the rivers, the other two being protected by huge moats through which flowed the waters of the river Soan. This moat was 200 yards wide and fifteen yards in depth. It served a dual purpose of being a protective barrier and carrier of the city’s sullage. Because of its surrounding structures, this capital city was, according to Megasthenes, almost invincible.

Inside it, the houses and other buildings were chiefly made of wood and unburnt bricks. It was the custom, says Megasthenes, to use wood for buildings where floods were common, and brick and mud for the same purpose in areas not threatened by floods. That is why only a few ruins have survived that distant past. But whatever has survived and has been excavated, testifies to the truth of Megasthenes’ observations.
The king was the supreme head of the state and had military, judicial, executive and legislative functions. He worked very hard. Megasthenes says that "The king does not sleep during the day time but remains in the court the whole day for the purpose of judging cases and other public business. This was not interrupted even when the hour arrived for massaging his body. Even when the king has his hair combed and dressed, he has no respite from public business. At that time he gives audience to his ambassadors."

Inspite of having concentrated all powers in himself, or perhaps because of that, the king was constantly worried about conspirators and assassins. He was heavily guarded inside his palace and much more so, when he moved out. His palaces had tunnels, secret rooms and doors in the walls and he slept in different rooms at night, occasionally changing them during the night.

The Empire

The empire was divided into a number of provinces, ruled over by Governors and Viceroy's who were, many a time, princes of the royal family. The central and eastern parts were ruled by the king himself. In the administration of the empire, the king was assisted by a council whose members were considered very influential people as they chose Governors, Chiefs of Provinces, Deputy Governors, Treasurers of the State, Generals of the Army, Admirals of the Navy, Judges, Magistrates and other high officials.

The capital city of Pataliputra had a thirty-member Municipal Council divided into six different boards. The council met occasionally to discuss matters of general interest such as repair and up-keep of roads, temples, markets and public property and fixation of taxes and market prices.

The six boards looked after the functioning of different departments. One board supervised industries, crafts, trades, guilds etc. The second regulated markets, inspected weights and saw to it that fixed prices were charged from the customers. The third one supervised manufactured products and permitted no adulteration of products. The fourth one collected tax amounting to one-tenth of the products sold. Penalty for false declaration of sales was death, but it seldom needed to be
resorted to. The fifth board, ensured the comforts of travellers, merchants, ambassadors and other foreigners visiting India. The last board maintained a census by recording births and deaths.

In the rural districts, the administration was of a different kind. There were officials who were entrusted with duties such as constructing and superintending irrigation works and surveying and assessing irrigated lands, building and repairing of public roads and bridges and the erection of mile-stones and sign posts at regular distances. They collected taxes from the farmers, supervised hunters and saw to it that they did not defraud the state of the dues forthcoming to it from the ownership of horses or elephants. They kept an eye on the wood-cutters and took care that the country was not deforested. They also supervised and controlled the working of the mines.

The large and powerful army of Chandragupta, which even defeated Seleukos Nikator, is mentioned in detail by Megasthenes. The number of armed soldiers is stated to be 400,000. The army consisted of infantry, chariots, cavalry and elephants. It was managed by a war office which had departments under it for each section of the army.

The infantry soldiers were armed with long shields of undressed ox-hide, and huge bows and swords. The arrows were discharged by resting one end of the bow on the ground against the left foot; the sharp arrows which were three yards long, could easily pierce the enemy’s shield and armour. Swords were wielded with both hands.

Cavalry and war-elephants formed separate divisions. Each cavalry soldier had two long lances. The horses had no saddles and no bridles but were equipped with spiked muzzles which acted as halters. The chariots, on the march, were drawn by oxen, so as to keep the horses fresh. During the battle, two men-at-arms stood by the driver. An elephant carried four sharp-shooters. There were stables for the horses, chariots and elephants. The arms were stored when not in use.

The soldiers formed a large part of society next only to farmers. They received a regular salary from the state, which also supplied their arms and equipment. They enjoyed a lot of freedom, were respected socially and were well off economically, as their pay was very liberal.
The Caste System

Megasthenes mentions seven castes among the Hindus; he seems to have mistaken certain sub-castes and even particular professions as castes. He divides Brahmins into two castes, namely teachers or philosophers and councillors or statesmen. Kshatriyas he mentions correctly as the warring class; but he divides Vaishyas and Sudras into three castes, viz., farmers, herdsmen and artisans. The seventh caste, he mentions, is that of the inspectors and overseers.

"The philosopher caste" writes Megasthenes, "in point of number is inferior to the other classes, but in point of dignity pre- eminent over all. For the philosophers, being exempted from all public duties, are neither the masters nor the servants of others. They are, however, engaged by private persons to offer the sacrifices due in life time, and to celebrate the obsequies of the dead: for they are believed to be most dear to the gods, and to be the most conversant with matters pertaining to Hades. In requital of such services, they receive valuable gifts and privileges. To the people of India at large, they also render great benefits. When gathered together at the beginning of the year, they forewarn the assembled multitudes about droughts and wet weather, and also about propitious winds, and diseases, and other topics capable of profiting the hearers. Thus the people and the sovereign, learning beforehand what is to happen, always make adequate provision against a coming deficiency and never fail to prepare beforehand what will help in a time of need. The philosopher who errs in his predictions incurs no other penalty than obloquy, and he then observes silence for the rest of his life."

The councillors or statesmen, belonging to the Brahmin caste, formed the Council of the Emperor. Like Chanakya (Kautilya), they made politics their profession and many of them, sometimes, were the real power behind the throne. Kshatriyas acted as soldiers and they were treated liberally. The artisans belonging to different guilds specialized in the manufacture of products like chariots, armour and other consumer goods; they were treated respectfully and received many privileges from the state.

"The farmers are far more numerous than others. Being, moreover, exempted from fighting and other public services,
they devote the whole of their time to tillage; nor would an enemy coming upon a farmer at work on his land, do him any harm, for men of this class, being regarded as public benefactors, are protected from all injury. The land, thus remaining unravaged, and producing heavy crops, supplies the inhabitants with all that is requisite to make life very enjoyable. The farmers themselves, with their wives and children, live in the country, and entirely avoid going into town. They pay a land-tribute to the king, because all India is the property of the crown, and no private person is permitted to own land. Besides the land tribute, they pay into the royal treasury a fourth part of the produce of the soil."

