

The
Good Citizen

by
Hilla Vakeel

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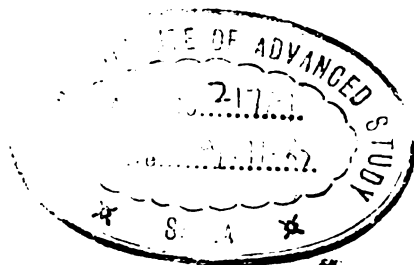
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FOREWORD

There is an old story about a king who wanted to learn the art of making images. He went to a sage and asked for help. The wise man told him that in order to learn image making, he must first learn the laws of painting. The king asked to be taught these. But the sage said that in order to know the laws of painting, it was necessary to know the art of dancing. The king asked to be taught the art of dancing. The sage replied that in order to learn the art of dancing one must know the laws of instrumental music. The king asked to have the laws of instrumental music revealed to him. The sage replied that in order to know the laws of instrumental music, one must first know the laws of vocal music. The king begged for knowledge of the laws of vocal music. And the sage answered that before one could know the laws of vocal music or any laws at all, one must learn to be a good man.

This fable came to my mind when I read the text of Hilla Vakeel's little book, *The Good Citizen*, because, it seems to me, that it is impossible for people to grow up and create anything useful either for themselves or for others, unless they become good men and women, that is to say, truly human. We live in a world crowded by people of all kinds, of different temperaments and varying opinions and backgrounds. And we have to adjust ourselves to each other in order to live in the vast human family by recognising that we have certain rights which other people must respect, and that we owe certain responsibilities to other people. If I throw a banana skin into the street after eating the banana and someone slips on the skin and becomes lame or dies, then while I have claimed my right to eat the banana, I have not fulfilled my responsibility to my fellow citizens because I have dirtied the common street we use as well as led to someone else being injured by my neglect of the injured person's right to walk about without slipping on a banana peel. Thus it is the claiming of our rights and the fulfilling of our responsibilities that makes for good citizenship in life. All rules of good behaviour are based ultimately on the rights we have and the responsibilities we owe to each other. And we try to live as good citizens because we

respect each other, or pay reverence to each other's humanity, the essence of our being.

We had fairly good laws of behaviour in our ancient land. These lasted us for generations as part of our religions, and as customs and conventions. Then, our country came into contact with the new world of Europe from which came new ways of living, new ideas and new forms of behaviour. Unfortunately, in many ways, our own habits and the customs which came from Europe clashed. Some of our habits were dead habits, because they were suited to the old life of the days of the bullock cart. And some of the things which came from the West with the machine age, were silly. And, unable to fuse them, we became some of the most badly behaved people in the world. Now we have to choose the good things from our old life and from the many wonderful ways of Europe and mix them well if we want to be good citizens today. It is a very difficult task. And we need guidance from those who have thought about such matters.

Miss Vakeel's book is full of simple wise things, because she has obviously gone deep into the problem of how to live with dignity in this bad age of ours where so many ideas and habits clash every day. And those who read her advice will, I am sure, be helped to live better lives. Certainly, we have to wipe out the shame of being known as a very badly behaved people. It is unlikely that the older people, who are set in their habits, will change very much. Perhaps, however, the young, to whom this book is mainly addressed, will make it their bible and go on to build a new way of life in our country.

MULK RAJ ANAND

BOMBAY,
July, 1949.

PREFACE

For all of us in India, old and young alike, everything has changed since August 15, 1947. As children are good at remembering dates, you will recollect, that that was the day on which our country achieved freedom and self-government, which means that we became masters in our own house, and had to take on the job of keeping it in order.

Now this, as your class teacher will tell you, is not a very easy job. Ours is a very, very large country consisting of one-sixth of the human race, which means that out of every six people in the world today, one is an Indian like you and me. When you remember how many things have to be done to keep one little house in order, how hard Bapa has to work in the office, and Maji in the home, you can realise what it must mean to manage a large country like ours, and look after three hundred and twenty million men, women and children.

It can only be done if all of us get together, do what is expected of us, and work for our neighbours in every possible way. This is called good citizenship. As our country is badly in need of good citizens just now, in the following pages are discussed how you, and your playmates, and other children like you can become good citizens, and help to build up this big, beautiful and beloved land of ours.

HILLA VAKEEL

Bombay, May 1949.



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CLEANLINESS

Many years ago, people were not (like some naughty children today), very clean in their habits, and many diseases broke out and carried off thousands of men, women, and children at a time.

Cleanliness has to be regarded as “a social duty,” which means that it is something we owe our friends, and everyone else in the world around us. Many diseases are caused by lack of cleanliness, and if we are not clean we can get those diseases, and the people we talk to, and meet, and touch can get them also. The good little citizen never skips his bath, or rushes through it like a goldfish diving in at one end of a bowl of water, and immediately coming out at the other.

His teeth are well-brushed, his nails are clean, and if he decides to go out when he has a cold—which he shouldn't as colds are very catching indeed—he always has a couple of extra handkerchiefs in his pocket and sneezes into them. His clothes are clean, and his shoes are well polished, as his parents insist on his doing things well and doing them for himself, and he gives them a shine every morning before he puts them on. When he wears chappals, or plays about barefoot in the sands, you can see that his toe nails are clean, and he never, never forgets to wash behind the ears.

CLEANER CITIES

“Some people,” said a visitor to this country, describing it in a letter to a friend, “evidently consider India one large spittoon.” We must confess to our shame that this is very true indeed, for wherever we may happen to be—in villages or towns, or even in large cities like Bombay—we see *pan supari* stains on streets and pavements, and even on the walls and staircases of offices and other buildings. This means that we have a number of bad citizens amongst us, who have no pride in their village or town and do not care if it looks clean and tidy and beautiful.

Now, if all these people were in Japan which, as you may have heard, is one of the cleanest countries in the world they would be punished and made to pay a fine on the spot. Supposing our Government started doing the same thing in India, what a lot of money we could get for the hospitals, and museums, and public parks, and libraries, and schools which we so badly need in India today!

This reminds me that only ten out of every hundred people in this country know how to read and write; so if you want to find out what it feels like being a teacher, and if you want to be a good citizen as well, find someone who is willing to learn and teach him a little everyday in your spare time. Get your brothers and sisters and school friends to do the same, and while you are about it, tell your pupils

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that the place for orange peel, banana skins, waste paper, and rubbish of all kinds, is the household, or municipal dust-bin.

Remember we have just started being masters in our own house, and the very first thing about running a house is to keep it clean and tidy, and make it beautiful.

QUEUEING UP

If you want to be a good citizen, there are many things you will have to learn, and the sooner you learn them, the nicer it will be for your neighbours and the country to which you belong.

One of the most important is to know how to keep your place in a queue, and not to shove and push other people aside in order to get *your* seat or *your* ticket before everybody else. You must remember that the person you are trying to push aside wants *his* seat or *his* ticket just as much you do yours, and since he got there first, he has a greater right to get it before you do.

The next time you are tempted to break the queue, think what it feels like when some ill-mannered, nasty, and selfish person brushes you aside and takes your place. Unfortunately, many of your elders do not set you an example in this respect. So you and your schoolfellows have to start setting them an example instead. Just imagine what a forty or fifty-year-old will feel like when he sees a tiny little girl or boy being quiet, and orderly, and keeping to his or her place in a queue (or even giving it to somebody old and feeble), getting nicely in and out of a railway compartment and being polite, well-mannered, and thoughtful of others? He will feel heartily ashamed of himself, and perhaps remember all his life to do unto others what he wanted others to do unto him.

