

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

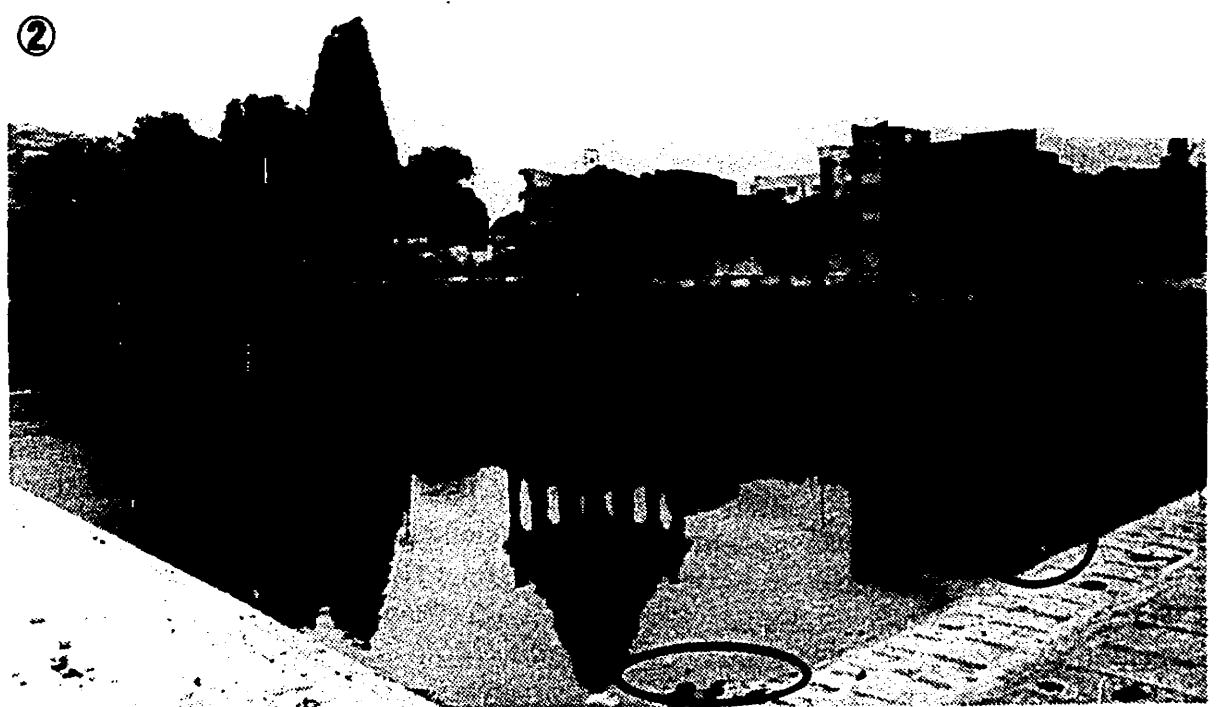
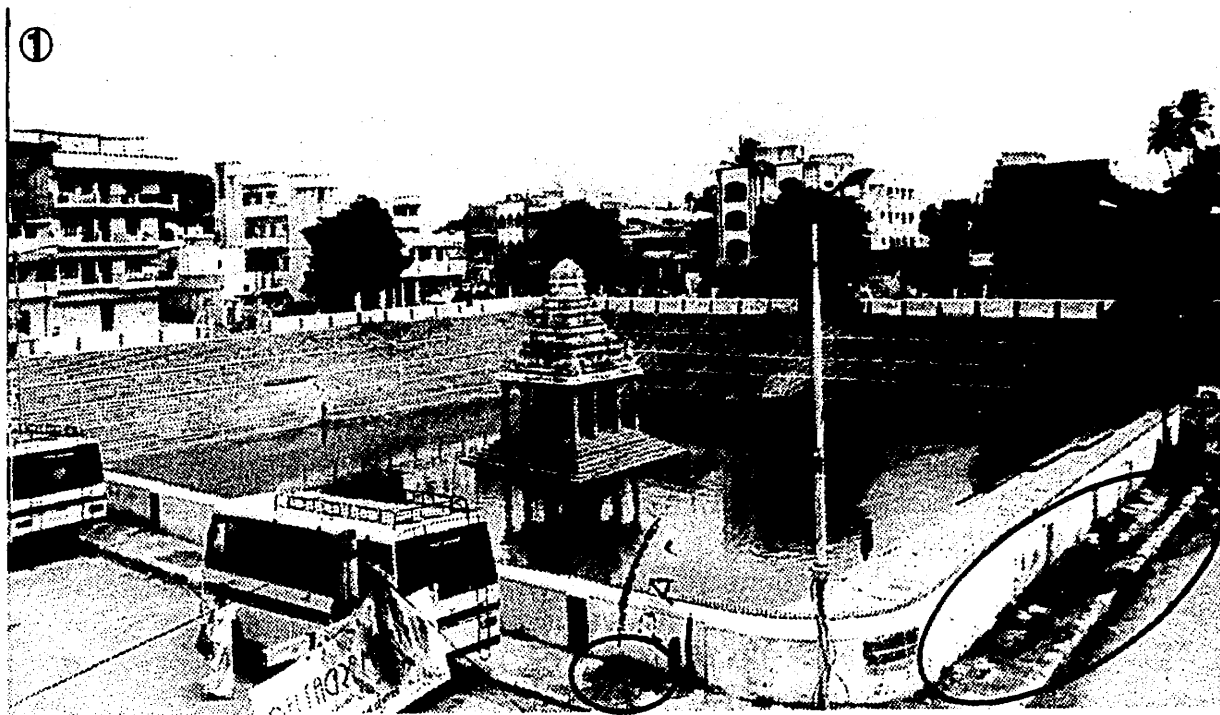
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New tanks for old?

(By A Special Correspondent)

With Chennai suffering from an acute water shortage, **water harvesting** is the latest buzzword in town. While Metrowater commits itself to propagating the idea and insisting on water harvesting facilities in all buildings, non-official organisations are looking at what contribution they can make. The Rotary Club of Madras (Main) has been looking at the problem of groundwater recharging for five years now and sees ensuring it through the temple tanks of yore as an immediate necessity.

Having taken up four tanks in the past with mixed results, the Club has this year, after a gap of couple of years, re-launched its programme. Having completed work at a temple tank in Saidapet, it proposes to start work shortly on the ancient Chitrakulam tank in Mylapore, with financial support from the TVS Group.

Examining why the Club's project failed at the Marundeeswarar Temple in Tiruvanmiyur and at the Virupaksheswarar Temple in Mylapore, where water was once again seen in empty, wild growth overrun tanks, INTACH's Tamil Nadu Chapter has expressed the view that SUSTAINABILITY, by involving the local people in post-restoration preservation, was not a component of the project and the technical aspects of the restoration project alone were concentrated on. INTACH Tamil Nadu therefore recently undertook to study what could be done in Tiruvanmiyur to restore the tank again and see that it remained restored. The Rotary Club took the point, and now it is up to the two organisations to explore ways and means of working together. A few preliminary joint meetings have



been held and at one, the President of the Chitrakulam Mada Streets Residents' Association pledged to discuss with INTACH how their tank, once restored, could be preserved, ensuring recharge of water every year, and the area around

maintained as well-tended but people-friendly place.

The Club has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Corporation to desilt 37 of the City's 45 tanks in a phased

(Continued on Page 5)

1. The Karaneswarar Temple tank in Saidapet, shortly after the Club had restored it. But already domestic waste is being dumped on the pavements (see dark patches on right).

2. Another picture of the Saidapet tank, showing plastic waste in the water in the foreground.

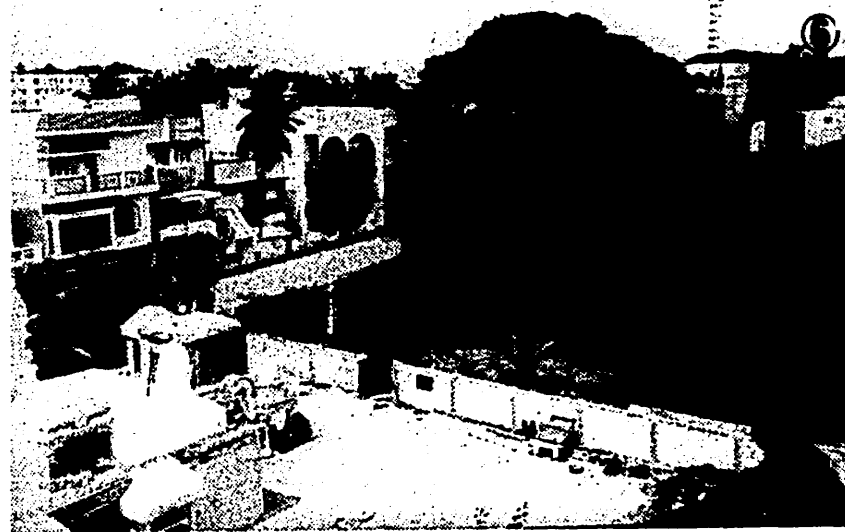
3. Chitrakulam Tank, Mylapore. The Rotary Club of Madras (Main) will shortly be taking up the restoration of this neglected tank with support from the TVS Group.

4. The Agatheeswarar Temple tank, Nungambakkam. The Club hopes to renovate this tank this year. But will it be able to prevent domestic waste (foreground, right) returning to the scene?