The herdsmen belonged to the Sudra caste and came mostly from the aboriginal tribes. They included shepherds, hunters, etc. They cleared the forests of wild animals and brushwood for human habitations and fields; they caught and tamed elephants which formed an important part of the army; only the king could keep elephants and none else. In return, the herdsmen received rations etc. from the royal exchequer.

The overseers travelled around inspecting the work of government officials and furnished confidential reports directly to the king. They kept watch over the army and were alert to detect a plot against the king. They freely made use of courtesans to elicit particular information. It was a well-paid job for the adventurous youth.

Megasthenes mentions the principal religious sects as the Brahmins, Buddhists and Jains. He also remarks the similarity between the philosophies of the Brahmins and of Pythagoras and Plato, the Greeks.

Of the moral structure of the society, Megasthenes speaks in the highest terms. People lived frugal and happy lives. Wine was never drunk, except at the sacrifices when the Soma juice was consumed by the priest. Rice formed the staple article of diet. Polygamy was common among the upper classes but women, in general, enjoyed great liberty. They studied philosophy and could take monastic vows, if they liked. The custom of suti (voluntary widow burning) was unusual and was only practised among people of two tribes.

The Indians enjoyed a great and well-founded reputation for honesty and fair dealing. Of their honesty, Megasthenes, like
Hsuan Tsang many centuries later, speaks in an extraordinarily enthusiastic fashion. When he visited the camp of Chandragupta, he found that in the whole of the vast army encamped there, the thefts reported amounted to the value of less than 200 drachmae* per day. People left their houses unguarded, made no written contracts and obeyed unwritten laws. Legal cases were decided according to old traditions by the local headsmen.

Hindus knew to read and write; they wrote on paper woven from flax. Generally speaking, however, laws, religious precepts, and even secular poetry, was committed to memory and handed down orally.

**Life of the People**

People lived in peace and prosperity. In Pataliputra, they dressed well in printed muslin, sometimes embroidered with jewels. An umbrella was carried by an attendant over the head of a nobleman as he went through the streets. “In the ceremonial processions, on the occasions of festivals etc., elephants decked in gold and silks, four-horsed chariots and yokes of oxen, took part. Then came a great host of attendants in holiday dress, with golden vessels such as huge basins and goblets six feet broad, tables, chairs of state, drinking vessels and lavers, all of Indian copper and many of them set with jewels such as emeralds, beryls and Indian garnets. Others wore robes embroidered in gold thread and led wild beasts such as buffaloes, leopards, tame lions and rare birds in cages.”

The people were well-built and nourished and had ample means of subsistence. Megasthenes notes that they “exceed in consequence the ordinary stature, and are distinguished by their proud bearing. They are also found to be well-skilled in the arts, as might be expected of men who inhaled pure air and drank the very finest water. And while the soil bears on its surface all kinds of fruits which are known to cultivation, it has also underground numerous veins of all sorts of metals, for it contains much gold and silver and copper and iron in no small quantity, and even tin and other metals, which are employed in making articles of use and ornament, as well as implements and weapons of war.”

* Ancient Greek silver coin.
He was amazed at the wide width of the Ganges, the fertility of the soil which produced two crops a year because of the two monsoons each year; the huge animals and plants, the ‘vegetable-wool’ (cotton), the honey-bearing reed (sugar-cane) and the rice plant.

Apart from the fertility of the land, says Megasthenes, certain traditions observed by the Indians contributed to the prevention of famine among them; for whereas “among other nations it is usual, in the contests of war, to ravage the soil and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste; among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom the farmers are regarded as a class that is sacred and inviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when the battle is raging in their neighbourhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger, for the combatants on either side in waging the conflict make carnage of each other, but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain quite unmolested. Besides, they neither ravage an enemy’s land with fire nor cut down its trees.”

Such then, in brief, was India, at the time of Chandragupta Maurya. The picture portrayed by Megasthenes is in no way less than the Ramrajya, aspired and dreamed of by many leaders and statesmen of India till modern times.
WILLIAM DWIGHT WHITNEY

"... All the Sanskritists ...[in America]...are either directly or indirectly pupils of Professor Whitney."
— Richard Pischel

While European and British scholars were the pioneers in the study of Sanskrit abroad, the Americans were in no way far behind them in the field. One of the foremost American scholars of Sanskrit was William Dwight Whitney. He was instrumental in establishing chairs for Sanskrit studies in different American universities. His most important contribution was the translation of the Atharvaveda, one of the four Vedas.

While Whitney was still a student in Germany, in 1850, he developed an interest in the Atharvaveda. To begin with, he got hold of all the manuscripts of this scripture available in Berlin, and copied them; then in 1853, he compared them with the texts available in Paris, Oxford and London. Thus he compiled a verified and representative text of the Atharvaveda in Sanskrit which was published in Berlin in 1856 by Roth and Whitney.

This was followed by a few other publications on the same subject. These were Whitney’s Alphabetisches verzeichniss der Versanfange der Atharva-Samhita; The Atharvaveda Pratisakhya and Index Verorum to the Published Text of the Atharvaveda.

With the experience thus gained and the relevant material before him, Whitney set himself to the arduous task of translating the Atharvaveda into English, writing a critical and exegetical commentary to accompany it. This work was later on edited and published in Whitney’s name by Lanman in 1905. In two bulky volumes, this is the most dependable English translation of the Atharvaveda till today.
Whitney's work revealed to the English-speaking world the vast store of knowledge contained in this important religious text of the Hindus. Among other things, it tells about the beginnings of the Indian system of medicine, the Ayurveda; it also throws hints on the beliefs and customs of primitive human society in general and of the Indian in particular.

Atharvaveda composed sometime before 1,000 B.C., contains 6000 verses and about 1000 lines of prose. The verses, more in the nature of charms, were uttered and utilized for a variety of purpose. They were uttered with a view to attaining intelligence, to attain virtues of a Brahmacharin (celibate student), to possess cities, fortresses, kingdoms, villages, riches, food-grains, children, wives, cattle, horses, elephants, chariots, etc.; to induce peace and contentment among the people; to frighten away the enemy's elephants; to win a battle; to ward off the enemy's weapons; to cause the enemy's army to run away and to protect one's own; to predict the result of a battle; to win over the enemy's general and chiefs; to throw a charmed snare, sword and other weapons; to charm all musical instruments in war, to win back a lost city; to perform a coronation; to expiate for sins; to make cattle healthy; to protect crops; to make a new house auspicious; to get medicines for incurable diseases; to cure fever, cholera, diabetes, bleeding, epilepsy and possession of a person by demons or evil spirits; to cure diseases in which vatta, pitta, and kapha is deranged; to cure heart diseases, jaundice, leprosy, consumption, dropsy; worm infestations in cows, horses and men; to have antidotes against all sorts of poisons; to cure diseases of head, ear, nose, throat, eyes and neck; for securing sons, for the welfare of the foetus and pregnant mother and easy delivery; stopping excessive rain, snow or draught; to win in debates, to win in gambling; to have success in trades; to prevent bad dreams; to remove unlucky effects of evil stars; counteracting the evil effect of an enemy's charms; securing long life; performance of ceremonies at birth, tonsure, marriage; warding off earth-quakes, eclipses of the sun and moon etc.