PUNCTUALITY

Lord Nelson, who, as you have probably learnt in your history book, was the great British admiral who defeated Napoleon Bonaparte at the Battle of Trafalgar, had a favourite precept which he was fond of repeating : “ I have always been a quarter of an hour before my time and it has made a man of me.”

No one can be a good citizen unless he or she knows what it is to be punctual, to keep appointments to the tick of the clock, to answer letters promptly, and to be prompt in performing whatever it is they have promised to do. Some little girls and boys, and alas ! some adults also, are very unpunctual and careless in their habits. This makes everything very difficult for other people who have to deal with them and upsets a lot of arrangements, which is not very nice for anyone concerned.

Imagine what it would be like if your milkman, or your baker, or your cook failed to turn up punctually, at a certain hour in the morning, everyday. You would either have to go to school without your breakfast, or turn up late, miss part of your lessons, interrupt the class, and upset your teacher. Again, how disappointing it would be if you asked Firoza and Alice, and Bal and Mahomed to tea, and they forgot all about it or turned up when it was time to go. You would have to sit down to melted ice-cream, cold and leathery *bhajiyas*, *puris* which have flopped down and

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look like pricked balloons and sweets which make you sick to look at. All the trouble, and expense, and careful planning would go to waste, and all because two naughty little girls and boys who, you can be sure, will grow up into very bad citizens indeed, forgot to remember that it is "better to be three hours too soon than one minute too late."

GOOD MANNERS

Good manners have been defined by a great English novelist as “benevolence in small things.” This is a very true definition, for no one can be truly polite, unless he is also kind and good and unselfish, and has consideration and respect for others.

It may seem very funny to you, for example, to see a fat man slipping on a banana skin (which a bad citizen has carelessly thrown on the road), but it is not at all funny, for the person who falls down, possibly fractures a bone and is thus crippled for life. When anyone, young or old, laughs at such accidents, it shows that he or she is not only ill-mannered but cruel, thoughtless and very unkind indeed. The good citizen, if he cannot give a hand to the poor unfortunate person who has fallen down, passes on and behaves as if nothing at all has happened.

Some children, too, think, it very clever if they manage to grab the nicest sweets at a party, and force others to play all the games *they* like, to shout at the top of their voices, so that no one else has a chance of talking, or eating the nicest sweets, or playing the games they want to play themselves. These are the kind of children who are careless about their “Thank you’s,” their “May I’s?” and their “Beg your pardon’s,” who lose their tempers in public, who forget to return the things they borrow, who interrupt a conversation

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and are not ashamed of being rude to their class teachers, their elders and their parents. Such children usually grow up into thoroughly unpleasant men and women, and turn out to be very bad citizens indeed.

As your teacher has no doubt told you, the most essential part of being a good citizen is to remember what you owe to others oftener than you remember what others owe to you. Politeness is merely a way of proving, in the small everyday things of life, that your memory has not failed you in this respect.

YOU AND YOUR COUNTRY

The 15th of August is a happy day for all of us in India, young and old alike, for we celebrate the anniversary of Independence Day, the day when our country became our own and was handed over to us to look after, to love and cherish, to tend and serve as best we can.

As on this day last year, you will no doubt be waving flags, marching in processions, singing songs, shouting slogans and feeling very happy and elated as it is right you should. National birthdays, like your own and your friend's, are happy days and meant to be enjoyed. A first birthday especially is an occasion for rejoicing, but when the festivity is over the parents of the little one-year-old have to get down to the job of looking after it, feeding it, keeping it clean and tidy, happy and amused, and nursing it through long, tiring days and nights when it is ill, planning sensibly for its future, so that it grows up sound in mind and body and soul in the years that lie ahead.

Just imagine what would happen if the parents stopped looking properly after the child when the birthday party was over, and did not bother about how it grew up? By the time the next birthday came round, the infant would either die, or become so ill, and peevish, and troublesome that everyone would wish it had not been born at all. In the same way the 15th of August will have very little joy or promise unless, in the days that follow, we

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remember that we have to help our country to grow and are ready to work hard, to give up some of our time, and fun, and comfort, in order that she may live and flourish, and be one of the greatest and loveliest countries in the world.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is a very important factor in the make-up of the good citizen for, unless a man has learnt how to be honest, to speak the truth and to be straight in his dealings with other people, he is what your elders call “a menace to society,” and no good at all to the world.

You have, no doubt, heard of the “black market,” and “pugree” and all the horrible, dishonest people who deal in these things, and charge ten times as much for a house or for anything else as it is worth. For example, if a poor man needs some medicine for a sick or dying relative, and the chemist charges him black market rates because he knows how badly it is needed, he will have to get into debt to pay the price or let the relative die. The chemist does not care what happens because he is a thoroughly wicked and dishonest person who has not been brought up to do the right thing, and to be kind and honest and speak the truth.

Other dishonest dealers know that people must have food to eat, and houses to live in, and clothes to wear, and are forced to get them at any price ; so they put up the prices, and everyone else has to work hard, and struggle, and worry in order to get more money to keep alive, and feed and house and clothe themselves and their children. Such people are bad citizens because they do not care what happens to others and are not ashamed to take advantage of their need.

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All these bad and wicked people were children once, like you and your playmates, but they were not brought up to speak the truth, deceived their parents about the marks they got at school, took away other children's books and toys and pencils, blamed other people for their mistakes, and copied at examination time. Now that they are grown-up men and women, they are able to do a great deal more harm than they did when they were small, and make a lot of people anxious and unhappy. So remember to speak the truth, and to learn to be honest, and good, and straightforward while you are small, so that when you grow up, the world will be glad and happy that you were born.

HEALTH

If you remember how miserable you felt when you had whooping cough, or measles, or a splitting headache, or perhaps something even more serious, you will realise how important it is to look after yourself and to keep well and healthy.

There are three things which, according to doctors, are necessary to good health—fresh air, good food and plenty of exercise. Children who live in crowded cities and go to school nearby should make a point of playing games in the open air for some time every day, or go and spend some time in the recreation parks and gardens open to the public.

Many girls and boys get sick by over-eating, or eating food sold in the streets in open baskets, so that the flies have got at them first. Flies are really very nasty things, and whatever food a fly sits on gets infected, and poisons the person who eats it. Cholera, which is a horrible disease, is caused by flies, so make it a point never to eat anything which has been exposed to these pests, and also keep on telling your cook, as well as your playmates, how dangerous they are. After all, it is not very pleasant to eat food which has been previously sampled by a fly, after it has spent the hour before in the Municipal dust bin.

When you feel tempted to eat too many sweets, too many *bhajiyas*, too many *samosas* (all very tasty, and piping hot and thoroughly

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indigestible) remind yourself how miserable you are going to feel afterwards when you get ill, and how sad your mother and father will be to see you sick. Remember that an unhealthy person is very little use either to himself, to his family or to his country. Supposing there is an explosion, or a flood, or an earthquake in your district, you could do your share of helping in the emergency—as every good citizen should—only if you were strong and healthy.

Remember too, that your rulers have appointed people who are trying hard to keep you fit and healthy, by seeing that the streets and drains are clean, that your drinking water is pure, that bad food is not sold in the market, that there are not any dangerous germs about, and it is your duty to help them in this task as much as you can. Keep your own house, and garden, and backyard and kitchen, and everything in it perfectly clean, and you will help to make your city cleaner and everybody in it healthier all round.

EFFICIENCY

Many of you have friends or parents who have visited America and other Western countries and been greatly impressed by the efficient way in which almost everything and everybody functions most of the time. This is due to the fact that people in those countries are brought up to realise what they owe to their jobs, to their employers and to their country and feel terribly ashamed of themselves if they do anything badly. In our own country, mainly because ninety out of every hundred do not know how to read and write (and those who do are often lazy and have no pride in their work), we see that many things are not done as they should be, and all of us have to suffer in consequence.