5. The Marundeeswarar Temple tank, Tiruvanmiyur. This was the first temple tank restoration project the Club undertook, but the state of the tank reflects that an answer has to be found to ensure SUSTAINABILITY.

6. The P.V. Koil Street tank near Hamilton Bridge, Mylapore. Another tank the Club had restored, but expectations of the local residents sustaining it never materialised.

7. The Purasawalkam temple tank. Another tank restored by the Club, where raised walls and pavement shops on the left and in front prevent it from being seen by the public. Presumably, unseen it will be able to remain relatively less misused until the rains bring it water again. (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Time to move from speaking to the converted

For long *The Man From Madras Musings* has been aware that for all the awareness that *Madras Musings* has been creating on subjects ranging from civic consciousness to heritage, it has by and large been speaking to the converted. At the recent release of *Nature's Spokesman: M Krishnan and India's Wild Life*, Theodore Baskaran of the Roja Muthiah Research Library made the point even more bluntly.

Much as he appreciated the work of that great wild life photographer, naturalist and environmentalist being brought out in English, which he wrote prolifically in, such books would only reach the kind of audience present on the occasion, the committed and the converted, Baskaran said. What about the great majority in the State — and elsewhere — who are ONLY Tamil-speaking, asked Baskaran. How do you get them converted and committed?

Not only should Krishnan's body of writing in English — particularly his fortnightly column 'Country Notebook' which ran for 46 years in *The Statesman*, Calcutta — be translated into Tamil and published but, even before that, his writings on the natural environment in Tamil should be published, Baskaran urged. Few know that Krishnan wrote as felicitously in Tamil as in English, but so little of it reached the public that need to be converted, Baskaran pointed out.

Relating how the pangolin — the anteater — was described nowadays as *erumbu-thinni*, a literal translation, and the sea-cow as the *kadal-pasi*, Baskaran said all these animals had specific Tamil names and not these convenience ones. Krishnan used them all in his Tamil writings and for this reason alone, to restore into Tamil consciousness the historic Tamil names of Nature's bounty, be it flora or fauna, he hoped Krishnan's writings would be published.

MMM couldn't agree more with Baskaran that environmental — and other — messages needed to be spread in Tamil. And publishing Krishnan's work would be the best thing to do to pioneer the way. But with not one Tamil publisher present on the occasion, MMM wonders who would come forth to publish Krishnan's contributions in the vernacular. There could well be more takers for the novel he wrote, *Kathiresan Chettiar's katha!*

Another project that needs to be taken up by a publisher is a large or small format coffee-table-type book featuring a selection of pictures from Krishnan's wild life collection. Described as India's finest wild life photographer of an earlier era, his black and white pictures remain among the best taken in the country. They need a wider audience — an exhibition and a book. Any takers? Oxford University Press should be thinking of that as a follow-up.

Sea blindness

When Vice Admiral M.K. Roy of the Institute of Indian Studies recently spoke to the local chapter he referred to the sea blindness "that had prevailed in India since Independence and looked forward to on-going deliberations that might at last lead to a marine policy. *The Man From Madras Musings* was delighted to hear that policy was likely to focus NOT only on defence strategy, but would also include environmental, political, economic and resource components too. MMM couldn't help but hope that when that happened the universities would wake up and introduce courses in Maritime History, Maritime Economics, Indian Ocean History, the Ocean Environment etc; as Admiral Roy pointed out, no such courses are taught at any college in India today. Neither is there a focus on such matters as the Indian Ocean Rim (now virtually consigned to oblivion), a Bay of Bengal Community and an Arabian Sea one.

Meanwhile, MMM was glad to hear, that progress was being made on integrating the Indian military establishment and establishing a degree of unity through a joint

ous interest now being shown in a plan first suggested 140 years ago and which has kept cropping up ever since.

MMM learns that global bids are to be floated shortly for a feasibility study for a 100 km canal to be developed mainly by dredging a good portion of it in Indian waters and cutting the rest of it through Indian territory — at the tip of Rameswaram Island. That's a plan that shouldn't cost more than \$300 million, MMM is told.

The savings on coast to coast journeys and even from Tuticorin to Paradip will be enormous, MMM has no doubt. The entire Tamil Nadu coast, particularly those stretches along the most backward districts in the State, will benefit immensely through new development. And strategically, India stands to gain much — not least by making life a bit easier for the Coast Guard in its constant battle against illegal traffic in the Palk Straits and Palk Bay. Nevertheless, the environmental consequences need to be studied further.

The proposed plan, it is understood, will not endanger the coral reefs or the fish resources on both sides of the Strait. Some

Muttukadu has been made a waterway again, with some stretches better than others. Nevertheless some form of navigation is possible. This is the case in the north too. And reacting to this progress, the immediate suggestion made by the authorities is pleasure boating — as at Muttukadu. MMM just can't understand why when it comes to an existing waterway we can't have a greater vision.

With the roads becoming more and more congested, why aren't we looking at expediting the work on the entire canal stretch between Pulicat and Mamallapuram and providing a regular ferry service? Why aren't we looking at the possibility of houseboat cruises on such a stretch? Why aren't we even looking at the possibility of houseboat homes being permitted to occupy long-term space along specified stretches of the banks as is done in other parts of the world?

MMM is quite willing to concede that none of this may be practicable, but are we even beginning to look at how the canal should be made viable if and when we get around to desilting at least the greater part of it and

stretches where the flyovers have already been opened, there's greater traffic on these sides, particularly on the narrowest stretches, than on the flyovers. Now why that is MMM has not figured out, but what it's doing to those using the sides is not exactly a happy state of affairs.

Meanwhile, areas with wide and congested roads and which need flyovers are not getting the priority they need, it would seem. Two areas that strike MMM as needing immediate rescue are the Eldam's Road — Anna Salai junction and the Kathipara Junction. They may be parts of a national highway, but that's no reason for the city to go slow on them.

There is, MMM understands, a feasibility study being undertaken on a Rs. 150 crore scheme for a massive 4-lane flyover over Anna Salai from Eldam's Road to Teachers' College in Saidapet. Whether we need such a grandiose flyover is one thing, but getting the study done as quickly as possible is another, for any reasonable alternative would appear essential from the Eldam's Road to the Cenotaph Road junctions with Anna Salai.

Play or film?

While *The Square Circle* scripted by Madras's own Timeri Murari still awaits release in any cinema theatre in India, he went and wrote a stage version of it and was invited to direct it in the Haymarket's Little Theatre in Leicester. When he recently showed a video recording of one act of the play and a clip of the film's interpretation of a key sequence in that act, there was much to debate at the British Council at the end of the viewing.

Much of the discussion, *The Man From Madras Musings* noted, was centred on the variety of Midlands accents heard from the British-born Indian stage players. Looking Indian, dressed Indian, but not sounding Indian, did it affect the production? That the question itself was raised and debated at length certainly seemed to MMM signs that it was a matter of concern even if those who talked about it felt it didn't matter. Murari himself explained that when the actors had first read their parts they had made a deliberate effort to sound 'Indian' — and had sounded like Peter Sellers! So he soon got them back to what their normal accents are. But MMM feels a local production in India — why not Madras? — with local actors is something he'd be more comfortable with, particularly when it comes to the minor roles.

More intriguing was the two approaches to the rape scene. Stylised on the stage, it was nevertheless, according to Murari, an emotional-draining experience for the two characters to go through their paces night after night. But MMM, looking at it from the audience, found the film close-ups of the woman's agonised face having a far greater effect on the viewer than body movements seen on stage from a distance. Which, MMM supposes, is the essence of the film versus stage debate.

MMM

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

defence services' staff which would have a closer working relationship with the Ministry of Defence. If that materialises — and there seems to be a degree of confidence in the air — would we at last see the disappearance of such restricting working conditions as EIGHT ministries dealing with ocean affairs? Could we see the birth of a Ministry of Ocean Affairs dealing with all eight subjects? MMM does not know if that is possible, but surely integration should be the name of the organisational game.

While these positive notes were being struck, it was a pity to notice the absence of relevant University departments — both faculty as well as students — at this meeting held in the University of Madras by the Institute. Where were the representatives of the Departments of South and South-east Asian Studies, Defence Studies, and Geography, to mention just a few who would have benefited much from not only the discussion but also from the interaction with the large number of Naval officers present? Can't we ever get away from local politics even to listen to a guest speaker with much to offer?

Seaway again?

All those who missed the meeting with Admiral Roy, also missed a discussion on a major project which concerns Tamil Nadu — the Sethusamudram scheme. *The Man From Madras Musings* understands that there is some seri-

ous of the areas where the coral reefs are have the potential of being developed as marine parks, even if the coral in the one existing park has not exactly been given the protection it warrants. The fishing banks in this area are also amongst some of the best in the world. An assurance of environmental safety is therefore essential. While the development work on the canal may not threaten the environment, what are the guarantees that once the canal becomes operational, the currents and tides in an area where Man has altered Nature will not affect both the fishing and the coral as well as the coast? This is what needs deeper study — and at the end of the day the decision to be taken will have to be one based on whether the fiscal, developmental and social benefits from the canal outweigh the consequences of environmental degradation. MMM hopes that any objective study made by a global authority will at the end of the day say, "You can have your cake and eat it too!"