These verses in the Atharvaveda indicate the beliefs and behaviour, the social needs and environments of the people in those times. They also provide us an insight into their practice of the art of healing. They tell us that magic and charm had a
lot of influence on the daily life of kings and commoners, in a
variety of circumstances and that the priests or the priest-
doctors who chanted these verses were important members of
the community, equally indispensable to people in all strata of
society.

*Chance contact with Sanskrit*

William Dwight Whitney was born on 9 February, 1827, in
Northampton in Massachusetts, U.S.A. His father, Josiah
Dwight Whitney, was a banker. His mother, Sarah, was the
daughter of the Rev. Payson Williston of Easthampton. William
had three brothers and one sister; his eldest brother, Josiah
Dwight Whitney of Harvard, was an eminent geologist; another
brother, James Lyman, was head of the Boston Public Library;
a third, Henry Mitchell, was professor of English at Beloit
College; his sister Maria was professor of modern languages
in Smith College. William was born and brought up in an
atmosphere where education, religion and thrift were given
their due importance.

William entered, after the public schools of Northampton,
the sophomore class at Williams College in 1842 at the age of
fifteen. Three years later in 1845, he graduated with the highest
honours.

As it looked in the beginning, Whitney should have pursued
his studies and devoted his life to natural sciences. But a few
chance occurrences turned him towards the study of languages.

Early in 1845, William's brother Josiah, returned from Europe,
bringing with him hundreds of books for his library. Among
them was a Sanskrit Grammar by Franz Bopp. On 1 October,
1845, just as William began the study of medicine in a physi-
cian's office, he developed measles. During his convalescence,
he picked up Bopp's Sanskrit Grammar. He liked it and studied
it from time to time. After he recovered from his illness, he
dropped the idea of studying medicine and joined as a clerk in
his father's bank instead. There he worked for more than three
years. In the meanwhile he kept up his interest in Sanskrit and
also started his studies in the German and Swedish languages.

In June 1849, he accompanied Josiah, his elder brother, to
Lake Superior as Assistant Sub-Agent, on a Geological Survey.
He took the Sanskrit Grammar with him to keep in touch with
the subject while on the expedition. By this time he was so
well conversant with the Sanskrit language that he wrote an
article entitled ‘On the Sanskrit Language’; it appeared in
Bibliotheca Sacra in August, 1849. This was his first pub-
lication on the subject.

Sanskrit Scholar

His interest in Sanskrit having been aroused, he wanted to
pursue the studies further. In 1849, he went to Yale for a year
to study under Edward Elbridge Salisbury, ‘the pioneer and
patron of Sanskrit studies in America’, as Whitney later de-
scribed him in a dedication. Though self-taught, Whitney’s pro-
ciciency in the subject at the time was such that his teacher once
remarked: “It soon became evident that the teacher and the
taught must change places.”

In September 1850, he left for Germany to pursue his studies
further under world-renowned teachers. There he studied for
three semesters under Bopp, Albrecht Weber and Karl Lepsius
in Berlin, and then under Rudolph Roth in Tubingen. During
this period he laid the foundations and made plans for his work
on the Atharvaveda, to which he was to devote the rest of his
life. In August 1853, he returned to his own country.

While Whitney was abroad, his teacher Salisbury, was mak-
ing plans for utilizing his student’s services in the best possible
way on his return. With his efforts a new post of ‘Professor-
ship of the Sanskrit and its relation to kindred Languages and
Sanskrit Literature’ was created at Yale. Whitney was elected
its first incumbent and he joined the post in May, 1854. In 1869,
when Harward offered him a chair and better emoluments,
again with the efforts of Salisbury, his salary was raised so as
to retain him at Yale. Whitney continued to occupy this post
till his end.

Next in importance to Whitney’s Atharvavedic studies and
publications was his work on Sanskrit Grammar. Though Whit-
ney was by no means a pioneer in this field — for quite a few
Sanskrit Grammars had already been compiled by the European
and British scholars — yet Whitney’s work, published at Leipzig
in 1879, proved useful because of the way he handled his
subject. He subordinated to the technique of modern linguistic
science, the classification, arrangements, rules and terms of the
ancient and medieval Hindu grammarians, whose traditions had previously prevailed in the West. He took his material primarily from recorded Sanskrit literature, covering historically both the classical language and the older Vedic.

Whitney's Grammar marked a great transition in the history of Sanskrit study. It laid the foundations of the comparative study of grammars of other languages — a study that was later pursued by Wackernagel and others. His Grammar was later translated into German and it was revised by Whitney himself a decade later. The Grammar was followed by a formal supplement, *The Roots, Verb-forms, and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language*, published in Leipzig in 1885.

Whitney was also interested in Hindu astronomy. In 1860, he published an English translation of *Surya Siddhanta* which was a very valuable contribution, accompanied as it was with illustrative notes.

Whitney took a keen interest in the American Oriental Society, of which he was elected a member in 1850. Since then, in one capacity or another, he served it for a total of fifty-one years. In 1857, he became its Corresponding Member and as such edited all its publications for the next twenty-seven years. Later he became its President and held that office for six years. For many years, his were the major contributions to the Society's journal. At one time, when the Society's financial position was very stringent, in spite of his own meagre assets, he sent a cheque for a thousand dollars to the treasurer of the Society "to help it meet the publication expenses of the society — with a hope that it might serve as a suggestion and encouragement to others to do likewise."