You often find that letters are undelivered, trains do not arrive on time, telephones get out of order and remain unattended to for days, thefts remain undiscovered, streets are unswept, hospitals function in a most inept manner, schools and colleges are badly organised, and repairs to roads and public and private buildings seem to take about seven *avatars* to accomplish. When you want a country to be efficiently run, everyone from the highest to the lowest has to be alert, energetic, has to have a very high sense of duty, and has to remember that every time he is lazy and inattentive and careless, he is letting down other people and his country very badly

indeed. He cannot be slipshod in his work, or take time off from his working hours to chew *pan*, read the paper or go to sleep. If he does so, he is a bad citizen, and, though he may not realise it, a traitor to his country.

All of you who are children today will be citizens tomorrow, and if you want to enjoy the advantages of living in a country which is efficiently run, cultivate the habit of doing everything as perfectly as you can. In your lessons, in your games, in your hobbies, in your examinations, in your day-to-day tasks, make up your mind to be as efficient as possible. A well-organised country is not something your government can present to you on a silver tray, tied up in cellophane with blue ribbon bows. It is something that every citizen has to achieve for himself by doing his own job punctually and efficiently, and remembering what he owes to, what your elders term, Society and the State.

CHARACTER

When you hear people talk about the wealth of a country, they usually mean that it is rich in raw cotton, or wheat, or rice, or gold, or diamonds or something else which can be sold in return for money. All this is very true because we need money in order to live, but there is also another kind of wealth which is more important to a country than all these things—and that is the character of its inhabitants.

If a country possesses *all* the gold in the world and if its people are cowardly, then the people of some other country can march in and take away all their goods and money, and even the country itself, because no one is brave enough to fight in its defence. Again, a country may have *all* the food in the world, but if the people who live in it are pleasure-loving, lazy and inefficient, and care only for themselves, the country will be badly managed, and no one will be able to live a happy and ordered life within its boundaries.

Then again, if a country has the largest industries in the world, but if the people who live in it are dishonest, they will not mind becoming quislings when they get a chance—which means that they will sell their country to her enemies in return for money, or power, or position, or something else.

The first thing a good citizen has to do is to set about building up his character. No

one is too young to begin learning how to be brave, truthful, unselfish, honest and reliable, and the earlier you begin the easier it will be when you grow up. If you want to serve your country, and not be a useless parasite letting other people do all the work for you, you have to *force* yourself to do the hardest tasks, whatever the cost. It may be very pleasant, for example, to lie in bed instead of getting up early in the morning, but if you do so you will miss your lessons, be late for school, and have a bad report at the end of the term.

It may be much more fun spending your time reading Comics than helping mother to tidy your wardrobe, but if you do so you will learn to be selfish and self-indulgent, and grow up to be the kind of person who is no use either to himself, or to the world. Again, it is easy and simple to tell a lie and avoid punishment, but girls and boys who do so, and do not check themselves in time, turn out criminals later on and fill the jails.

Remember that the men and women whom we honour and respect, who have done great deeds, and served their country and the human race would have achieved nothing if they had been lazy, and cowardly, and inefficient, and thought only of themselves and of having a good time. Nothing really worth while can be obtained easily, or be done the easy way. You must be prepared to work hard and suffer if you want to do great things, and then you will find that the reward is also great, and that millions of people are happier as a result of *your* efforts.

PATRIOTISM

“In the days of the great Roman Empire,” says an English writer, “he was the bravest citizen of Rome that did most love and best serve his country.” If you remember some of the poems you learnt in your earlier years at school you will recollect these lines in *Horatius* which underscore the same idea :

“ . . . For Romans in Rome’s quarrel,
spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son, nor wife, nor limb, nor life in
the brave days of old. . . ”

Unless a country has citizens who love her so much that they are prepared to give up everything in order to make her great, she will always remain a Cinderella among the nations—looked down upon, neglected, unhappy and despised by everyone around.

We are told about our own country that she is one of the poorest countries in the world. Out of every hundred people who live in it about nine or ten can read and write, most of them have little to eat and less to wear, no doctors or hospitals to go to when they are sick, no schools and colleges for their children, no fun and games, and nothing to look forward to except worries and troubles all their life long. When you remember that the population of this country amounts to about three hundred and twenty million people, you can imagine how hard our Government, and all of us will have to work to remedy this state of affairs.

THE GOOD CITIZEN

Now that we are masters in our own house, the country has become *our* responsibility and we have to roll up our sleeves, work hard, and give up a lot of fun and comfort, if we want her to rank among the most progressive countries in the world. In the history of every nation there is a "testing-time," just as there is an examination week at the end of every term. If you fail, it means you have been lazy, and careless, and thinking only of yourself, and that you are unfit for anything better, or higher, or more progressive. If you love your parents, you will study hard and come out on top just as, if you love your country, you will work hard to improve the lives of her people.

Young as you are, there are many ways in which you can help to build up your country, even if it means picking up the rubbish in city streets, and teaching somebody round about to read and write. Best of all, prepare yourself *now* to do great things for your country, and for her people, and, if you love your country enough, the gods themselves will find a way in which you can help.

Here is a poet's version of what little girls and boys can do for their country.

"What can a little girl do
For her country and for you ?

She can play a straight game all through.
That's one good thing she can do.

She can shun all that's mean—
She can keep herself clean

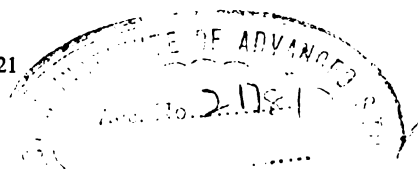
Both without and within.
That's a very fine thing she can do.

P A T R I O T I S M

Her soul she can brace
Against everything base ;
And the trace will be seen all her life in
her face.

That's an excellent thing she can do.

She can look to the Light,
She can keep her thoughts white,
She can fight the Great Fight,
She can do with her might
What is good in God's sight.
These are truly great things she can do. . . .”



SERVICE

In the beginning of World War II, as some of you may remember, France was overrun by the German army, and much of it was bombed, laid waste and destroyed. In 1945, when the war came to an end, France, like the other countries of Europe, set about repairing the damage to her cities and towns, and agricultural districts, and everybody, young and old alike, turned out to help in the work of rebuilding the country.

Children gave up their fun and games, and worked hard in the fields after school hours ; with the result that there was a great deal more for everybody to eat, and the whole country was helped by their efforts.

Our own country, as you probably know, does not grow enough to feed the millions of people who live in it, and we have to get our food from other countries, and pay heavily for what we get. Now if you, and tens of thousands of other Indian children like you, made up your minds to do something about it, along with your elders, we would not only have enough to eat, but could save money to buy machinery, set up industries, make and sell the things we turn out, and make everyone a great deal more comfortable all round. We could build free hospitals for the poor, free schools and colleges for their children, parks and museums, libraries and gymnasiums, theatres and picture galleries for everyone, and give old

S E R V I C E

age pensions to people who are too old and feeble to work.

There is a great deal of fun to be had in planting, watching and making things grow. Then, too, while you are enjoying yourself, thus, and getting stronger for being in the open air, you are helping everyone around, and being a true and loyal citizen, in the highest sense of the word.

Every good citizen has to keep before himself the ideal of service and look out for some way, however small, in which he may help someone else, his country, and the human race. Girls and boys, as well as men and women, who live only for themselves, are defeating the purpose of Creation, and it is much better that they should not be born in a world which badly needs kind, and loving, and unselfish people.