Using the Canal

This is another canal *The Man From Madras Musings* is talking about. This is the Buckingham Canal. The grand plan to desilt the entire stretch of it from Pulicat to Mamallapuram has got off to a start, with significant progress being made in some stretches and none at all in others. MMM observes that about 15km from Thoraipakkam to

providing access roads to it at different points along the way? Pleasure boating alone is not going to justify all the work that has been put into making a good part of the canal navigable for craft with shallow draughts. Not only must the cleared stretches in the north and south be linked, but we must get around to finding the best use for the canal once that is done. If little or no use is made of the canal, MMM is convinced it will revert to its old sorry state in no time at all.

Flights of fancy

With the first phase of flyover building drawing to a close, having successfully transferred the congestion from old points to new — and almost achieved gridlock in some areas — *The Man From Madras Musings* hears that work will commence on five more flyovers the moment the two remaining flyovers in the nine-flyover Phase One are thrown open; the Perambur flyover, the tenth in this phase, will, it is reported, take its time.

When work starts on them, there will be five more places in the city where pedestrians and cyclists will live endangered moments every time they pass by these soaring monuments to 'Singara Chennai'. That's because once again the flyovers are being sited on narrow roads and reducing the width on both sides to less than safe margins. It strikes MMM as significant that on the

OUR
READERS
WRITE



Thanks for killing us!

The magnitude of air-pollution in Chennai is alarming, and the unresponsiveness of officialdom is even more distressing.

Although born in Australia, I have always been proud of Chennai and have cherished its culture, heritage, and progress over the years. Having returned to my homeland after a few years overseas, it was most disappointing to note that the city has changed for the worse. Chennai is more polluted now than it was before my departure.

While I was happy to note that most petrol-driven cars had the mandatory 'non-polluting green sticker', the exhaust fumes emitted from diesel-driven, medium and heavy, vehicular traffic was going unobserved! The resultant dense, black smoke that envelops the entire city offers proof that Chennai could be a vital contributor to the depletion of the ozone layer.

I believe there exists a Pollution Control Board in our city, but its presence is unnoticeable. It is mind-boggling why it isn't taking immediate and stern action against air-polluters. Why aren't there any Pollution Board inspectors on the road monitoring vehicular emission and, if there are, why aren't they doing anything significant to help curb air pollution? Why aren't heavy 'on the spot' fines imposed on offenders? Why isn't Government taking an interest in passing necessary legislative measures? Is it because the biggest offenders are the Government-operated public transport vehicles? Why aren't they reprimanding the zillion autorickshaw drivers who continue to adulterate gasoline with kerosene to save a few measly paise, while putting our environment and everyone's precious health at risk?

My heart goes out to the traffic constables who direct and (try to) maintain order on our roads amidst the numerous concoctions of gases and fumes. Most of them are seen sporting blackened (due to the overwhelming smoke!) facemasks or handkerchiefs in an attempt to protect themselves. What have they done to deserve such an atrocity? Why do you have to kill them and all the rest of us commuters? Why don't the politicians, legislators, and authorities of the (so-called) Pollution Control Board spend an entire day on the streets of Chennai during peak hour traffic and experience the smog for themselves, rather than being chauffeur-driven in the comfort of their air-conditioned cars? Why do they turn a blind eye to the "trials and tribulations" of the common man? Why hold power when they can't employ it for the good of mankind? What has the common man done to deserve this? Why should we suffer for the incapacity, inadequacies, and ineffectiveness of the authorities?

Dr. Sanjay Cherian
Madras Medical Mission
Mogappair
Chennai 600 050.

Changing numbers

I entirely agree with MMM that there must be an official communication from the Corporation of Chennai to property-owners about

A President-to-be at Presidency

Your 'Road full of memories' (MM July 16th) made me recall some thing of President Radhakrishnan's background.

"M.R.R.Y.. S. Radhakrishnan M.A., is requested to report himself as soon as possible to the Principal, Presidency College. Formal proceedings appointing him as Malayalam Master sub pro temp. on Rs.60-80 will issue later". * This was the communication of the Director of Public Instruction in letter dated 30.3.1909 sent to S. Radhakrishnan. On completion of his M.A. course in Philosophy at Madras Christian College (then in George Town) in 1909, Radhakrishnan worked for a time as Sub-Assistant Inspector of Schools at Russelkonda. On the recommendation of Dr. Skinner of Christian College, the then Director of Public Instruction appointed Radhakrishnan as Malayalam Master as a vacancy existed at the time only in that Department. But he taught in the Department of Mental and Moral Science.

Radhakrishnan's address at that time was 38, Ekambareswar Agharam, Sowcarpet, Madras. The Principal, Presidency College, in his letter dated 21.10.1909, requested "the Surgeon 4th District, Royapettah" to examine the bearer Mr. S. Radhakrishnan, M.A., and certify as to his fitness for entertainment in the Educational Department. A descriptive roll on his behalf is enclosed." Having entered government service Radhakrishnan had his share of transfers off and on. In January 1910, he was sent to the Teachers' College, Saidapet, on half-pay as "Acting 6th Assistant to obtain a diploma in teaching". His last pay certificate sent to the Teachers' College says, "He has drawn pay as Sub-Assistant Inspector of Schools, Russelkonda, and Acting Malayalam Master Presidency College at the rate of Rs. 75 a month upto the end of December 1910. He made over charge of the office of Malayalam Master Presidency College on the forenoon of 3rd January 1910."

In 1911, he was transferred to Presidency College as Additional Assistant Professor of Philosophy. According to the entries in the service register "S. Radhakrishnan M.A., medalist is Additional Assistant Professor of Philosophy on Rs. 100." In 1914, he was appointed Assistant Professor. The syllabus for the intermediate B.A. and the P.G. classes included logic, psychology, ethics, Indian and Western Philoso-

* M.R.R.Y. was the abbreviation of Maha Raja Raja Sri. It was the honorific before it was replaced by Sri and Thiru.

the change of numbers being effected (MM, August 1st).

The "new number" on the pillars of houses in several places has been re-written two or three times! How are we to conclude that the exercise is over and determine that a certain number is the ultimate one? Even an announcement to this effect has not been made.

Door numbers of properties are very important and play a vital role in transactions. So there must be an official record of these and this must be duly conveyed to residents by official means.

C. Kesi
Conran Smith Road
Gopalapuram
Chennai 600 086.

More heritage sites

Referring to MM June 1st, in which several heritage sites have been mentioned, perhaps two or three more may be added. At Purasawalkam there is the famous Gangadheeswarar Temple, at Saidapet there is the Karneeswarar Temple to which a gopuram has been added recently and at Meenam-bakkam on the road to Nuthen-cherry, there is the Dhenu-pureeswarar Temple. In Selayiur there is the Abhirami Amman Temple.

St Matthias' Church, often referred to as the English Church of Vepery, Adipureeswarar Temple in Tiruvottiyur and Little Mount at Marmalong bridge could also be added.

New places of worship are springing up very often. One such structure is the Skandashramam at Selayiur. But it is to be noted by everyone that our old structures need renovation and restoration. Government and non-government

agencies along with colony promoters should give a hand on such matters. One such attempt has been made in respect of Jalakandeswarar Temple at Vellore which has been restored to its pristine glory. A few years ago a few panchaloha idols were dug out near this temple and these are preserved at Ottai Pillayar Temple at Vellore itself. There is a possibility that these idols once belonged to the Jalakandeswarar Temple. The Archaeological Survey of India should do some research on this matter.

K.S. Shankar
'Sowbhagya'
Plot No. 208, House No 21
Chitlapakkam Main Road
Ganesh Nagar
Selayiur
Chennai 600 073.

Matchless match

As an enthusiastic cricketer, I used to witness the Gopalan Trophy matches in the 60s and 70s, and thoroughly enjoyed the competitive cricket. The Sri Lankans have young talent in plenty. Pace bowlers thrive in Sri Lankan conditions. The revival of the series will help both the teams to produce genuine pace bowlers. Tamil Nadu cricket will benefit.

C.K. Subramaniam
A 101, Vashi 1-400703
Navi Mumbai.

A Driver or drivers?

I came across a street name that's not run of the mill. 'Driver Street' is off Marshall's Road, adjoining the Government Ophthalmic Hospital. A few residents and staff of the Corporation office think that the street owes its name to the movement of police and fire station vehicles

phy. There was no area of the extensive syllabus which he did not teach. He was so friendly and easy of access to the students that he was called "the boy professor". This was a period of acute financial strain for Radhakrishnan. He undertook tuition and valuation of papers to supplement his income. Besides, he was obliged to give his rights on *Essentials of Psychology* (a collection of his lectures in book form) to the Oxford University Press for an outright payment of Rs. 500. One evening in 1914, as Radhakrishnan was reading by lantern light, there was a knock at the door. A stranger entered and said, "I am leaving for Cambridge and as instructed by goddess Bhavani in dream, I have come to seek your blessing." They had a brief conversation. The stranger was none other than Srinivasa Ramanujan, the mathematical prodigy.

Radhakrishnan was transferred to Anantapur in 1916 only to return to Presidency College the same year as Professor of Philosophy. There was no Chair in Philosophy then at the University of Madras. Radhakrishnan's desire was to continue at Presidency College as Professor of Philosophy. That was not to be. He was then transferred to Rajamundry in 1917 to provide a berth for someone else on extraneous grounds. Since the chances of returning to Presidency College appeared to be slender, Radhakrishnan joined the Mysore University as Additional Professor of Philosophy in 1918. In 1920, the post of Professor of Philosophy at Presidency College came under the Indian Educational Service. Radhakrishnan presented his case for that post. Again, caste considerations prevailed. Though he was promoted to the IES, his desire to continue to teach at Presidency was not fulfilled. In 1921, he left Mysore University to occupy the George V Chair in Mental and Moral Science at the Calcutta University. Radhakrishnan saw in all this the hand of a benevolent Providence directing the course of his life. He was cut out for a bigger role to spread his message and influence as an exponent of philosophy, religion, and culture. What the Madras Presidency College lost, the nation and the world at large gained.