The study of languages (linguistics) and their science (philology) was another major interest with Whitney. In 1864, he delivered a series of lectures before the Smithsonian Institution, and later before the Lowell Institute, on the principles of linguistic science. These were published in 1867, under the title *Language and the Study of Language*, and were translated into German by Jolly and into Dutch by Vinckers. In 1875, he published the *Life and Growth of Language*, which was translated into German, French, Italian, Dutch, Swedish and Russian. His writings on the history of human language are indicative of his scholarship in the subject and have earned for him a prominent
and permanent place in the subject. He was one of the founders and the First President, in 1869, of the American Philological Association. As chairman of the committee appointed by this Association to study the question of English spelling, in his report presented in 1876, he opposed the principle of 'historical' or 'etymological' spelling and favoured reform, especially in the use of the simpler and alternative forms.

In his earlier years at Yale when Whitney's salary was insufficient to support his growing family, he added to his income by teaching German and French. Out of this subsidiary activity, grew a list of publications, such as: a Series of Annotated German Texts (1876); a German Reader, with notes and vocabulary (1870); Larger (1869) and Smaller (1885) German Grammar, German Dictionary (1877), French Grammar (1886) and Essentials of English Grammar (1877). These grammars, for all practical use in school or college, show the same clarity, conciseness and insight that mark his other studies, as for example, in Sanskrit. They anticipated contemporary methods and were widely used and deservedly influential.

Whitney also contributed to the St. Petersburg Sanskrit Dictionary of Bohtlingk and Roth, Webster's English Dictionary, Appleton's New American Cyclopaedia, Jonson's New Universal Cyclopaedia, Encyclopaedia Britannica and to Century Dictionary of the English language in six volumes, of which he was the editor-in-chief.

Personal Glimpses

Whitney was married to Elizabeth Wooster Baldwin of New Haven, on 27 August, 1856. Three sons and three daughters were born to them. Whitney was devoted to his family and his home. He was neither orthodox nor a member of any church, but he attended services regularly and knew the Bible thoroughly. He was a lover of music.

Whitney was calm and patient and bore himself with dignity. He was gentle and kind even to those from whom he expected nothing, and was full of gratitude to those who did him a service. While presiding over meetings or presenting papers, he was dignified and brief. "No laboured reading from a manuscript but rather a simple and facile account of results.
An example, surely: He who had the most to say used in proportion the least time in saying it."

A large number of publications that he had to his credit, were due to his habit of hard and regular work. He never broke his regularity of work even under dire circumstances. On 4 July, the American Independence Day, he worked only an hour less than usual. On 7 June, 1894, he died in New Haven Connecticut. He was sixty-seven then.

Recognition

Recognition came to Whitney in abundance from America and abroad. He received honorary degrees from a number of American and foreign universities. He was an honorary member of the Oriental Societies of Great Britain and Ireland, Japan, Germany, Bengal, Peking, Italy and of the Literary Societies of Leyden, Upsala and Helsingfore. He was a Foreign or Corresponding member of the Institute of France, the Royal Academies of Ireland, Denmark, Berlin, Turin, the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, the Royal Academy of St. Petersburg and the Royal Academy dei Lincei of Rome, Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Foreign Knight of the Royal Prussian Order pour le merits (succeeding Thomas Carlyle). In 1870, the Berlin Academy awarded him the Bopp Prize for his publication of the Tatthiriya Pratisakhya.
MAX MÜLLER

"By editing the Rigveda and the Upanishads, you have made accessible to European scholars the thoughts and aims of our old sages hidden hitherto in illegible manuscripts."

— Devendranath Tagore

ANCIENT SANSKRIT literature first attracted the attention of the German scholars in the later half of the eighteenth century. Sanskrit manuscripts that most attracted the earlier German scholars were, Kalidasa’s play Shakuntala, the dialogues of the Bhagavadgita and the discourses in the Upanishads. The availability of German translations of the Shakuntala in 1791 marked the beginning of this epoch. The enthusiasm with which this work was hailed by Goethe, the great genius of Germany, is difficult to exaggerate. He gave vent to his unbounded admiration for it in the following words: "If the business of the early and the fruits of the later year, if what charms and delights, if what satiates and nourishes, if earth and heaven are to be comprised in one word—I name, Shakuntala, thee, and so all is said." Philosophico-religious dialogues of the Bhagavadgita impressed greatly the distinguished philosopher, Wilhelm Von Humboldt. He thanked destiny that it had permitted him to live to know this work. He said: "This episode of the Mahabharata is the most beautiful, nay, perhaps, the only truly philosophical poem to be found in all literatures known to us." Analytical discourses in the Upanishads provided intellectual solace and comfort to the celebrated philosopher, Arthur Shopenhauer. In his now famous words of praise for the Upanishads, he said: "On every page we meet profound, original, sublime thoughts. Everything
here breathes Indian air and original existence akin to nature. It is the most recompensing and most elevating reading that (except the original) is possible in this world. It has been the comfort of my life and will be the comfort of my death."

While these and other German scholars studied different aspects of Sanskrit literature and put forward their views on them in very praiseworthy terms before the world, there is another, whose work had the greatest impact not only outside India but even inside it. He was Max Müller whose name lovingly has been Sanskritized as moksa-mula, the root of salvation. His translation of the Rigveda and several other works, and his genuine love of ancient Indian culture, endeared his name to all educated Indians.

Early Life

Max Müller was born on 6 December, 1823, at Dessau, the capital of the small duchy, Anhalt-Dessau, situated in Central Germany. His father Wilhelm Müller, a distinguished poet, famous for his Greek songs, died at the age of thirty-three, when Max was only four years old. His mother Adelheid was the daughter of Ludwig Von Basedow, Prime Minister in the duchy of Anhalt-Dessau.

Max Müller came to an academic career not out of his own choice; he, in fact, wanted to become a musician and composer, but was discouraged in doing so by a famous composer. He learnt Sanskrit under the most renowned teachers of the language in Europe. At Leipzig University, he was taught by Hermann Brockhaus who was the first occupant of the Sanskrit chair founded there in 1841. He obtained his Ph. D degree in this university in 1843. The following year, he attended Bopp's lectures on comparative philology at Berlin. From there he went to Paris in March 1845 to study Sanskrit under the famous Indologist, Burnouf.

After completing his studies in Paris, in 1847 Max Müller went over to Oxford. He had decided to settle there, making England his home and English the medium of his scholarly work. He married Georgina Adelaide Riversdale Grenfell, an English lady, who helped him greatly in adjusting to the English environment.