CIVIC PRIDE

When we in Bombay switch on the electric light, turn on the radio, talk over the telephone, fly from Bombay to Calcutta, or anywhere in and out of India, wear the finer types of cotton material manufactured in this country, read about Jamshedpur and its vast iron and steel industries, we do not realise that we owe all this (and much, very much more) to the genius of one man—the late Jamshedji Tata, one of the greatest citizens this country produced in modern times. Frank Harris, his biographer, the man who wrote the story of his life (a book you must read when you grow up), mentions that Jamshedji Tata had so much love for, and pride in the city in which he lived, that when someone remarked that Bombay had not a single good hotel to its credit, he set afoot plans *the very next day* for its construction, and a hotel considered to be “one of the finest in the East” came into existence.

It is not in everyone's power to do things on such a big scale, or to change the history of India as Jamshedji Tata was able to do. That is, however, no excuse for sitting back with folded hands and doing nothing at all. The good citizen loves the place in which he lives—whether it is a big city like Bombay, or a modest little village, or a tiny hillock with six little houses clustering round the side—and he always wants to make it nicer, cleaner, healthier, and more beautiful than any other

CIVIC PRIDE

place in the world. If you spend some of your leisure, for example, picking up the waste paper, banana skins and orange peel that bad citizens have thrown on the road, it means you have pride in your city and want it to be tidy and clean in appearance.

If you try and persuade your friends to spend part of their pocket-money educating some poor child or another, or impress on them to be disciplined and orderly in their behaviour, it means you are sufficiently interested in your surroundings to be alive to its problems. If you tend your garden so that the landscape, of which it forms a part, may look lovelier, it shows that you are thinking on the right lines, and are a very good citizen indeed.

Find out what your city, or town, or village lacks—colleges, schools, libraries, museums, picture galleries, theatres, art schools, decent living conditions for rich and poor alike—and make up your mind to spend your life filling one of the gaps. It may seem very difficult, and even impossible at first. But great men like Jamshedji Tata have proved that no difficulty is too great to be overcome, and that nothing is impossible to the brave, loving and steadfast spirit.

CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

A woman I know was travelling down from Bombay, in a suburban train, some days ago, when a batch of about eight to ten school-boys got in at a station on the way. They rushed in pell-mell, shouting at the top of their voices, treading on passengers' toes, without so much as a "Beg your pardon," roughly shoving other people's coats and umbrellas aside, took their seats and kept up such a din that no one could hear his neighbour talk.

One little boy who was eating peanuts, pelted his schoolfellows in the opposite seats with the shells, which fell in a heap on the floor, and in passengers' laps, others made rude remarks about the occupants of the compartment, and a big boy of about fourteen (who should have known better) deliberately tripped up an old lady who was entering the train and who would have fallen and hurt herself had not some other people rushed to her rescue.

Later, when a ticket inspectress entered a compartment, it was found that none of the boys had tickets for the class they were travelling in, and were ejected with a great deal of difficulty. Not only were they rude and insolent (when they should have been humble and thoroughly ashamed of themselves), but they turned up at every station, put their heads in at the window, and hissed and jeered at the ticket inspectress.

One shudders to think of the type of citizen these young people, and others like them, will

grow into, in later life. The good citizen must display, both in the small and big things of life, all possible consideration for other people, whatever the cost.

You may like, for example, to hear "Meri Jan" played a dozen times on the gramophone, or wish to play the radio at full blast every day, but the rest of the family, as well as your neighbours, may not share your taste in music, or may be too tired, or sleepy, or sick to want to hear any music at all. You may like to keep the light burning when your companion favours the dark, or enjoy a draught when no one else does, but if you have in you the makings of a good citizen you will put their preferences before your own, as far as is humanly possible.

People who throw rubbish out of their window into somebody else's compound, slash the leather seats in railway compartments, break up queues, fail to keep their appointments, and in the hundred and one daily affairs of life think only of themselves, make very bad citizens indeed. No country can grow strong or flourish which is full of people who stop to think how their own lives, or pockets, or comfort are affected by any situation that may arise, and who do whatever is beneficial to themselves. Make up your mind *now* to display every possible consideration for others, and you will find, that in building up your character, you have made your country strong and great.

DRONES

You may remember learning when you were small a poem about a lazy little boy called Simon, who loved to lie in bed, when it was time to get up and do his lessons for the day :

“ Lots of time,” said Simon Lazy

Looking at his bedroom clock.

“ You are wrong, sir,” came the answer ;

“ You are wrong, sir”-tick-a-tock.

“ One more turn,” said Simon Lazy,

“ One more doze, and that will do.”

“ Up, sir ! Up sir !” came the answer,

“ Work and duty wait for you.”

“ Dear ! Oh, dear !” cried Simon Lazy ;

“ How that clock does leap ahead !

I’m quite sure it goes much faster,

When I doze a bit in bed.”

“ Not at all, sir,” came the answer ;

“ Think it out and you will find

’Tis not that I’ve run before you,

But that you have lagged behind . . .”

The first thing a good citizen has to be very careful about is to have a very, very good conscience about his work, and to keep himself busy doing something useful for the community, and for the world at large. No country can be properly run if the people who live in it are lazy, have no love for work, and want to do only those things they like, in preference to those it is their duty to do. When you have a geography lesson, or sums to finish, and decide to go and play a game of football instead

(because you are too lazy to tackle the job in hand), you will be a failure at school and a disappointment to your parents ; and, as we usually carry with us in our adult life the habits we form when we are young, it means that when you grow up you will neglect your work, be useless to yourself and your family, and a nuisance to your employers.

As you grow up you will realise that ‘ there is nothing in life which gives so much happiness as work.’ All the things you enjoy so much— food, and games, and cinemas, and excursions— as well as all the things that grown-up people enjoy, are all right in their time and place, but very boring if continued for days. The world’s greatest men and women are also the busiest. They could not have achieved the heights to which they have risen, if they had remained in bed when it was time to get up, preferred to play games when they were supposed to be doing lessons, sat about idly gossiping when there was a job to be done, made all sorts of excuses for themselves, and been lazy and self-indulgent and afraid of work.

If you have no occupation ‘ invent ’ work for yourself, and don’t give it up when it becomes tedious and difficult, or when the novelty wears off. Remember that ‘ the devil always finds mischief for idle hands to do ’ and the consequences of mischief can be very, very unpleasant, if not disastrous.

IDEALS

Most boys, when asked what they would like to be when they grow up, answer that they wish to be engine drivers or pilots, champion swimmers, or ace cricketers, or something of the kind. Little girls, on the other hand, do not seem to know their own minds, except when they are taken (by unwise and unthinking parents), too often to the cinema, in which case they wish they could become Hollywood stars, or heroines of some glamorous romance in real life or on the screen.

Boys and girls (unfortunately, like too many adults), plan their lives, not in terms of what they have to do, but what they like to do.

The good citizen must however, always have ideals, and include in his pattern of living, something useful which he can do for his country, and for the world at large. If you keep on thinking in terms of what you are going to eat, and what *you* are going to wear, and the money *you* are going to spend buying yourself things and having a nice time, it means you are a thoroughly selfish, unkind and detestable person who is no use to the country, and the world at large ; and since the most selfish people in the world are also the unhappiest, it means you are no use to yourself, and made a great mistake in being born.

Every human being who is worthwhile and wishes to be a good citizen, must have ideals to which he aspires, which means he must try

to rise to something higher in life, be better than himself, and aim at being a source of help and comfort to those around him, and to the country in which he was born. When he thinks of success, he must think of it not in terms of being rich, or famous, or happy in a narrow personal way, but only in terms of the part he can play in leaving the world, a little better than he found it.