S. Jagadisan
13/48A, Tarachand Nagar
Vruggambakkam
Chennai 600 092.

nearby, and probably because some of the drivers were housed there. One resident said the street is also called 'Arai theravu' because there are houses only on one side of the street. A little beyond Driver Street, in Pudupet, Chennai-2, is 'Goiya Thoppu Street', which name is self-explanatory. However, today the place is just another bylane in a metropolis with no guava trees in sight.

T.K. Srinivas Chari
'Mithila'
4/39, East II Cross St
Shenoy Nagar
Chennai 600 030.

In violation?

Of late there has been an increase in construction activity in and around Kalakshetra Colony, Besant Nagar, with apartments upto four floors coming up. As a result, the builders have gone deeper for ground water. Thus the taste of water has become salty.

It is not known if the CMDA rules permit such highrise apartments on narrow streets. The builders are required to display at the site the plan number and details of permission. Will the Authority look into the matter and put a stop to such indiscriminate construction violating all norms?

P. Raghavan
H/22/11 Vaigai Street
Besant Nagar
Chennai 600 090.

Flight safety

The 'Kishkinta' entertainment park near Tambaram is running a much advertised laser show and attracting children and their parents.

Though I am ignorant about aviation and flight safety, I am concerned because this entertainment park is situated close to the flight path of Chennai Airport on the Tambaram side.

Will not those powerful laser beams distract the crew of flights while they are on their crucial landing or taking off procedures at night? Have the organisers of this show obtained clearance for this entertainment from the appropriate authorities? What do the airport authorities feel about what, in my view, seems a threat to flight safety?

V. Rajagopalan
Flat-F, Bagmar Flat
20, 8th Street Extn.
New Colony
Adambakkam
Chennai 600 088.

P.O. alternative

Mr. Kannan has described inconvenience for want of a Post Office in his area (MM, June 16th). While he can mobilise support and pursue the matter of a full-fledged Post Office, getting postal stationery alone could be solved comparatively easily. There is already an arrangement by Post Offices for this.

He should contact the Post-master of K.K. Nagar/Ashok Nagar and put up an application explaining the hardship faced and seeking permission to get and sell postal stationery as per Departmental rules and conditions and on commission basis. Either he or any housewife or retiree can do this as a service to the locality.

Mr. Kannan should consider this line of action first.

N. Dharmeswaran
21, Kumaran Nagar
Guduvanchery 603 202.

• *Despite statistics*

TN's agri growth is dismal

• MMM's piece on July 1st titled 'TN tops in rice' is not strictly true, writes S. VISWANATHAN, Editor of *Industrial Economist*. He goes on to say:

“The Tamil Nadu Agricultural Department has taken legitimate credit for the productivity improvements brought about in rice. But the State's performance in the years of the green revolution has been unflattering, if not outright dismal.

I strongly believe that TN should move away from water-intensive rice and sugarcane and encourage farmers to produce oilseeds, pulses, fruits, vegetables, flowers, etc. on which the returns are also much higher. These will also suit the agro-climatic conditions of the state.

I am aware acceptance of such a suggestion from a native is difficult. A recent report with the heading 'TN agriculture trends worrying' that appeared in *The Hindu* of July 12th, quoting from a research paper from Harvard University may find better acceptance!

An article that appeared in *Industrial Economist* reflecting its Editor's convictions is reproduced here.

Tamil Nadu's dismal record in the years of the green revolution, when it slipped from being the sixth largest producer of foodgrain to tenth, can be attributed to the absence of a long-term growth policy; non-availability of water-intensive crops like rice and sugarcane; and to the area under the major crop, rice, having shrunk due to the absence of any perennial river and the long, unresolved dispute of sharing the Kaveri waters with Karnataka.

The following are the production figures of major producers of rice in 1998-99, taken from the *Economic Survey*, 1999-2000.

State	Production (in lakh tonnes)
West Bengal	133.16
Uttar Pradesh	116.16
Andhra Pradesh	114.34
Tamil Nadu	82.15

I hope Dr. Arulmozhi of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Department will at least now concede that Tamil Nadu is nowhere near the top.

In a monsoon-dependent activity, it would make sense to take average production spread over three years (or more). With this yardstick, the average for 1996-99 for Tamil Nadu at 69.71 lakh tonnes is just around half that of West Bengal (130.63 lakh tonnes) and lower than those of Uttar Pradesh (118.51 lakh tonnes), Andhra Pradesh (102.10 lakh tonnes) and even that of the Punjab (77.26 lakh tonnes).

The growth of Punjab's production is, of course, too spectacular to sustain claims of any comparability with Tamil Nadu. At the break of the Green Revolution, Punjab was an insignificant producer of rice. Average annual production was a mere 3.5 lakh tonnes against Tamil Nadu's 39.7 lakh tonnes. Look at the favourable factors that helped Punjab to take to rice in a big way: copious availability of water, plentiful sun from April through September, unsuitability of farm lands in the Punjab for raising the traditional wheat crop during summer, a food policy that ensured procurement of rice and wheat at remunerative prices introduced at the break of the food crisis of the mid-Sixties, the excellent research done by the agricultural universities of this region find varieties most suited; and the massive extension work by the universities and the government.

The growth in rice production in Punjab is truly breathtaking. The bulk of the exports of rice, particularly the remunerative basmati variety, takes place from Punjab and adjoining states. This region accounts for almost the entire income from exports of rice that touched a record Rs. 6201 crore last year.

The lesson here is clear: Tamil Nadu should look for opportunities to custom-farm and produce those varieties that are in demand from the global markets at handsome prices. The state should adopt a deliberate policy to switch to crops like oilseeds, cotton, fruits and vegetables, which are better suited to its climate and which demand much less water. Progressive farmers in



THE OLD... ...& THE NEW

Our OLD is a picture taken in 1988 and is of what had once been a garden house in Harrington Road and which, having been let to run to seed, had become at the time of the photographs, the Harrington Road Post Office. The sign which was raised in its garden proclaimed for years what was planned for the site: A hotel with some shopping and office facilities.

Instead what has come up on the site in record time is our NEW, perhaps the biggest superstore in the City. The Rahejas' Shoppers' Stop, after success in Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi, Jaipur and Hyderabad comes to Madras in this 50,000 square feet building in which Crossword, the bookshop chain and Music World, the music store chain, will also have floors to themselves. A total and totally different — shopping experience — is promised. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Punjab and Maharashtra have done so.

But, with the state having no long-term policy on agriculture and with a leadership firmly believing that there is nothing wrong with the state's performance, little investment is being made on modernising and improving agriculture. Instead there has been hefty reliance on populism-based sops to win vote banks like the farm lobby.

The study also draws attention to the lowest levels of expenditure on agricultural research among the southern states (not to talk of the Punjab or Haryana) and suggested prioritising research to correct Tamil Nadu's geographical disadvantage. Several Union ministers of agriculture and experts have referred in the past to the need for adopting crops suited to the agro-climatic conditions of different zones. This mapping has been done years ago dividing the country into different agro-climatic zones.

Look at the experience of the United States. Production of the main crops, corn and wheat is concentrated in the fertile mid-western states. California focuses on fruits, vegetables and nuts, Hawaii on sugarcane and pineapple. One

cent Harvard study was titled 'Tamil Nadu agriculture trends worrying'. It pointed to the contribution of agriculture to the net state domestic product declining faster in Tamil Nadu than in all India.

There is, therefore, urgency to look closely at Tamil Nadu's agricultural production. Close to 70 per cent of the population still depends on agriculture. The sector still accounts for over 30 per cent of the State's gross domestic product. Therefore, agriculture growth will have a sizeable impact on overall growth rates; which means this will have a sizeable impact on poverty elimination. A recent Asian Development Bank study by two professors (K Sundaram and Suresh D Tendulkar) of the Delhi School of Economics, points to rural poverty not declining in the Nineties, the decade of reforms, as much as it did in the Eighties. This, despite the much higher rates of economic growth recorded during the Nineties compared to the Eighties. The professors have referred to a slowdown in the rate of agricul-

ture. The work it is committed to do is to "remove all the shrubs, vegetation and top clay soil so as to ensure percolation of rainwater into the temple tank bed and construct collection pits for harvesting rainwater in the temple tank through inlets which would channelise the rainwater into the tank". This would enable the recharging of the groundwater and improve its level in and around the tanks, the Club is confident. The Club feels, it would also put these tanks, to some extent, back into the use they had been

primarily meant for by the ancients. Between 1995 and 1998, the Club undertook tank restoration work at Tiruvanniyur, Mylapore, at the Ganga-deeswarar Temple in Purasawalkam and at the Raveeswarar Temple in Vyasarpadi. Of these, the Purasawalkam tank alone holds water and reflects successful restoration — but encroachments around it hide it from the public view, raising the question of whether public tanks are meant to be hidden assets of the city. Last year, the Club took up Saidapet — which to date — demon-

(Continued on Page 7)

• Looking back on Edward Elliot's Road

The 'officials' and the scholars

(Continued from last fortnight)