For twenty-five years, Max Müller was on the staff of
the Oxford University in different capacities. In 1850, he was appointed Deputy Taylorian Professor of Modern European Languages at Oxford. Four years later, he was made a full professor. In 1858, he was elected a life Fellow of All Soul's College. He was a candidate for the coveted Boden Professorship of Sanskrit at Oxford which fell vacant in 1860, after the passing away of its first incumbent, Horace Hyman Wilson. Max Müller deserved this post on the basis of his merit and there was every likelihood that he would get it. But, unfortunately, some prejudice against him stood in the way. He could not get this job and was greatly disappointed; not so much that he did not get it but because he felt he was treated shabbily. The old English university earned a bad name by losing its sense of justice in his case. Later, however, it realized its folly and made amends for it by creating for him a Professorship of Comparative Philosophy. He accepted this post, but retired from it voluntarily in 1875, at the age of fifty-two. He was appointed Hibbert Lecturer and Gifford Lecturer and was invited to address learned gatherings. He was the first president of the English Goethe Society and president of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, held in London in 1892.

Work on Rigveda

Max Müller had got interested in the Rigveda, the most ancient and venerable religious scripture of the Hindus, as early as 1846, when he was only twenty-three. He was, he wrote later, irresistibly attracted towards it and felt as if a new world had opened up before him.

He conceived of a bold plan to prepare a complete edition of this text, to be accompanied by the monumental commentary of Sayana. He set himself to the task of studying, understanding, translating and commenting on it. It took him more than two decades to complete the work; the first volume of this work appeared in 1849 and the sixth and last, in 1874. The whole work was published with the financial help given by the East India Company. A second and revised edition in four volumes was published later, with the financial aid to the extent of £4,000 given by the Maharaja of Vijainagram. This latter edition has been reprinted lately in 1965.
Manuscripts of the Rigveda had begun to find their way into Europe towards the middle of the nineteenth century and efforts were made to translate it, particularly by Friedrich Rosen of Germany and by the great French Indologist, Eugène Burnouf. It was, however, left to Max Müller, the latter's pupil, to take up this gigantic task.

The availability of Max Müller's Rigveda in print for the first time was great news. It was received with a lot of enthusiasm and the author was greatly applauded and thanked. Many leaders of the Hindus, assured the author of their eternal gratitude to him. Devendranath Tagore, the great poet's father, said: "By editing the Rigveda and the Upanishads, you have made accessible to European scholars the thoughts and aims of our old sages hidden hitherto in illegible manuscripts. It is to be hoped that the seed of the knowledge of our old literature may strengthen the bonds between two nations, which, grown up under one roof, later separated and are scattered over remote part of the globe, but are once to be reunited by providence."

Raja Radhakanta Dev, another eminent Indian, said that Max Müller had done an unestimable service to the Hindus by giving them a correct and magnificent edition of their holy scripture. He aptly remarked: "It is surely a very curious reflection on the vicissitudes of human affairs that the descendants of the divine rishis (sages) should be studying on the banks of the Bhagirathi (Ganges), the Yamuna and the Sindhu, their holy scriptures, as published on the banks of the Thames by one whom they regard as a mlechcha, (impure man) and this mlechcha (Max Müller)...ere long will rise to the rank of a Veda-Vyasa (arranger and revealer of the Vedas) of the Kaliyuga."

A few orthodox Brahmin circles in India, initially reacted adversely to Max Müller's translation, saying, it, the most venerable book, had been written by a mlechcha with the cows' blood. But gradually even they came around — even more eloquently. At a meeting, in Poona, when the printed text of the Rigveda was read out to the gathered Brahmins, they not only conceded it was correct but many of them even corrected their own manuscripts after comparing them with that of the Max Müller's! Later on, the same Brahmins sent him an upavita (the sacred thread which the religious-minded Hindus wear
round the neck) and even invited him to act, from a distance,
as priest at a Brahmin religious ceremony.

Interest created by Max Müller’s work on the *Rigveda*,
provided a much-needed force and impact to the Hindu revi-
valist movement then under way in India. Dayanand Sarasvati’s
slogan ‘Back to the Vedas’ could not have been raised or heard
as effectively but for the publication of the *Rigveda*. Max
Müller himself had all along fully realized that the publication
of the *Rigveda* was an epoch-making event in the religious and
intellectual history of India. He wrote, “After all, it was their
Bible and had never been published before during the three or
four thousand years of its existence.”

*Sacred Books of the East*

Work on the *Rigveda* alone would have sufficed to number its
author among the immortals; but Max Müller was not a man to
rest on his laurels. He already had further plans for work in his
mind. He had observed that even though oriental scholars and
Indologists had been working, for long, on different aspects of
the ancient literature of the Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and other
religious sects of India and of the East, yet there were many
important manuscripts which were not available to them. He
thought of collecting and translating all such important texts,
so as to make them available to all those who would be inter-
eted in them. The result was a 51-volume collection entitled *The
Sacred Books of the East*, published by the Oxford University
Press. As to the significance and importance of this work, Max
Müller has said: “I admit that it requires patience, discrimi-
nation, and a certain amount of self-denial before we can dis-
cover the grains of solid gold in the dark mines of Eastern
philosophy. It is far easier and far more amusing for shallow
critics to point out what is absurd and ridiculous in the religion
and philosophy of the ancient world than for the earnest student
to discover truth and wisdom under strange disguises. Some
progress, however, has been made, even during the short span
of life that we can remember. The *Sacred Books of the East*
are no longer a mere butt for the invectives of missionaries or
the sarcasms of philosophers. They have at last been recognized
as historical documents, aye, as the most ancient documents in
the history of human mind.”
The great contribution that this work of Max Müller’s made in the study of ancient Indian literature and culture, is fully attested to by the fact that the whole series has been republished in India since 1962, on the advice of no less a person than Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the world renowned philosopher and a former President of India.

There are numerous other publications of Max Müller’s in English and German, as important as the Rigveda and the Sacred Books of the East.

_Appreciation of Indian Culture_

Max Müller’s appreciation of Indian culture was gradual in its onset and development; it increased as the time passed. His considered and cautious views on the subject can be witnessed in his lecture series delivered at Cambridge University in 1882, and later published in the form of a book entitled _India: What Can It Teach Us_. He said: “A study of Greek literature has its own purpose, and a study of Sanskrit literature has its own purpose; but what I feel convinced of and hope to convince you of, is that Sanskrit literature, if studied only in a right spirit, is full of human interests, full of lessons which even Greek could never teach us, a subject worthy to occupy the leisure, and more than leisure... True, there are many things which India has to learn from us; but there are other things, and, in one sense, very important things, which we too may learn from India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans; and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life — again I should point to India.”