Here is a little poem which you must read with a great deal of attention, and keep on repeating to yourself; so that by the time you are grown up, you will learn to do the right things, and be the kind of citizen of whom your country can be proud :

“ God, give me courage
 To do what is right ;
 Courage to speak,
 Courage to fight.
 For honesty, goodness,
 Justice and Truth ;
 Courage to choose
 The good in my youth.
 Courage to own
 When I’m in the wrong ;
 Courage to face
 The day with a song ;
 Courage to guard
 My thoughts and my tongue ;
 Courage to choose
 The right when I’m young . . . ”

DO IT NOW....

A well-known woman writer who happened to visit a certain State in India, some years ago, was told that the railways in that district never arrived on time, and that she would have to wait hours on the platform, if she went according to the railway time-table.

Refusing to believe this, however, she packed her suitcases and arrived just in time to see the train steaming in. Happy at her own foresight, she walked up to the driver and congratulated him on his punctuality. He thanked her and said somewhat shamefacedly, "But, madam, this is *yesterday's* train . . ."

You can imagine, how difficult it must have been for the unfortunate people who lived in that State, to keep their appointments punctually, (as all good citizens should), or go and see a dying relative in some distant place before he passed away, or make any sort of plans to get about.

Now, if all the people responsible for the railway service of the State had learnt to do things promptly, how much easier life would have been for all concerned. It is best, whatever work, or duty, or lesson you have in hand, not to keep putting it off, but to do it as promptly as possible, because the more you put off doing a thing, the lazier you feel about getting down to it, and the fewer chances there will be of getting it done at all.

Most of you, I am sure, have heard the story of a shoe which was lost for want of a nail,

DO IT NOW....

a horse lost for want of a shoe, a general lost for want of a horse, and a battle lost for want of a general. Now, if the person in charge of the horse had remembered to nail down the shoe in time, what a difference it would have made to his country, and to the brave soldiers who were fighting for it. Instead of a defeat, they would have had a victory, and the whole country would have rejoiced, instead of being vanquished and unhappy.

As most human beings, both old and young, are inclined to be lazy, and to take the easy way out of a situation, the temptation to put off things assails most of us. The earlier you begin to force yourself to do the things you dislike doing, and learn to do them when they ought to be done, the better it will be for you and for your country, and the people around you. "By the streets of 'by and by,' one arrives," it is said, "at the house of 'never,'" and one of the worst experiences in life is to find that one is *too late*....

LOVE OF MANKIND

Some of you may be familiar with the name of Leigh Hunt, the well-known English poet who was born in 1784 and died in 1859, and who wrote, among other things, a charming poem called "Abou Ben Adhem" which runs as follows :

"Abou Ben Adhem, (may his tribe
increase !)

Awoke one night from a deep dream of
peace,

And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold :—

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem
bold,

And to the presence in the room he said,
'What would'st thou?' The vision raised
its head,

And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, 'The names of those that love
the Lord.'

'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay,
not so,'

Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellowmen.'

The angel wrote and vanished. The next
night

It came again with a great wakening light.
And showed the names whom love of God
had blest,

And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

Now, if you and I had lived in the days of Abou Ben Adhem and known this kind and loving personality, we would have found him to be an extremely good citizen, because love of humanity is the essence of good citizenship, and if we love people in the right way, we are bound to behave as we should by them, in the small as well as the big things of life.

The good citizen always remembers that it is his duty to love everyone around him, or at least to behave as if he did so. If you consider the lives of the world's greatest men and women, you will find that they have all been inspired by love of humanity, and have laboured, and striven, and suffered, to make the world a nicer place to live in for the men and women of their time, and for the generations which came after.

When you grow up, you will find that Love is the answer to all the problems of life, whether big or small. If you love your parents and wish to make them happy, you will study hard, and fight the temptation to read Comics or thrillers, when you should be learning your lessons for the day.

If you love your friends, you will spend your pocket money buying them the things they like, instead of frittering it all away selfishly on yourself, and you will become a better person in consequence. If you love your country, you will discipline yourself in every way, and find out ways and means by which her problems may be solved. And if you love humanity, nothing will matter to you except the welfare

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of your fellow-beings, and everything you do will come right, because it is done with a good and unselfish motive. So try and love everyone around you—even though they are not very nice, or pleasant, or lovable—and you will find that there is not much you have to learn about being a good citizen, because, like Abou Ben Adhem, you have learnt to love your fellow-men.

HELPFULNESS

One of the greatest essentials of good citizenship is a spirit of helpfulness, which you must try and acquire in your very earliest years. When you want to find out who is the best citizen in any neighbourhood or district, ask for the most helpful person in that locality, and you can safely decide that he or she merits the honour. In our country, unfortunately, owing to a great many reasons (which you will study and understand when you grow up), a large number of people are very unhelpful and selfish, and do not care at all what happens to the country and to other people, so long as their own interests are served. They are horrid people who care only for themselves, or, at the most, for their children and their relatives.

When you remember that ours is the poorest country in the world, and that a great deal more remains to be done here than anywhere else in the world—that millions of people have to be taught to read and write, schools and colleges, hospitals, playgrounds, gymnasiums, roads, houses, waterworks planned and built and, what is more difficult, ignorance, superstition, communalism, idleness, selfishness, wiped out—you will realise how much more is demanded of us than of people in other parts of the world, and how helpful and brave and untiring all of us have to be in order to bring our country in line with the progressive countries of the world.

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The next time you or your friends get some pocket-money, save some of it to buy a prize for the most helpful boy or girl in your class. Then ask your teacher, at the end of each term, to collect votes and give the prize, and try and deserve this prize yourself as often as you can. If you acquire the habit of being helpful when in class, you will be helpful both at home and outside ; and, when you grow up, your country will be proud of you, for you will have her interest at heart, and remember all the time what you owe to your country, and to her people.

LITTLE THINGS

We have so far been dealing with the major virtues of life—Charity, Helpfulness, Love of Humanity, Service and Patriotism—and we have seen how important they are, and how we should try and develop these virtues at an early age.

Just as important, perhaps even a little more important than the big things of life, are the little ones, and we have to be very, very careful about them, if we want to be good citizens, and to live our lives in as nice and effectual a manner as possible. After all, when you come to think of it, “it is the little drops of water which make up the ocean, the little grains of sand which make up the earth, and the tiny little bricks which make up a house.”

It may be a very, very, small thing to say “Thank you”—just two little words which use up only eight letters of the alphabet—but if you forget to say it when you have to, it means that you are badly brought up, that you are too careless and lazy to remember your manners, that you are ungrateful and insensitive, and do not realise when someone has done you a kindness, and that, in all probability, he will not do you a kindness again.

You may think it a small thing to talk to your neighbour when someone is performing, but it means that you are preventing other people from listening to the music, discouraging the performer, and proving that you are not in

the habit of thinking of anyone but yourself, like all horrid and selfish people.

Again, it may not seem very important to you to do the tram or bus conductor out of an anna—you probably feel that four pice is a very small sum, and that the people who own the trams and buses are not likely to miss it—but if everybody were of your opinion, not only would we be living in a world full of dishonest people, but the owners would be working at a loss, and there would be no buses and trams for all of us to travel in.

If you want to do big things in life, the only way to succeed in this is to do the little ones first. You cannot, for example, be a Mahatma, if you have not sufficient love in your heart even to share your sweets with your friends. You cannot be a great general when you grow up, if, when you are young, you cannot school yourself not to be afraid of the dark.

All these little things are steps which lead you to great ones. If you can catch yourself out, and stop yourself from making small mistakes, and keep on doing this through the years, your steps are set on the right road to greatness, for “trifles make perfection” and “the creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn....”