Edward Elliot's Road housing so many eminent persons who did not harbour as much animosity towards the foreign ruler as the Congressmen did, would naturally have produced a few I.C.S. people, it would be thought. Yes, it did — at least four: M. Anantanarayanan (later Chief Justice), P.N. Ramaswamy (High Court Judge), V.N. Rajan (Chief Secretary, Travancore) and S.R. Kaiwar (Secretary, T.N. Government). And there were a few from the next rung in the hierarchy — the Financial Civil Service or the Indian Audit and Accounts Service of today. These included C.S. Iyer, N.V. Raghavan, (whose mansion has now been converted into the Nilgiris Supermarket) and V. Sundaram. A stone's throw from the borders of E.E. Road lived three other distinguished Accountants-General — T.R. Panchapakesa Sastry (his

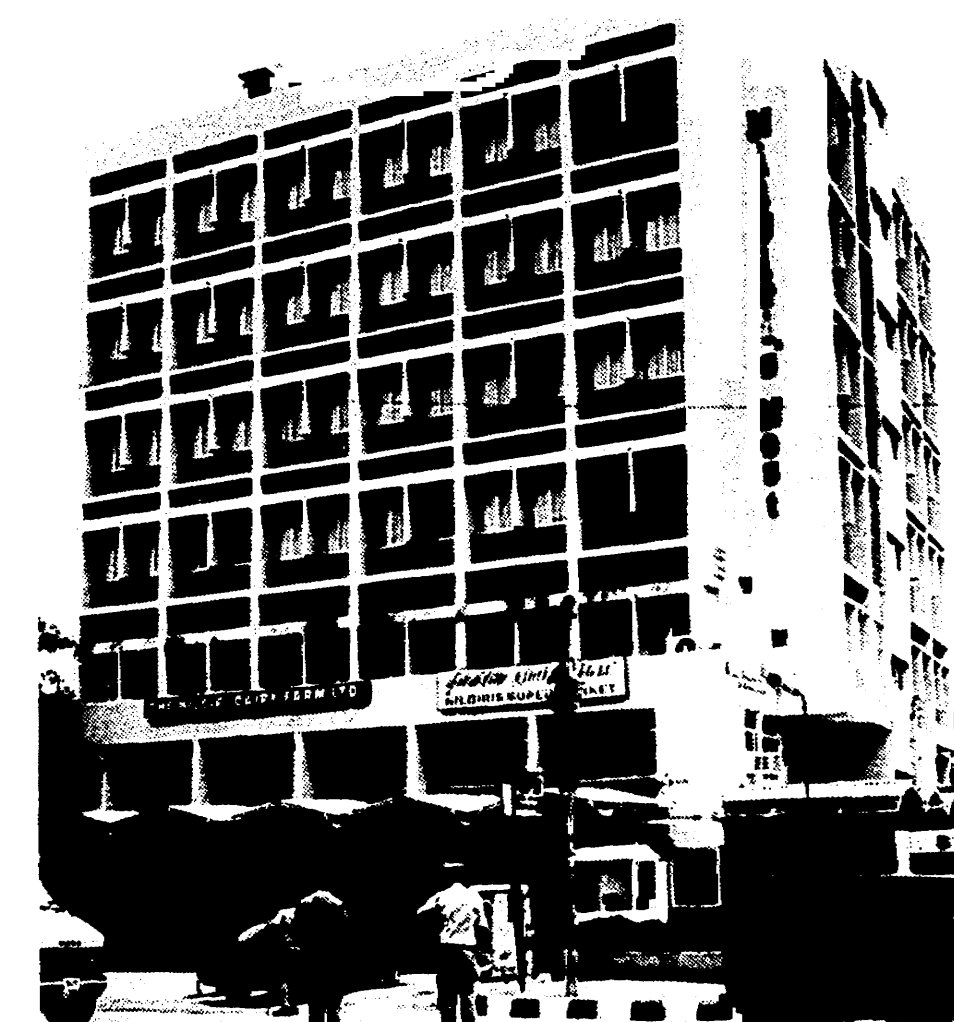
nephew T. Swaminathan was also an I.C.S.), T.K. Rajagopalan and H. Bhimasenu Rau. The last-named has a street named after him, as in his lifetime he owned about forty houses there and rented them for low amounts to the not-so-well-off of his community.

Of the Accountants-General mentioned earlier, the name C.S. Iyer stands out. He was the brother of the Nobel Laureate, Sir C.V. Raman. He was an outstanding Accountant-General in his professional career, but his hobby was violin playing. He was a known heckler (in the American parlance of today) at the Experts' Sessions of the Music Academy, and attracted an audience of his own. The barbed questions he used to ask of the distinguished lecturer left no one in doubt that a person would be a fool to call himself an expert if he was not well prepared to appear before a Music Academy audience in which C.S. Iyer was present. C.S. Iyer himself

gave lecture-demonstrations of ragas on his violin.

A distinguished scion of C.S. Iyer happily living in our midst today is his daughter, Vidya Shankar. She no longer gives many vocal performances, but the few that she gives are worth travelling any distance to forget yourself in the divinity of classical music. To her should go the credit for getting due recognition for Syama Sastri's compositions. Vidya Shankar is an unpublished philanthropist as well for the cause of music and musicians; the Tyagaraja Vidwat Samajam in Mylapore can testify to this.

Dr. V. Shanta, who has dedicated her life to providing relief to cancer-stricken patients from all over India at the Cancer Institute, Adyar, is a granddaughter of C.S. Iyer. Usha Uthup, the very popular singer, and Lakshmi Shankar, the noted Hindustani classical musician, are also from this family. At various points of time the



Nilgiris Supermarket on the site of N.V. Raghavan's garden house.

Road has housed an early (if not the first) Station Director of the All India Radio (G.T. Sastry) and some of the earliest Indian promotees to district-level ranks in the Police and Excise Departments. A luminary of the early days of international economic organisations was Dr. P.S. Loganathan, who lived on a spur of Edward Elliot's Road. Dr. Loganathan was the first Director of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE).

In this category of officers came a salt and excise inspector who after his long service in a coastal town decided to make his retirement home on Edward Elliot's Road. His name was A. Madhaviah. In keeping with the hierarchy of the post he held in government service, he bought a modest plot of land, built a red-coloured house (reminiscent of a police station of those days), which he named as *Perunkulam House* — a simple Tamil name which contrasted starkly with the neighbouring Sanskrit names like *Girija*, *Chintamani*, *Dwaraka* and *Sudharsan*.

I never saw Madhaviah, but had heard of him as the 'father of the Tamil short story' through his *Madhavayyavin Kutti Kathaigal*. He has also written a novel. Madhaviah's son, M. Anantanarayanan I.C.S., went on to become the Chief Justice of Madras. Another son, M. Ambu was a promising cricketer whose life was cut short by a motor cycle accident. I believe his wife became in time an honoured Headmistress of a school in the South.

A third son of Madhaviah was M. Krishnan, whose love of nature defies a single word — description. Krishnan was a naturalist, a photographer of nature, some of whose photographs have been published in the world-renowned National

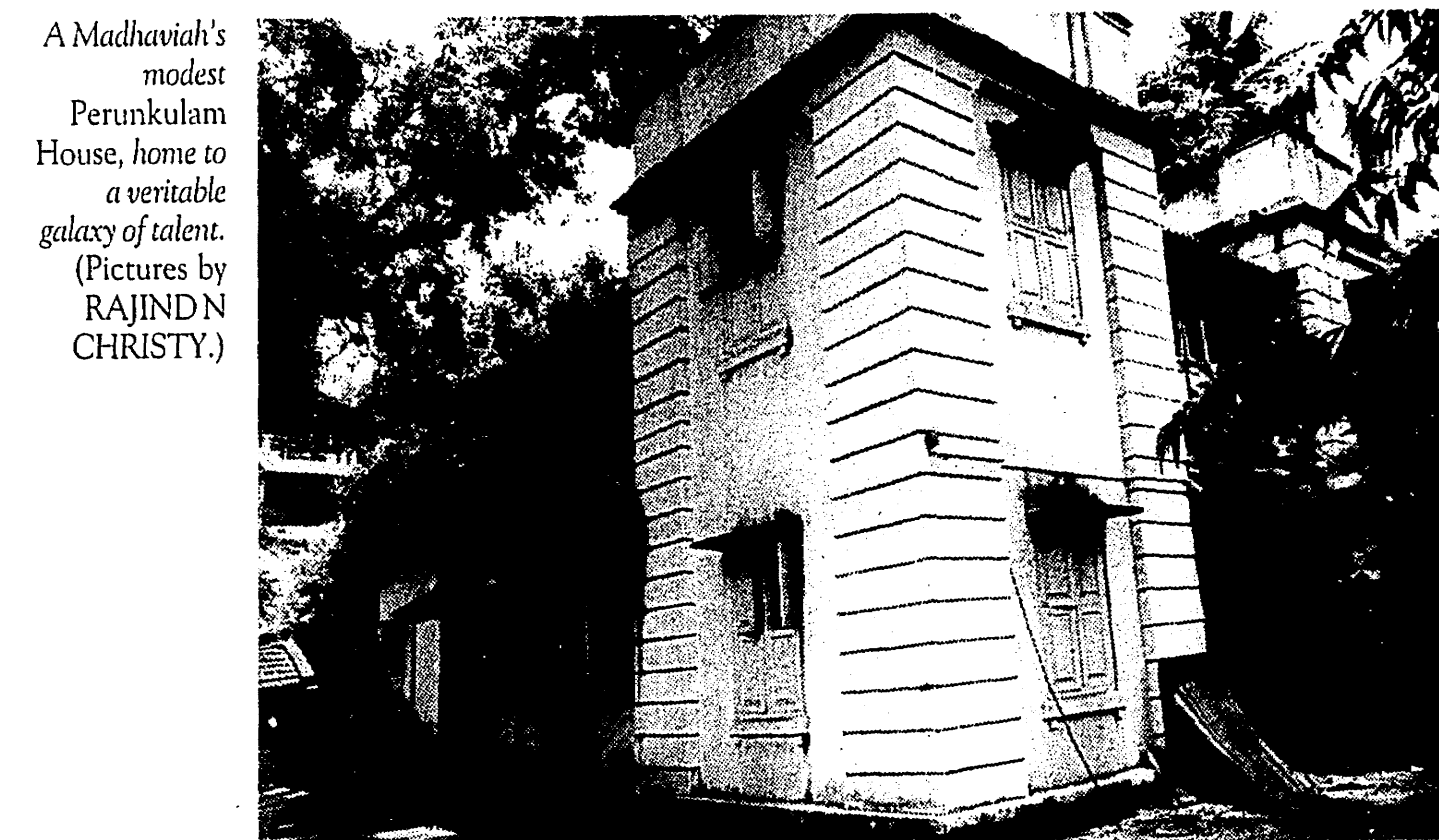
Geographic Magazine, and an expert writer on animals, birds and other beautiful creations of Nature. A collection of his writings has just been released.