Commenting upon the important but controversial question, of the Hindu view of life, already been labelled by many scholars and eminent persons of the West as ‘sedentary and of the other world’, Max Müller said: “Instead of simply despising this Indian view of life, might we not pause for a moment and consider whether their philosophy of life is entirely wrong and our’s entirely right; whether this earth was really meant for work only (for with us pleasure also has been changed into
work), for constant hurry and flurry; or whether we sturdy Northern Aryans, might not have been satisfied with a little less of work, and a little less of so-called pleasure, but with a little more of thought, and a little more of rest. For short as our life is, we are not mere May-flies that are born in the morning to die at night. We have a past to look back to and a future to look forward to, and it may be that some of the riddles of the future find their solution in the wisdom of the past."

Max Müller's attitude towards India was not limited to an appreciation and love of its past alone; seeing the present plight of India, he was deeply concerned about its uplift. He was an ardent supporter and promotor of India's cultural renaissance during the nineteenth century, inspired as it was by literary and archaeological researches, revealing the ancient glory of India. He acted as a spokesman for India in England of the intellectual heritage and aspirations of the Indians. The religious and literary movements begun in India in those days, he interpreted as signs of the awakening of India. He interpreted Ramakrishna and his teachings, as the modern embodiment of that ancient and national spirit of India. He inspired his Indian contemporaries in their hope for the future and pride in the past. In 1899, he said: "What I feel and what I wish my friends would feel with me, is that a country which, even in these unheroic days could produce a Rammohan Roy, a Keshub Chander Sen, Malabari and a Ramabai is not a decadent country, but may look forward to a bright, sunny future, as it can look back with satisfaction and even pride on four thousand years of a not inglorious history."

Max Müller had full faith in his Christian religion, yet in his life, the teachings of the Vedanta exercised an ever-increasing influence on his mind. In this regard, he himself said: "I make no secret that all my life I have been very fond of the Vedanta. I share his (i.e., Shopenhauer's) enthusiasm for the Vedanta and feel indebted to it for much that has been helpful to me in my passage through life." In Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings, Max Müller hopefully predicted: "This constant sense of the presence of God is indeed the common ground on which we may hope that in time not too distant, the great temple of the future will be erected, in which Hindus and non-Hindus may join hands and hearts in worshipping the same
Max Müller never visited India, though at one time, it appears, he did want to. As an explanation to his love of India from a far off site, he said: "As classical scholars yearn to see Rome or Athens, I yearned to see Benares and to bathe in the sacred water of the Ganges. But at that time such a thing was out of the question." Later he said: "I feel, I am always in Benares. I love to imagine this house as Benares. I do not desire to see the geographical Benares with my physical eye. My idea of that city is so high that I cannot risk a disillusionment...My India was not on the surface, but lay many centuries beneath it; and as to paying a globe-trotter's visit to Calcutta and Bombay, I might as well walk through Oxford street and Bond street. But though, I never stood on the ghats of Benares, and never saw the men, women and children stoop from there into the sacred waters of the Ganges, I had the good fortune of knowing a number of Indians in Europe, and no doubt, some of the best and most distinguished of the sons and daughters of India."

Tributes

Max Müller passed away at Oxford on 28 October, 1900, at the age of 77. At a condolence meeting held at the English Goethe Society, on 23 November, 1900, at Calcutta, Ramesh Chander Datt, said: "...for a period of half a century, my country men have looked upon Professor Max Müller, not only as the best interpreter of ancient Indian literature but as the truest friend of modern India." Lokamanya Tilak, speaking on the occasion, said: "In him India has lost the warmest friend, the wisest lover, and the most enthusiastic admirer whose place, alas! will be filled we know not when."

In 1957, the New Delhi branch of the German Goethe Institute, was renamed the Max Müller Bhavan.
JOHN MARSHALL

Discovery of Harappa civilization by John Marshall pushed back Indian history by well over 2000 years and opened up fresh fields for research, the ultimate results of which may even be more revealing.

In 1921, Sahni, a member of John Marshall's team of archaeologists discovered a few stone seals bearing some inscriptions and animal designs from a trial excavation at Harappa in the Punjab. This site had vaguely been recognized as belonging to an ancient culture by Cunningham since 1861, as he had obtained various antiquities including some engraved stone seals from the workmen who were excavating this site to pull out bricks for laying the nearby Railway line.

At about the same time, at another site, about 400 miles from Harappa, archaeological excavations were being conducted by Bannerjee, another member of John Marshall's team, around the old dried-up channels of Beas and the Indus, at Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana district of Sind. In 1922, he accidentally, came upon a big mound where he found a flintstone knife and so suspected the existence of an ancient site lying buried underneath the mound. Digging the upper parts of the mound revealed a Buddhist monastery. But during these excavations, he found some more ancient relics including the engraved seals similar to those discovered by Cunningham in 1861 and Sahni in 1921 from Harappa.

When John Marshall saw all these seals, he recognized them as similar to those discovered earlier at some of the sites of ancient Mesopotamian culture. He at once concluded that there were the sites of a very ancient civilization in India, contemporaneous with those of ancient Mesopotamia. He ordered full-scale
exploration and what it revealed was beyond all his expectations and hopes.

After the partition of India in 1947, Indian archaeologists found many more sites of this civilization in the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan etc., of which the sites at Lothal and Rangpur in Gujarat and Kalibangan in Rajasthan were considered more important. They have shown interesting archaeological evidence of the eastward expansion and later decline of this civilization. Excavations undertaken so far, have revealed that this civilization occupied the whole of Sind, Punjab, North West Frontier Province, a part of the Gangetic basin, Gujarat and other western coastal regions. This civilization seems to have occupied $1200 \times 700 = 840,000$ square miles of area, which in size is very much larger than even the combined areas of the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt put together.

As the first evidence of the existence of this civilization was obtained in Harappa in the Punjab, according to archaeological convention, it has been the Harappan civilization; initially, it was tentatively called the Indus civilization.