EMERGENCIES

Those of you who live in Bombay, and happened to witness the terrible storm which swept over the city and its suburbs in 1948, must have realised with joy that we have a number of good citizens amongst us, of whom we have every reason to be proud. For example, when the rain was coming down in torrents, and the wind sounded like dozens of bombers overhead, the milkman duly turned up with his bottle of milk, the baker delivered the bread, and quite a sprinkling of fruit and vegetable vendors braved the elements, and appeared at their stalls as usual. Now this proves that all these people have a very fine sense of duty, and are equal to an emergency—as all good citizens should be—whatever the cost to themselves.

The way people behave in a situation which involves danger shows what stuff they are made of. Ask yourself how you behaved when the cyclone was on, if you helped the family to bar doors and windows, roll up the carpets, search for the candles, move the furniture, improvise shelters and do whatever there was to be done. If you did, it shows you are equal to an emergency, and when you grow up, you will come forward to help your country in any major difficulty that may arise.

Some of you may have read of the Epic of Dunkirk, a place the Allies were forced to evacuate during World War II, and how every

Briton who owned a ferry-boat, steam launch, barge, dinghy, canoe or any vessel whatever, whether seaworthy or otherwise, launched forth on the high seas to do his bit for the national cause. They did not stop to think that their lives were in danger, that they would be bombed by the Germans, that it was cold and comfortless, and that the seas were rough, but only of what they owed their country and all those who were in distress.

Even if you were brave enough—which I hope you are—you are still too young to be called upon to face emergencies of that kind, supposing they were to arise in our country. But there are other things you can do, less important occasions on which you can help to prove what stuff you are made of. When a dog, for example, gets run over, you can telephone to the S.P.C.A. (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), or summon other assistance ; when a car breaks down, a man faints on the roadway, a house collapses, or someone loses his way in the dark, that will provide something for you to do to prove what a good citizen you are. Remember help has to be given in whatever direction it is needed—and because life is so arranged that no kindness is ever lost you will find that “the gift is to the giver and comes back most to him. . . .”.

CLOTHES

Those of you who have read the previous pages must have realised by now that in order to be good citizens we have to be very careful about all our actions, that we have to mind our speech and our thoughts, and do the right things as far as is humanly possible, because all we do affects other people's lives, and they may suffer as a result of our behaviour, if this is not all it should be.

Although clothes are not so important as other things—like being kind, and helpful and unselfish—they are signposts to character, and indicate the lines along which we think and act. We have to be careful about what we wear, and how we look, because others have to look at us, and if we are not careful about our appearance, they will be forced to look at something which is not very pleasant to the eye.

So you must remember to keep your clothes spotlessly clean, to see that there are no ink or food stains down your shirt or frock, that your shoes are nicely brushed and shiny, that your buttons and hooks and eyes are in place and properly fastened, and that your face and hands and knees do not look as if you were allergic to soap. Also, if you are wearing Western clothes, say, a shirt and shorts, or a shirt and trousers, remember to tuck your shirt in, and not to wear it hanging outside as you see so many people doing all around you—

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who ought to know better. When you adopt a dress belonging to the people of another country, you have to adopt the conventions which go with it. A shirt is not meant to be worn flopping about like a *pehran*, and it looks just as shocking and ridiculous as a sherwani would, if it were worn with a tartan kilt.

In the small, as well as in the big things of life, we have to sacrifice ourselves, our desires, our interest, our ambitions for the general good. And if there is nothing much we can do in the way of helping our country and her people, we can at least try not to be eyesores, and not to inflict ourselves on other people.

COMMUNALISM

Those of you who are old enough to read other parts of the newspaper beside the Children's Page, must have often come across the word "communalism" in its columns. Now this is a very hateful word, which implies a very narrow attitude to life, and a ridiculous prejudice against people who do not belong to your community or group. This attitude has been disastrous for our country, because it has led to the division of India, and to the riots, the murder, the pillage, the starvation and suffering which we have witnessed amongst us for some time past.

When you grow up and begin to think things out for yourself, you will find that there is nothing more absurd and disheartening than the spectacle of a man who hates another, just because he is a Hindu or Mussalman, because he is black or white, or belongs to some other religion than his own. This kind of stupid and senseless hatred has led to most of the wars you read about in your history books, and unless it is entirely rooted out, we shall go on suffering to the end of Time, or till the human race is completely wiped out. I wonder what all of us would think if a white cow took a dislike to a brown one, just because of its colouring, or if a number of horses in Ireland wanted to fight a number of horses in India, just because they happened not to be born within the same political boundaries. You will

not find animals killing each other for such ridiculous reasons, and it seems to be the sole privilege of humanity—which is supposed to be intelligent and to possess a superior type of brain—to distinguish itself in this respect.

The very first thing we in India have to do, if we want to be good citizens, is to root out this wicked spirit of communalism at all costs. We have to remember that men and women and children in West Punjab are no different from those in East Punjab, that mankind is exactly the same in East Bengal as in West Bengal, and that in fact all over the world, men and women have the same desires, the same ambitions, the same joys, fears and hopes; whatever their creed, religion or race. Here is something which John Donne, the great English poet and divine, has to say about it; ask your teacher to explain it to you and remember to act on it *every moment of your life*, however hard and irksome it may be:

“No man is an ‘Iland,’ *intire* of it *Selfe*; every man is a peace of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*, if a *Clod* bee washed away by the *Sea* Europe is the lesse, as well as if a *Pro-montorie*, were, as well as if a Manor of thy friends or of thine were; any man’s death diminishes me, as because I am involved in *Mankinde*, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee. . . .”

A NEW BEGINNING

Like so many grown-ups, you, no doubt, think of the New Year as an occasion for sending and receiving good wishes, having enormous meals, for getting about and having a good time, and being as merry and cheerful as possible.

Now this is all to the good, for the happier people are, the kinder they are likely to be, and nice and pleasant to everyone around them. It is, however, not enough to think of the New Year as an occasion for rejoicing. If we want to be good citizens, we have to think of it as an opportunity for making a fresh start, and, after taking stock of ourselves, our faults and our defects, make up our minds to shed as many of them as we can, as quickly as possible.

Now, most of us are inclined to believe that we are excellent people, and that if we sometimes lose our tempers, are mean, selfish and horrible, and behave as we shouldn't, it is the fault of those who irritate us and bring out the worst in our natures. Supposing this to be true, it means that our virtues—such as they are—do not go deep enough, and that is something we have to check up on and start improving in the year which lies ahead.

It is surprising how many defects we find in ourselves once we begin to think seriously about them, and how obstinately they cling to us in spite of continuous efforts to shake them off. The next time you feel like shouting at Bal for returning your Comics with the front

cover torn off, like carrying tales, telling stories or lying about in bed when you should be doing your lessons, just try and see if you can avoid doing these things, and you will find out just how strong you are and how strong you can be.

If you find out—as you certainly will—that a bad habit is less easily shaken off, than a python which has wound itself round the body of its victim, you must not be disappointed, for life is really a battle, and there can be a great deal of fun in such a fight.

You will fail—as saints and supermen have failed before you—not once, but a thousand times. But you will also find that the great secret of life is to go on, to feel that every day is New Year's Day, and that a New Year means the opportunity to make a new beginning however often and however badly you fail in the major and minor issues of life.

BEHAVIOUR

“Behaviour is a mirror”, says Goethe, the great German poet and philosopher, “in which everyone displays his image.” How you conduct yourself in a class-room, at home, on the road, in buses and trams and in all public and private places shows what you are, how you have been brought up, and the extent to which you are cultured and educated.

Unfortunately, many girls and boys, both young and old do not care how they behave in public, and so create a very bad impression on everyone around them. If you want to be a good citizen, you have to be very careful how you behave, for a good citizen is never a nuisance to others, and so has to mind very carefully what he says and does—and how he says and does it—every moment of his life.