I recently read that it was not only the sons of Madhaviah who attained eminence; his daughters did too. His eldest daughter, Lakshmiammal, was married young and had a bitter experience. The father, undaunted by the setback, educated her himself, helped her pass University degrees and crown herself with dignity as the first-ever Indian to become the Principal of Queen Mary's College. Another daughter of his, now in her nineties, still has an agile mind, and is active enough to paint nature and embellish her work with poetry. Yet another daughter translated Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* into Tamil.

If Madhaviah made his contribution to the lighter and popular aspect of the Tamil language, there lived on the E.E. Road another who devoted all his waking hours to the ponderous side of Tamil. This was Vaiyapuri Pillai who was one of the (three?) compilers of the English-Tamil Lexicon (dictionary) brought out by the Madras University. This was a monumental work which called for an enormous amount of patience, perseverance research, and a boundless capacity to write his findings by hand on reams and reams of paper. A shy, self-effacing small-made man, he was a fund of information on ancient Tamil works. He was also good at Sanskrit. Truly Oliver Goldsmith's description that one wondered "how so small a head could carry all that he knew" could be applied to this great person.

(To be concluded next fortnight)

Raghu Tagat



A Madhaviah's modest Perunkulam House, home to a veritable galaxy of talent. (Pictures by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

NEW TANKS FOR OLD?

(Continued from page 1)

manner. The work it is committed to do is to "remove all the shrubs, vegetation and top clay soil so as to ensure percolation of rainwater into the temple tank bed and construct collection pits for harvesting rainwater in the temple tank through inlets which would channelise the rainwater into the tank". This would enable the recharging of the groundwater and improve its level in and around the tanks, the Club is confident. The Club feels, it would also put these tanks, to some extent, back into the use they had been

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strates successful restoration and this year it hopes to do Chitrakulam and a Nungambakkam temple tank.

Meanwhile, INTACH hopes to make its technical study of a plan to ensure SUSTAINABILITY into a more public friendly preservation and have volunteers audio-visually present it to the public around tanks being restored and demonstrate how with public participation the restored tanks, could be kept alive and as new. The Tiruvanniyur study, INTACH feels, could with local modifications be repeated anywhere else in the city.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period July 16th to 30th. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu.)

- Which Airline's aircraft crashed in Patna on July 17th killing 55 people?
- Which 'lost' fresco of Leonardo da Vinci do experts claim was found beneath another fresco in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio?
- A fund to compensate victims of Nazi Germany's regime of slave and forced labour was created on July 17th. What is the amount involved?
- What Olympic first has U.S. athlete Marla Runyan (women's 1500m) achieved?
- Which Royal is to be canonised a martyr by the Russian Orthodox Church?
- Name India's first missile-firing submarine which was commissioned on July 19th.
- Name the latest Apple Power Mac.
- Which American President is to be posthumously honoured with the Medal of Honor, the country's highest bravery award?
- Who recently quit the Union Cabinet after differences with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Attorney-General?
- Which team has won the Chennai Football Association's Senior Division Super League title?
- Where was Chennai Telephones' first Digital Loop Carrier system launched on July 21st?
- Which Chennai chess player recently became India's first Woman Grandmaster?
- The oldest surviving printing press in the country is in Tamil Nadu. Where?
- Which film has won the State award for the best feature film of 1999?
- Who is considered the 'Father of the Tamil novel'?
- What distinction does the no-nagenarian Ku. Pa. Sethummal have as far as Tamil films are concerned?
- Who is the new State chess champion?
- Where was the First Additional Principal Bench of the Company Law Board, the first outside Delhi, inaugurated on July 29th?
- From which place in the State was the Kannada thespian Rajkumar kidnapped by Veerappan on July 30th?
- Which film is considered the first Tamil sound feature film?

(Answers on Page 7)

● *Y2K WMY was a three-day Mathematics Book Fair to celebrate 2000 — World Mathematics Year. The fair, which has just concluded, was organised by who else but...*

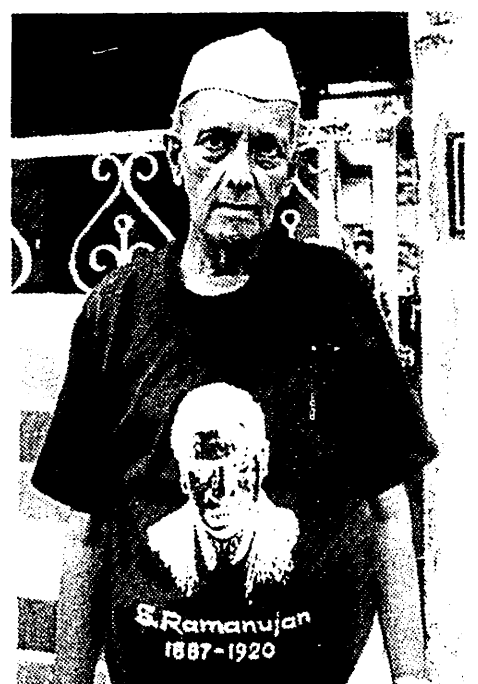
The Madras Mathsman

It's a modest and unpretentious house in Nanganallur. The board simply says 'P.K. Srinivasan — Maths Educational Consultant'. The compound wall is embellished with numbers and equations, the gate has squares and delightful geometric patterns — and the wall all the way up the long flight of stairs is festooned with a streamer-like chart showing the history of numbers. At the top, sits the man himself, clad in a white cotton dhoti and vest, surrounded by reams of paper and books. A surreptitious glance at the room inside makes me wonder whether the books are the original occupants of the house. To put it mildly and without exaggeration, you can't move an inch without stumbling over a book.

I sit down, mumbling something about the traffic blockade and the procession on the main road. He nods sagely, saying, "We are just muddling through, not really living 'Art in Mathematics'." This comes from a man who has accomplished more by teaching for an hour than others have by learning for a lifetime, who has traversed the length and

breadth of the country in search of like-minded mathematicians, who has single-handedly organised Maths expositions and put together a museum on Ramanujan — and who, at 76, still cherishes the dream of putting up a Maths City in Chennai.

How did all this come about, I ask him, conscious of the triteness of the question. "My two friends who sat on either side of me in class were responsible for transforming me from a scholar to a teacher. They could not



P.K. Srinivasan, the Mathsman, dedicated to keeping Ramanujan and Mathematics in the public eye. (Pictures by RAJIND N CHRISTY).

Muddling through numbers

P.K. Srinivasan's pointed observations on education deserve space to themselves. To quote: "We teachers are not here to teach so that the students may learn. We teach because they learn. There's a fine distinction between the two. The teacher should aim for victory in everything. But should aim only for utter defeat at the hands of a student. That's the ultimate victory."

To tell the truth, I find myself wishing that I could have been his student; may be Maths classes would have been a treat to look forward to instead of a drudge to be got through somehow. I never quite mastered the fine art of putting two and two together. Maybe that's why I still go all weak-kneed when confronted by numbers of more than one digit each.