Harappa Civilization

Excavations in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa and later at other sites, revealed a highly developed urban civilization organized in cities and towns whose wealth was derived mainly from agriculture and trade. The cities were well-planned and had straight wide streets. Burnt-bricks were used for all sorts of construction work. The residents seem to have enjoyed a degree of comfort, luxury and hygienic environment not obtained in any other part of the world at that time. There seem to have been an effective civil administration and government which controlled the activities at both the major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. Good drainage system, numerous baths and wells discovered from there go to show the attention given to water-supply and its disposal. The people domesticated cattle, sheep, pig, dog, camel etc. For transport they used wheeled vehicles. They were well conversant with metal work and had a plentiful supply of gold, silver and copper. Lead and tin were used by them; the latter being used only as an alloy in making bronze. With spinning and weaving of cotton and perhaps
wool also, they were well-versed. Their weapons of war and of
chase were bow and arrow, spear, axe, dagger and mace etc.
They did not have defensive body armour. Among their other
implements were hatchets, sickles, saws, chisels, razors, knives
and celts made of copper and bronze. Their domestic utensils
were chiefly made of pottery turned on the wheel and not
infrequently painted with designs. Copper, bronze and silver
was also used for making such utensils. Ornaments of the rich
were made of silver, gold, copper, ivory and shell, sometimes
overlaid with precious stones. For the poor, they were of shell
or terracotta. People were literate and used a script which,
unfortunately, has not so far been deciphered.

Engraved figures on the seals, and the terracotta and pottery
statues recovered from these sites, show a marked resemblance
between these figures and the gods and goddesses later worshiped
by the Hindus. This clearly indicates the Indian character of
this civilization.

The uniformity of this civilization, wherever it has been
discovered, is striking. Both Mohenjo-daro and Harappa show
similar town-planning, buildings, and mud-brick ramparts,
well-aligned houses, sanitation and antiquities.

Taking into view various factors such as the evidence obtained
through excavations at various sites, the similarity of the seals
obtained from these sites with those obtained from other
contemporary civilizations in other countries, carbon-14
dating of the Harappan objects etc., one can say that the
beginnings of the Harappa civilization date from the second
half of the third millennium B.C.

It looks as if this civilization survived longer in the peripheral
zones than at its epicentre in the Indus Valley. Floods and
invasions were certainly two among other factors that led to
the fall of this civilization in the cities of Mohenjo-daro and
Harappa. Rigvedic accounts seem to reinforce the theory that
these cities were sacked by Aryan invasions.

**Planned Excavations**

Soon after taking charge as Director-General of the newly-
created Department of Archaeology in 1904, John Marshall
had set about giving a planned and proper shape to all future
researches. He divided archaeological work in India into
several ‘circles’, each ‘circle’ being instructed to conserve typical and important monuments and to discover new ones wherever possible. Important sites excavated during the first two decades under his leadership include Taxila, Nalanda, Sanchi, Sarnath, Bhita, etc.

At Taxila, which was well-known as a centre of ancient culture in India, the excavations under his charge continued for well over two decades. Results here fulfilled the expectations raised by a city site situated on the main highway from the north-west, forming as it were, the crucible in which Indian culture was blended with that of the other races coming from that direction during the three or four centuries on either side of the Christian era. About a dozen sites were excavated within an area of some twenty square miles. Under Bhir mound, one of the sites, was revealed the presence of the earliest city belonging to the Mauryan period. This city was superseded later by the second and most important city at the site of Sirkap, founded by the Indo-Greek rulers and inhabited during the Indo-Greek and the Saka periods. Excavation of the second city sites revealed a lot of precious material with which a museum was created at the site.

While the lay-out of the Mauryan city was irregular and the construction unimpressive, the second town with its regularly arranged streets and lanes and well-built houses with spacious rooms and courtyards, is one of the best preserved ancient cities, the relics found being among the most representative and valuable dug out anywhere in India.

During his term of office as Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India, interesting and very worthwhile excavations were made at Pataliputra (Patna) and Nalanda.

All these discoveries provided the basis for writing several chapters on the political, social, cultural and artistic history of India.

*Early Life*

Born at Chester, England, on 19 March, 1876, John Marshall was the younger son of Frederic Marshall K.C. He was educated at Dulwich and at King’s College, Cambridge. After taking first class classical tripos, part one and two, he became a Prendergast Greek student in 1900 and later as Cravan
travelling student. Even as early as that he had become a famous archaeologist by his training and work in Crete, Greece and Turkey. In 1902, he married Florance, younger daughter of Sir Henry Longhurst. Soon after he joined as Director-General of Archaeology in India.

From 1904, to 1932, Marshall guided the policy of the Archaeological Survey of India. Some of the Indian States like Mysore, Travancore, Jaipur and Baroda also instituted archaeological departments on the pattern set by John Marshall for the Government of India.

In recognition of his epoch-making work, he was honoured by the Government, various universities and learned scientific societies. He was knighted in 1914. He died on 17 August, 1958.

Among his many publications, the important ones are: *A guide to Sanchi, A guide of Taxila, Mohenjo-daro and Indus Civilization, The Monuments of Sanchi and The Buddhist Art of Gandhara*.

While it was Cunningham who starting with the data supplied by the Greek historians and the Chinese travellers, located the sites of ancient cultures in India, it was John Marshall who made concerted efforts to excavate some of these particular sites with a view to bringing to light the successive cultural periods of ancient Indian history.

The discovery of the Harappan civilization by John Marshall changed the general configuration of Indian history and pushed it back by over 2000 years. It has opened up fresh fields for research, the ultimate results of which may be even more interesting.
"He was the father of Indian Pre-history."

IN THE EAST, the people believed that man existed on the earth since countless ages. In the West, according to the story of Adam and Eve, the total age of man, as also of the earth, was just about a few thousand years.

Such traditional beliefs were shattered during the last century when Darwin published his treatise, _Origin of the Species_ in 1859. He pointed out that man has evolved out of his ape-like ancestors; he was however, not sure when this did happen.

While Darwin's book caused a great upheaval, a more significant observation on the same theme but in another branch of knowledge, went almost totally unnoticed outside the limited field of its own investigation. This was the finding by Boucher de Perthes of peculiarly cut and shaped stones, together with long-extinct animal fossils, in 1847, in the old terrace deposits of the river Somme, at Abbeville in France. He claimed that these stone objects were made and used as tools by man who lived in very very ancient times. In 1859, three eminent English geologists confirmed his claim. In 1863, an important treatise called _Geological Evidence of the Antiquity of Man_ was published, in which the author provided proof in favour of the existence of man on the earth since hundreds of thousands of years.

The pioneering work of these scholars created a tremendous amount of curiosity and enthusiasm amongst scientists to know 'when, where and how' the prehistoric man lived. This had its repercussions in India as it did all over the world. Archaeologists and other people started looking for such stone tools in
the existing or extinct river beds, caves and other probable places. Robert Bruce Foote was the pioneer of such studies in India.