A friend who was waiting at an entrance to a cinema the other day, along with other people, noticed an unusually stout person walking up the steps, obviously panting and out of breath. A group of young people who were standing by seemed audibly amused at the spectacle, and made no attempt whatever to disguise their mirth, much to the embarrassment of their victim. Now if all these badly-behaved boys and girls had stopped to think for a moment, they would have realised that it is no fun for anyone to be terribly outsized, that they must feel very unhappy about it themselves, and that it only intensifies their discomfort

to have other people making rude personal remarks to their faces. Then too, if we remember that any one of us is likely to be that size if some of our glands do not function as they should, and conjure up an image of a number of uncivilised hooligans laughing at us, the situation would not seem funny to us any more, however it may strike other people.

Boys and girls who mind their behaviour in little things, who remember to subdue their voices when other people are asleep, or telephoning, or listening to music, who do not interrupt a conversation, who get up when older people enter a room, surrender their seats in trains or buses to others, keep their places in a queue, avoid being rowdy and greedy and rude, will grow up into the kind of citizen this country needs so badly at this period in her development. If at your age, you discipline yourselves in little things, you will be able to meet the responsibilities of citizenship when you grow up. No country wants to be burdened with weaklings and parasites, and the sooner you start learning how to be strong and disciplined the better it will be for you and your country when you grow up. You must remember that Citizenship has its rights, as well as its responsibilities.

TOLERANCE

A story is told of two knights who happened to be riding from opposite directions down a road, in the centre of which hung a shield which was silver on one side and gold on the other.

“What a lovely silver shield,” said one as he passed the other on the road. “It is indeed a lovely shield,” answered the knight, “but it is not silver ; it is gold.” Upon which they both fell into an argument, drew out their swords and began to fight.

Now, if both these Knights had known how to be tolerant, and not been in such a very great hurry to start a fight they would have taken the trouble to examine both sides of the shield together, and discovered that they were both right and both wrong in what they had said. You will find in most quarrels that there is a great deal to be said for both sides, and that if only we have the patience to examine the whole question carefully we shall discover that this is so. In one of Dicken’s novels there is a young girl called Tattycoram, who is very intolerant and has a very bad and violent temper. “Count four and twenty. Tattycoram, before you open your mouth,” advises a friend, “count four and twenty.” This is very sound advice, because most of the unkind things we say are said on the spur of the moment, and we are often sorry for what we have said afterwards.

No one can be a good citizen who does not know how to be tolerant, because citizenship

implies the ability to live peacefully with our neighbours, and understand their point of view. This can only be done if we believe that other people are just as wise—if not wiser—than we are, and equally entitled to express, and act upon, their own opinions. Intolerance is a sign of ignorance as well as of egotism and you will find that a great deal of it exists among backward peoples and backward countries. In the seventeenth century for example, Galileo was imprisoned by the Church for declaring that the planets moved around the sun, and during the Spanish Inquisition thousands were burned to death for heresy, that is, for holding beliefs contrary to the teachings of the Church. The riots which took place in our country not so very long ago, when people were killed just because they happened to be Hindus or Mussalmans proved that there is a great deal of religious intolerance amongst us which has to be wiped out. If we want to get anywhere—and I am sure we all do—we must first of all learn to tolerate, if not respect, one another's beliefs and be prepared to shed those which are harmful to the general good. This may not be easy going as we may be called upon to surrender some of our pet convictions, but good citizenship calls for sacrifice and no half-hearted measures will do. The next time you find something getting on your nerves, or feel like flying at your companion, curb your temper and try and keep calm. The habit of tolerating unpleasant things and people, like every other habit that is worth-while, can only be acquired by degrees; but a beginning has to be made *now*, and the effort sustained throughout our lives . . .

HOOLIGANS

A friend, who was travelling in a suburban train some time ago, noticed two grown-up girls entering her compartment and taking their seats in a corner. Happening to glance in their direction a little while later, she noticed both ripping off the leather covering of the seat and placing largish pieces in their bags.

An elderly woman who was looking on remonstrated with them and got a lot of abuse for her pains. Eventually, a complaint was made to the railway authorities who, let us hope, dealt with the culprits as severely as they deserved.

Anyone who has travelled in recent years in the compartments of local trains cannot have failed to notice the appalling condition of the seats, the leather ripped open, the springs peeping out, the panelling defaced by rude drawings and initials scraped with a penknife, the floor littered with a variety of rubbish, with—now and again—a young child relieving itself on the floor of the compartment with the blessing of its parent.

Many people do not seem to be interested in paying for their tickets, an equally large number thinks nothing at all of wanting to enjoy the “amenities” of Upper Class travel after having paid for lesser seats; nor are shoving, pushing, jostling and pick-pocketing absent from the scene.

To think that not only children but grown-ups (who ought to know better) belong to this

vast sub-human species which makes travelling a punishment for decent, well-conducted citizens, is very shocking indeed. We must all realise that ours is a country which has recently acquired political freedom, and if we want to retain it and to bring our country on a level with the other progressive countries of the world, we shall have to discipline ourselves severely in the small, as well as the big things of life.

It may not be a mortal sin to travel without a ticket, or throw orange peel on the floor of a railway compartment, but at this stage in our country's history it is extremely important that we should be disciplined, and the slightest deviation from the principles and practice of good citizenship must be regarded as a crime.

Here is a little poem which will help you to be a good citizen, and which you must say to yourself when you feel tempted to do the things you shouldn't :

*I ought to love my country,
The land in which I live.
Yes, I am very sure my heart
Its truest love should give.
For if I love my country,
I'll try to be a man
My country may be proud of ;
And if I try, I can.
She needs men brave and noble,
She needs men true and kind ;
My country needs that I should be
The BEST man she can find.*

A TRAVELLER RETURNS

A well-known Indian artist, who returned home after a long stay in the West some time ago, told a friend that he "had to close his eyes for shame" when he saw the streets of Bombay for the first time after landing, and compared them with those in the big cities of Europe or America.

He said it was very disheartening to think that neither the departments concerned with the task of maintaining cleanliness in the city, nor the inhabitants, as a whole, seemed particularly worried about this state of affairs, and went about their business apparently unconcerned about it all.

He also related how, having occasion to telephone to an official in a certain Government department, he dialled the number indicated and asked for Mr. B—. Somebody answered, in one of our numerous vernaculars, and the artist, who knew only two, was unable to follow what was said. The person at the opposite end thereupon banged the receiver down, after giving vent to what sounded like a lot of angry ejaculations and expletives.

His business being important, the artist dialled again and asked for Mr. B—. The person at the other end appeared to understand Hindustani, but apparently suffered from some affliction of the ear-drums and could not hear correctly what was said. So a great deal of time had to be wasted in explaining to him that neither Mr. D—, nor Mr. P—, C— or T—

would meet the requirements of the case, and could *Mr. B*—be found ?

After a couple of clerks had lent a hand in the whole business it was discovered that *Mr. B*—could not be located as his department had been shifted to a building elsewhere in the city. Eventually, the correct number was found, *Mr. B*—, it was discovered was out of Bombay and had left no instructions about the matter in hand, with any of his colleagues or assistants in the department.

Searching for premises brought this luckless artist in touch with *pugree* racketeers ; overcharging seemed to him part of every local tradesman's religion and nowhere did anything appear particularly efficient, hopeful or inspiring...

Now, it is very nice to keep our eyes open to what is going on around us, as well as to be alive to our defects, provided we also get down to the job of doing something about it. The good citizen is not content with talking about dirty streets ; he picks up the scraps of paper on the pavement in Hornby Road or arranges for their removal.