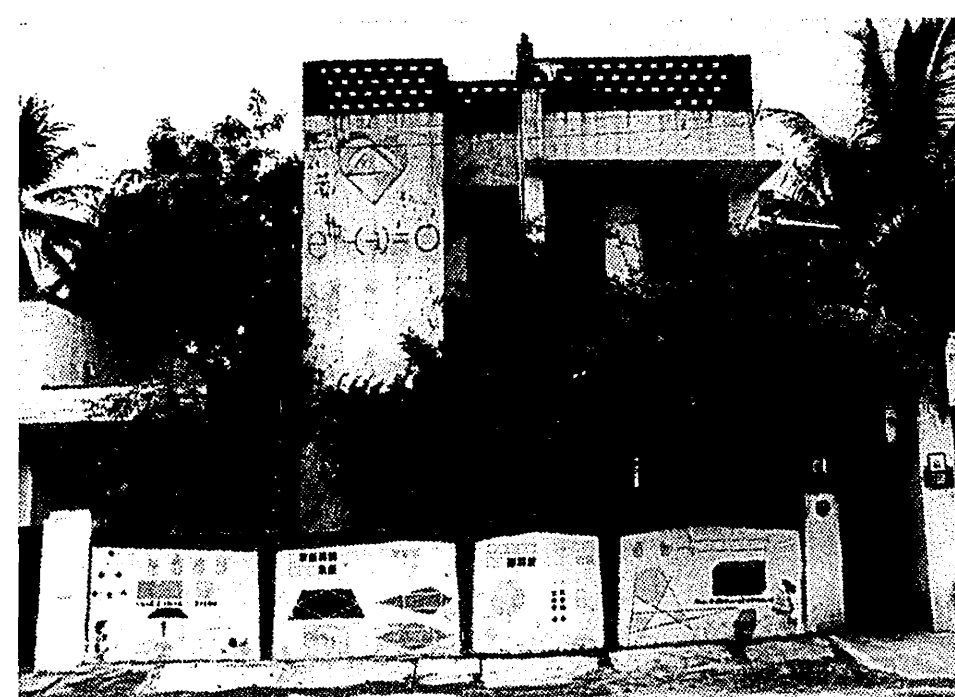
It was with something of the old dread that I approached the daunting task of teaching maths to my children. Fortunately I found that they had not inherited anything from me in that department, a fact for which I can

claim no credit. The only advice I can offer to young persons is — if you aren't a maths genius, marry one.

We (the maths-haters, that is) lived in a world far removed from the maths-lovers. They invariably wore glasses and pigtailed, scorned movies and could recall the squared value of nineteen in their sleep. 'We' never got beyond the ten times-table, 'We' only talked movies and fashions, 'They' were the nerds, 'we' were the duds. 'We' ragged 'them' mercilessly, 'they' regarded 'us' with lofty disdain.

Running into one of 'them' recently, I recalled how we had once kidnapped her, tied her to a tree and left her there to scream for mercy for hours on end, thus making her miss her favourite Maths test. She is now Head of something at NASA. That's how far 'they' get.

Our Maths books could move you to tears, and I find that the new improved editions are more new than improved. The protagonists of our sums were usually called Ram or Sita, and they



Ramanujan's house in Nanganallur, its walls decorated with Maths information. That's Pythagoras Theorem on high.

understand what was being taught. Then, as now, the emphasis was on rote and drill and passing examinations. Our classrooms are all curiosity-killers. Whenever I explained something to them, it became crystal-clear. A teacher was thus born. I completed my teacher's training — and, heeding the Gandhian call to go to the villages, went to Ramanickalpalayam in Coimbatore. I established the "Number Friend Society" there — as I have done in countless other places where I have worked.

"What made you leave?"

"I didn't like the attitude of the monied classes to education in general and teachers in particular. So I came back to Madras and joined Muthialpet School. It was from here that I left for the US on a Fulbright Teacher Exchange Programme. It was an excellent place to teach in. The children are curious and have a wonderful scientific temperament. They have maths and science in their daily life. Every child there knows how to use tools. The only thing is, there are too many distractions ... India is

now becoming like that. The media is stirring up undesirable wants and desires. The younger generation today is more bold, less hypocritical, yet they have not accomplished anything tangible."

"Why is that?"

"A complete failure of our education system. You know, children are wonderful. A one-year old, for instance, is constantly asking questions. We don't do anything to encourage that. Children who ask questions in class are told to sit down. To this day, I am like that one-year old child. I'm constantly probing, questioning... I'm interested in human beings. I'm a citizen of the world, a 'cosmos creature' — that, by the way, was a pen name under which I used to write a column.

"The tragedy of our time is that we have third-rate teaching, first-rate students, teachers who are only interested in making a fast buck by taking tuitions. People frequently ask me, beg me, to take tuitions. I refused them when I had a family to support. I refuse now also."

The conversation moves to a more personal plane. His wife, a Hindi teacher before their marriage, raised their ten children almost single-handedly. "I would leave home early, come back only at nine or ten in the night. The children all grew up somehow. They're all well-settled now. One son is in the U.S. and he's taken my wife there for some time. So I'm taking care of myself. My needs are frugal — I eat no starch, only fruits and greens. I'm preserving my health, because there's a lot I still want to accomplish....

"A Maths City. This is the place where Ramanujan was born. A Science City is no good. We should have some sort of a haven for budding mathematicians.

The Museum of Ramanujan at Royapuram is surely something to be proud of, a step in the right direction. "Yes, that was possible because of the encouragement of A.T.B. Bose, who was led to me by one of my students. Many eminent mathematicians from abroad have visited it, but in Chennai no one knows about it." — (Courtesy: Manasthala).

Let's all shed our blinkered approach and find that there's strength in numbers... — (Courtesy: Manasthala).

Memory a castle evokes

● *Madras Musings, May 16th, featured a print of 'Brodie Castle from Mr. Huddleston's Garden', drawn by Justinian Gantz in 1852. It had figured in the 1999 'Visions of India' catalogue of Christie's. We were therefore intrigued to read a rather comprehensive report about this painting in a recent issue of The Hindu referring to an October in London in 1996 and an S. Narayan Swami chasing this very same painting when he found it listed in Christie's 1995 catalogue. He bid at that time but it "was promptly repulsed, the asking price being well over twice the bid! This was disappointing but I decided to wait and see, for, though the picture had strong local interest for me, hardly anyone else was likely to buy it in a hurry," Narayan Swami wrote. He was certainly proved correct, for it was offered again, in 1999. And this was what Narayan Swami wrote, "I got to know of the auction on 1st October 1999, exactly three years to the day I first learnt about the picture. Mine was the only bid and the hammer fell at a price well under my original 1996 bid... after three years of waiting and uncertainty". Christie's catalogue mentioned a price of £1000-£1500 as the asking bid.*

Theodore Bhaskaran who had received a copy of Narayan Swami's article, sent it to *Madras Musings* with the suggestion, "since *The Hindu* did not use it all, perhaps you would like to use the rest" Offering as they do glimpses of a Madras long past — and forgotten — we accept the suggestion, only adding bits and pieces of the published material to provide the context.

THE EDITOR

"Brodie Castle from Huddleston's Garden! I have enjoyed this beautiful Madras view on many Sunday mornings during my last spell in Madras, from the beginning of 1989 to end 1991. My friend Shivakumar and I had decided to compile a checklist of the birds of the Adyar estuary and there was no better place to attempt this than the gardens of the Theosophical Society and the Adyar mudflats alongside. Thus, most Sunday mornings would find us trooping into the Society (to enter which we had taken written permission), telescope (mine) and tripod (Shivakumar's) in hand, binoculars at the ready. After a quick survey of the birds in the

there were the birds themselves, with the magnificent White-bellied Sea Eagle soaring over the rivermouth in grand circles, then there was the wind in our face which gave us renewed enthusiasm for the long watch and, above all there was the view: the broad expanse of water, the rivermouth and the Bay of Bengal to the right, Chettinad palace shimmering in the distance and a rare calm that is only found on the Adyar flats, at least 2 km away from the traffic and from habitation. George Arundale it was who wrote "The touch of Adyar changes us for ever." Very well put, for he had himself enjoyed this riverine idyll more than 60 years previously...

Brodie Castle in Adyar

Society gardens we would be ready to slip through the barbed wire and on to the Adyar banks on the far side. The surveyors themselves would often times face the imperious scrutiny of Radha Burnier, the Society's handsome President, inspecting her demesne with a couple of assistants by her side.

It was a moment's work to slip through the fence and stand on the comparatively dry part of the Adyar estuary and a couple of hours of bird observation could begin in earnest. This can be back-breaking, a period of vigil and toil with little or no ease — squinting through binoculars, bending over telescopes, wading around in knee-deep water to gain better access, probably one reason why the checklist is still not completed!

But there were plenty of compensations — for one thing

Brodie Castle's days were by no means over with the death in 1802 of its eponymous owner. For most of the next 150 years it housed the senior civil servants of Madras. "Broode Castle, the most imaginative of the merchants' palaces in Madras, with its long drawing-room jutting out over the Adyar river and catching every breeze, was occupied in 1930 by Charles Cotton, then Chief Secretary to the Madras Government, who had furnished it with a fine collection of the 18th Century furniture and china made in or for South India, and the Daniell brothers' paintings and prints of local scenes... I remember well the scene one morning as the great man, a spruce little figure in his white topee, silk suit, monocle and Old Etonian tie, emerged on the steps of the portico, while his car and

attendants waited below." Wrote Humphrey Trevelyan in *The India We Left*, touching on the style and the splendour at Brodies. Ramakrishna Mutt Road (leading from Luz to Brodie Castle) was originally Brodies Road until it was renamed in the Sixties...

John Gantz and his sons, Justinian Walter and Julius Walter, also drew many watercolour drawings of Madras houses (including *Bentrick's Building*, pulled down in 1990, St. George's Cathedral and the Kirk itself) which were issued into prints at a Lithographic Press they ran at Broadway (then Popham's Broadway). This press is believed to have existed from about 1820

for about 25 years and could have been the first Lithographic Press in India, even preceding Sir Charles D'Oyly's Behar Amateur Lithographic Press at Patna which came into existence about 1826-28. Justinian Walter Gantz (1802 to 1862) seems to have been the most prolific artist in the family, judging from the number of watercolours and prints he produced.