*Initial Discoveries*

He has given a vivid account of the circumstances leading to his initial discoveries of the prehistoric past of India. He wrote: "The first implement discovered was found by me on May 30 last year (1863), among the debris thrown out of a small gravel pit, a few hundred yards north of the cantonment at Palaveram (10 miles south-west of Madras) and about the same distance west from the high-road. My acquaintance with the flint implements which have excited so much interest in Europe was at that time limited to figures of them given in *The Geologist*, and I was then but little familiar with peculiarities of fracture of the quartzite pebbles. I felt a little doubtful therefore, in unhesitatingly regarding my find as a genuine stone implement. So I contented myself with mentioning it in a letter to my friend and colleague Mr. King and showing it to different members of my family.

"As I was leaving Palaveram the very evening I found the implement, I could not at the time extend my researches for further specimens but a careful search made in January (1864) put me in possession of two further implements of much more perfect shape than the first.

"On 28 September 1864, my colleague Mr. King, who had accompanied me, picked up two well-shaped oval implements on a little terrace of quartzite shingle in the bed of the Atrampakkum nullah (stream).

"The true nature of these implements was so unmistakable, that we immediately commenced searching for more, and in a few minutes were well rewarded, by finding several others as we walked up the dry bed of the nullah.

"The condition of the implements found showing evidently that they came from somewhere near at hand, we resolved to search the banks of the nullah very closely in order, if possible, to discover other implements in situ.

"The following day we proceeded to examine the nullah and its tributary gullies, commencing where the lateritic gravel first becomes well exposed on the west side of the old ruined pagoda
at the northern end of the Numbaucurm tank. It was not long before we found several finely-shaped quartzite implements *in situ*, embedded with numerous quartzite pebbles in a bed of hard furruginous laterite conglomerate which there rests unconformably on the plant shales. The implements *in situ* were found at depths below the surface varying from three to eight or ten feet, and often so tightly impacted as to necessitate some little labour with the hammer to extract them uninjured."

Describing the characteristic features of the implements he had discovered, Bruce Foote said: "They are shaped to show a cutting edge lying in one plane with reference to the axis of the implements, and this without regard whether their shape is oval, discoid, pointed like a spear, or broadly wedge-shaped like a hatchet. In some of various types, this edge goes entirely round the implement and in others it occurs on three sides and a blunt base is left; in a third type only two edges exist tapering to a point and with a blunt base; in a fourth, three sides though evidently trimmed, are obtuse and the fourth has a sharp cutting edge. In those implements which have themselves been exposed to the action of moving water, the process of conversion into true rounded pebbles is clearly visible."

In regard to the use to which these implements were put to, Bruce Foote said: "Whether these implements were used as axes or wedges, in other words, were fitted with handles or held in the hands only, it is, of course, impossible to decide; but they certainly give the impression of having been effective instruments. The smaller specimens must have been very formidable weapons if fixed to handles like axes and would have served to inflict terrible wounds on any foe... ."

Concluding from his findings the period when these implements could have been made, he said: "If we attempt to form an estimate of the time required for the elevation of the lateritic formations to such a height above the existing sea-level — by adopting Sir Charles Lyell's standard rate of oscillation of 2½ feet per century — we should obtain a period of about 14,700 years, assuming the rate of elevation to have been constant throughout the whole period .... The first appearance of the human race in southern India, would then have to be referred back to a period yet more remote."

Robert Bruce Foote through his researches was thus instru-
ment in providing evidence that the Indian subcontinent was inhabited by man from the very earliest times and his skills and capabilities were in no way less in the earliest times than those of man elsewhere.

Further Work

Encouraged by his initial findings, Bruce Foote's enthusiasm grew. He began extensive studies on the geographical distribution of the Palaeolithic (of Old Stone Age) and the Neolithic (of New Stone Age) sites, on the classification of the implements he had found, and on the tool-making techniques employed by prehistoric man. Between 1863 and 1904, he discovered as many as 459 prehistoric sites in peninsular India, of which forty-two belonged to the Palaeolithic Age and 252 to the Neolithic. Furthermore, he brought to light, for the first time in India, strata of the earth which contained no tools at all and which lay between the Palaeolithic and Neolithic ones at various sites, establishing thereby similarity of the 'hiatus or gap' in India also, as it was observed earlier at different European sites. This was a very significant observation. He also discovered and described a new species of rhinoceros at Belgaum, which he named R. deccanensis.

In 1868, Bruce Foote read an interesting paper on Indian prehistory before the Geological Society of London; another on a similar theme he presented at the International Prehistory Congress at Norwich. In 1873, the International Exhibition at Vienna displayed a part of his Indian collections.

His extensive collection of prehistoric stone tools from various parts of Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad, and Baroda was purchased by the Madras Government in 1904 and a special hall was built for its reception in the Archaeology Section of the Madras Museum. These tools are still available in the Madras Museum and the Indian Museum Calcutta, and serve as very valuable material for research workers.

Robert Bruce Foote intended to prepare a comprehensive catalogue of his entire collection. By the end of 1908, he had already numbered and arranged the specimens. The work, however, got delayed during the later years because of his ill-health and failing eye-sight. This catalogue in two volumes
was published posthumously in 1914, by the Madras Government Museum.

*Contributions to Geology*

While Bruce Foote is better known for his researches in the prehistoric past of India, his contributions to the study of the geology of southern India are equally fundamental and significant. Much of our knowledge of the geology of the crystalline rocks of the peninsular South and of the recognition and separation of the Dharwar System from the crystalline complex, is due to his endeavours. His paper on "The Dharwar System, the chief auriferous rock series of South India," is an important landmark in Indian geology. His field researches in the south also firmly established the division of the Archaean rocks of the earliest geological period into two entirely distinct systems—a division which holds good for other regions as well.

Robert Bruce Foote had joined the Geological Survey of India in September 1858, at the age of twenty-four and retired as a Senior Superintendent, in 1891, at the age of 57, after active service for 33 years.

After he left the Survey, he worked for three years as a Geologist in the Baroda state, during which period he published a useful monograph on the *Geology and Mineral Resources of the State*. Later he helped Mysore state to organize the State Geological Service. Thereafter, he took up his residence at Yerand at Shevaroy hills in Salem district, and carried on his field researches almost single-handed, both in geology and prehistory, till 1904. He died on 29 December, 1912, at the age of seventy-eight.

In the field of prehistory and Pleistocene geology of India, Robert Bruce Foote was a pioneer. He put India on the prehistoric map of the world and for that he has been aptly described as the 'Father of Indian Prehistory'.
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