He may not all at once be able to re-organise the telephone and transport systems, or teach landlords, tradesmen and other black marketeers to live according to the Sermon on the Mount, but it is surprising how much a sincere, disinterested person can do if he sets about it and if other sincere, disinterested people help him in his efforts.

That is perhaps the greatest message of Sarvodaya Day. And you, who will be the citizens of tomorrow, must bear this in mind and try hard to live up to those ideals for which Gandhiji lived, and fought, and died.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR

In the cyclone which swept over Bombay in 1948, a certain block of flats, built on a hill by the sea, suffered a great deal of damage. Tiles were blown off in hundreds from the roof and littered the compound ; glass panes of doors and windows were smashed, and giant trees, uprooted from the ground, lay across the garden, their branches sprawling in all directions, blocking the drive to the porch.

As soon as the rain had subsided the mali got down to the job of clearing the debris, but the task was obviously beyond him, and other help could not be found. Although there were dozens of servants on the premises—hamals, cooks, bearers, “ dog boys ” and malis—not one of them could be persuaded to join and they were horrified at the blow it would mean to their *izzat* to be seen sweeping the compound.

Now, this ridiculous attitude is due to the fact that most occupations in our country have been and are hereditary, and for hundreds of years the mochi's son has become a mochi, the shepherd's son a shepherd, the sweeper's son a sweeper and so on.

If a shepherd is found sweeping, he loses caste and all sorts of silly people look down on him for doing so. Actually, *there is no shame whatever* in any type of work, for it is the labourer who exalts his job, and not the work which lowers the labourer. The only things we need to be ashamed of are meanness and

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dishonesty, selfishness and cowardice. No country can get on if the people, who live in it have this attitude to work and refuse to get down to a job, just because their fathers and grandfathers before them were born to something else.

So remember, even if you happen to come from a long line of ancestors who have won glory for themselves on the battlefield, or of pundits, learned in philosophy and religion, you need not be ashamed of being discovered sweeping your garden, polishing your shoes or cleaning doors and windows. There are millions of things waiting to be put right in this land, and this cannot be done if we are either ashamed or afraid of work in any form. If you want to live in a clean, beautiful country, well organised and efficiently run, you must remember that there is dignity in labour and that "God Almighty hates a quitter," whoever or wherever he may be.

CRITICISM

A well-known statesman accused the people of a certain country many, many years ago of being "a nation of liars." This accusation annoyed the people of this country very much indeed, and one of them came out with an article in the Press containing quotations from a book, written by the statesman, in which he had admitted to having told several untruths in order to get out of an unpleasant situation.

There was great excitement over this contribution and everyone felt very happy and elated, because a very smeared and sable pot had been caught out "calling the kettle black."

Now this sort of criticism, besides being very unpleasant to all concerned, did no one any good, and therefore should not have been made at all.

Criticism has no value if the people against whom it is directed do not, or cannot, profit by it in any way, and are only annoyed by what is said. If Lalita, for example, criticises Indu for making a noise when other people are asleep or listening to music, and if Indu tells her to shut up, it means that the advice is wasted, and that Indu has a very wrong attitude indeed to life.

Even when a very silly person tells you not to be foolish when you *are* being foolish, you cannot get your own back by calling her all sorts of names. Even if you are able to prove

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to everybody's satisfaction that your critic really lacks intelligence, it does not, in any way make *you* any the wiser or less foolish.

The good citizen is always happy and eager to listen to a recital of his faults, in order that he may correct them as quickly as he can. Since other people can see us much better than we can see ourselves, it is always wise to give a great deal of attention to our critics—provided they are well-intentioned—and not to be annoyed about the things they say.

Also, when we want to criticise other people—whether persons or associations or government—we must be very careful to check up our facts and not to make malicious or exaggerated statements. The good citizen must learn to mind his behaviour as well as his tongue, for a great deal of mischief can be done, both in public and private life, by thoughtless speakers. And if after doing your best, you still find people being unjust to you, repeat to yourself what a great English writer once said : “ Only God Almighty can make a flower ; any foolish child can pluck it to pieces.”

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Once upon a time, there lived a king who was very, very proud of his skill in archery. Day after day, he roamed about in the jungles belonging to his kingdom, with his bow and arrow attempting to perfect himself, until one day he shot a deer with an accuracy of aim which had never been equalled before. Considerably elated by this achievement, the king went back to his palace, summoned his queen and courtiers, and related the story of his triumph to the durbar at very great length. Everyone listened patiently to the king's account of his adventures, and applauded loudly when he had finished, all except the queen, who said in a somewhat flat voice : " Practice, my lord, makes perfect. . ."

Now the king who was used to a great deal of flattery and expected to receive a great many compliments on the occasion, was very annoyed at this kind of lukewarm appreciation. He ordered his vizier to place the queen under arrest, to send her away from his kingdom, and to permit her to return only on pain of death. The vizier, who was a very wise and kindly person, escorted the queen out of the capital, though not out of the kingdom, provided her with money and promised he would do his best to induce the king to allow her to return. Being wise as well as beautiful, the queen settled down happily in her new surroundings and thought out a plan by means of

which she could convince the king of the error of his ways.

From a farmer in the neighbourhood she bought a newly-born calf and wrapping herself in a *boorkha* from head to foot, she went up and down her staircase every day, carrying it on her shoulders till it was almost fully grown.

One day, the vizier, who had kept in touch with the queen as promised, took his royal master riding past her house just as she was doing her exercise for the day. The king, who was amazed at the spectacle, went up to her and inquired how she managed to lift such a heavy burden on her shoulders, "Practice, my lord," she answered, "makes perfect. . ." The king, remembering the last occasion on which these words had been uttered, guessed the speaker's identity, begged her forgiveness and took the queen back to the palace, where they lived peacefully and happily ever after. . .

From this we learn that nothing is difficult of achievement if we only persist in our efforts, and that the good citizen must make a beginning and keep on working towards his goal until it is reached, however tedious and difficult the path may be.

EFFORT

Those of you who are old enough to follow the talk which goes on among your elders, must have heard how much discontent there is all around us. Someone is always to be heard grumbling about the fact that there are not enough houses to live in, not enough food to eat and not enough clothes to wear for all except a few wealthy people at the top.

One also hears a great deal about the 'pugree' racket, about bribery and corruption, about daylight robbery in railway trains and on the highway, and scandals in various departments of public life. People who have plenty of money, we are told, seem always to be able to get more, and people who have none get much less than they should.

Now there may be some, or even a great deal of, truth in these allegations, and if we look at the whole thing impartially we shall find that this country is afflicted with a great many diseases and disabilities of all kinds. What most people do not realise, however, is that when a country, like a person, falls sick it has to be carefully doctored, carefully nursed and carefully brought back to health. Everybody belonging to the patient must make every possible effort to bring it round, even though it involves a great deal of weariness, trouble, sleepless nights and sacrifices of all kinds.

But because we are human, and most human beings are inclined to be lazy, we do not want

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to be robbed of our sleep, of our comfort or pleasures. We must realise, however, that nothing is possible without effort, and that life yields just as much as we are willing to put into it. We have to work hard and not care how tired we feel, or how difficult the task, if we want to belong to a country in which there are enough houses for everyone to live in, enough food for everyone to eat, enough clothes for everyone to wear and everything else that makes for contented and civilised living. When you feel like being lazy, or not making that little bit of extra effort which ensures success, remember what Rudyard Kipling, the well-known English writer, has to say in this connection :

“ Our England is a garden,
But gardens are not made
By saying, ‘ Oh ! how beautiful ?
And sitting in the shade.’ . . .





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