As to Mr. Huddleston's Garden itself, in 1852 it was just that, the Theosophical Society having bought the estate only in 1875. There was a John Huddleston, a senior Civil Servant of Madras of about the same period as Brodie. Perhaps they knew each other. Huddleston is listed in Henry Love's *Vestiges of Old Madras* as having entered the East India Company's service in 1766, when he was Junior Merchant and 5th in Council at Ganjam. By March 1782 he was Military Secretary to the Madras Government and was part of the Company's Mission of 1783 to Tipoo Sultan, to treat for peace and obtain the release of prisoners of war. By October 1790 he was 3rd in Council to the Government of Madras. Huddleston's house still stands in the Theosophical Gardens and seems to be in regular use. There is a fine photograph in *Madam Blavatsky's Baboon* of Charles Leadbeater standing on the balcony of Huddleston's house, with Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya alongside, and the background is practically the same view of the Adyar

that Gantz painted. The book is exceedingly well-written, chronicling the history of the Society from its early days together with lively accounts of the personalities associated with the Society. The controversial Charles Leadbeater, for example, is described as someone whose tastes "ran mainly to small boys and tapioca pudding!"

As a historical account *Madam Blavatsky's Baboon* necessarily also covers the early, "conjuring trick" phase of the Society and Madame Blavatsky's preoccupation with Tibetan Occult. Be that as it may, to us, denizens of Adyar, the Society is a grand old institution with its spacious gardens and its legendary acolytes such as Col. Henry Steele Olcott and Annie Besant, not to speak of the institutions it established such as the Besant Theosophical School, or Besant Nagar itself. Huddleston may have built his estate on the banks of the Adyar, but it was Col. Olcott's vision for the Society which made it possible for me to ramble through its gardens, recalling to mind the threnody of Mark Antony to the Forum: *Moreover he hath left you all his walks,*

His private arbours and new-planted orchards, On this side Tiber. He hath left them you And to your heirs forever—Common Pleasure To walk abroad and recreate yourselves."

Answers to Quiz

- Alliance Air; 2. Battle of Anghiari; 3. \$4.8 billion; 4. She is the first legally blind person to qualify for the Games; 5. The last Czar, Nicholas II; 6. INS *Sindushastra*; 7. The G4 Cube; 8. Theodore 'Teddy' Roosevelt; 9. The Law Minister, Ram Jethmalani
- Integral Coach Factory; 11. At the iDLX technology partner's premises; 12. Subbaraman Vijayalakshmi.
- The CLS press on Hunter's Road, Vepery in Chennai; 14. *Natpukkaga*; 15. Mayavaram Vedanayakam Pilla; 16. She is considered the first woman dialogue writer (for the 1945 film *Krishna Bhakthi*); 17. M.R. Venkatesh; 18. Chennai; 19. Gajanur; 20. Kalidas.

TN's dismal agri-growth

(Continued from page 5)

natural growth, reinforcing the argument that the reform process had not impacted on agriculture.

What is needed is amending archaic laws, consolidating fragmented small land holdings and providing incentives for agglomeration of land holdings, even encouraging corporatisation of agriculture. These will open the way for the infusion of technology and investment, switching to crops that would ensure handsome returns on investment. This will also encour-

age allied activities such as animal husbandry, fish farming and custom farming for exports.

Arulmozhi should be familiar with the quantum jump in yields that are possible by taking to scientific agriculture. Even with an average yield level of 3.4 tonnes per ha, claimed by Arulmozhi, the net return, after expenses, would hardly be around Rs.20,000 to a rice farmer. For a sugarcane farmer getting 100 tonnes per ha and an average of Rs.750 per tonne, the net income after expenditure would work out to

around Rs.40,000 per ha. We have cited the success of horticultural farms raising capsicum or tomato getting a return of over Rs. 2 lakh per ha. State leadership should spend its efforts on educating the farmers on better alternatives available and, along with the agriculture university, provide them the support services needed in the form of soil testing, provision of hybrid seeds most suited to his geography, proper fertilisation, plant breeding and post-harvest techniques like processing and marketing.

Some capital lessons

'Singaara Chennai' seems to have got stuck on one of those dozen fly-overs-to-be that are choking city traffic these days. So it looks like she won't arrive till at least 2001 — and that is a good six months away. So how about trying to do some more for Chennai while there is still time, so that we shall have a TRULY 'Singaara Chennai'?! All we need to do is take a leaf out of our capital city's 'progress card'. For a start, no hoardings period. I was on a Delhi tour recently and saw the city right down to its innards. No hoardings anywhere in sight. The only ads allowed were 1' by 1½' boards fixed neatly to lamp-posts or the occasional median post. What a refreshing difference it makes to the skyline!

A second move would be to open a 'Chipko-cell' at Ripon Building. The Delhi administration has a full time 'tree wing' — ever planting and nurturing trees and booking tree-cutters mercilessly. Besides this, road-laying has been tied up with simultaneous tree-planting on either side. Even the new extensions of Delhi, such as Rohini and Mayur Vihar are fast coming under a green canopy. Chennai, on the other hand, is browning off; recently, half a dozen lovely trees on Annanagar's main arterial road were found felled after a huge foodstore chain set up shop. And only the local paper protested! Three decades ago Lutyen's Delhi was more brown than green; today it is a lush

green city thanks to assiduous tree-planting, the credit for which must go largely to the late Indira Gandhi who personally initiated the tree-planting drive AND monitored it no matter how busy she was with State matters. Can we expect such green leadership from Kalaignar Avargal? I fervently hope so, he shall then remain evergreen in our memory!

Delhi's traffic regulation is another area to learn from. Thanks to Kiran Bedi who revolutionised traffic police ef-

● by
Hiramalini Seshadri

iciency (she used to be called 'Crane Bedi' for her tough tow-away policy implemented in, 'no parking' zone). Delhi traffic regulation is absolutely strict. No way can you jump a red-light and get away with it. So for two-wheelers and three-wheelers, they HAVE to STOP and cannot be wheeling around at traffic signals blocking every nook and cranny. This ensures that when green comes on, traffic moves fast. Unscrambling the traffic jam at a red light in Chennai is a nightmare.

Pollution control is also strict. I found no smoky autos on the roads. Autoricks in Delhi are not all owned by policemen as they allegedly are in Chennai. So the meters are forced to be reliable and the fares just. That is a boon; for DTC bus services are very poor; the public relies

heavily on autos and chartered vehicles. In comparison, our MTC is pretty good.

The maintenance of public buildings and monuments is another area where we need to improve. The Delhi museums and forts are all so clean. They don't have a single museum building that looks as nice as our Madras Museum with its Indo-Saracenic architecture, but when it comes to maintenance they win hands down. Our museum foreground looks like a garbage dump; (it got so bad, finally something is being done now; but what can be done to that eyesore of a 'modern building' that has been allowed to come up so close to the exquisite museum theatre?) Inside Madras Museum, the lighting is so poor; even if a couple of artifacts went missing, nobody would be any wiser. But if we set our minds to it, we CAN do it; how nice the Police Commissioner's Office and Ice House on the Marina look now, after they have been renovated!

Another great concept that we could borrow from Delhi is the Coffee Homes idea. Set up by the Delhi Tourism and Transport Development Corporation, Coffee Homes that dot the city were set up "to encourage citizens to meet, interact and exchange notes". They are simply wonderful! Run by the DTTDC, they provide excellent coffee and snacks at most reasonable prices; but what is most striking is the ambience. Spacious and

well-lit, with plenty of fans (and totally fly-free) and furnished with comfy light chains and tables, the Coffee Homes truly accomplish their aim. We found retired people, students, media-scribes, families, office-goers... all meeting and chatting over *dosais*, *vadais*, noodles... and a nice steaming cuppa coffee. In Chennai, to some extent, Saravana Bhavan doubles as a Coffee Home. But private enterprise is always

strapped for space; and their eyes have to be on the bottom line. The best millennium gift from TTDC to us citizens would be — starting such coffee Homes in Chennai. There are lots of space available... Coffee Homes for citizens and tourists, a la capital style — that would really be the icing on the cake that is 'Singaara Chennai'. I hope Kalaignar Avargal is reading this!

A PRAYER

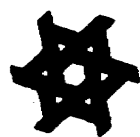
(With due apologies to Rabindranath Tagore)

Where the mind is full of fear
And the head is bent down in disgrace,
Where society has been broken into
Fragments by narrow domestic walls,
Where missionaries and children are burnt alive
And nuns are raped and dalits shot down,
Where medical attention is only for the rich
And accident victims bleed to death in the middle of the road,
Where education is restricted to the privileged few
And admission to schools and colleges is through donations,
Where crores of rupees are spent educating brilliant engineers,
And then they fly away to the USA
Where the homeless are arrested for sleeping on the pavements
And the high and mighty plunder crores and sleep in palaces,
Where hundreds of crores are spent on promoting cricket
And the Satellite channels beam them to every village,
Where people don't have drinking water
And we ask them to drink Pepsi and Coke,
Where people don't have food
And we urge them to eat Maggi Noodles and Britannia Biscuits
Where people don't have clothes
And we coax them to wear Allen Solly and Peter England,
Where the rich can bend laws to suit individual needs
And the poor rot in jails for petty crimes,
Where beggars search for food in dust-bins
And pet dogs and cats are given Bournvita and Horlicks,
Where we voice our concern for the poor
Over a glass of Scotch, at seminars in star hotels,
Where thieves and swindlers get elected for high posts
And we invite them as Chief Guests,
Where we listen to them with rapt attention
And the newspapers feature them on the front pages,
From these baffling contrasts, violent uncertainties
And rampant hypocrisy, our Father,
Let my country awake.

V. Chandrashekhar

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