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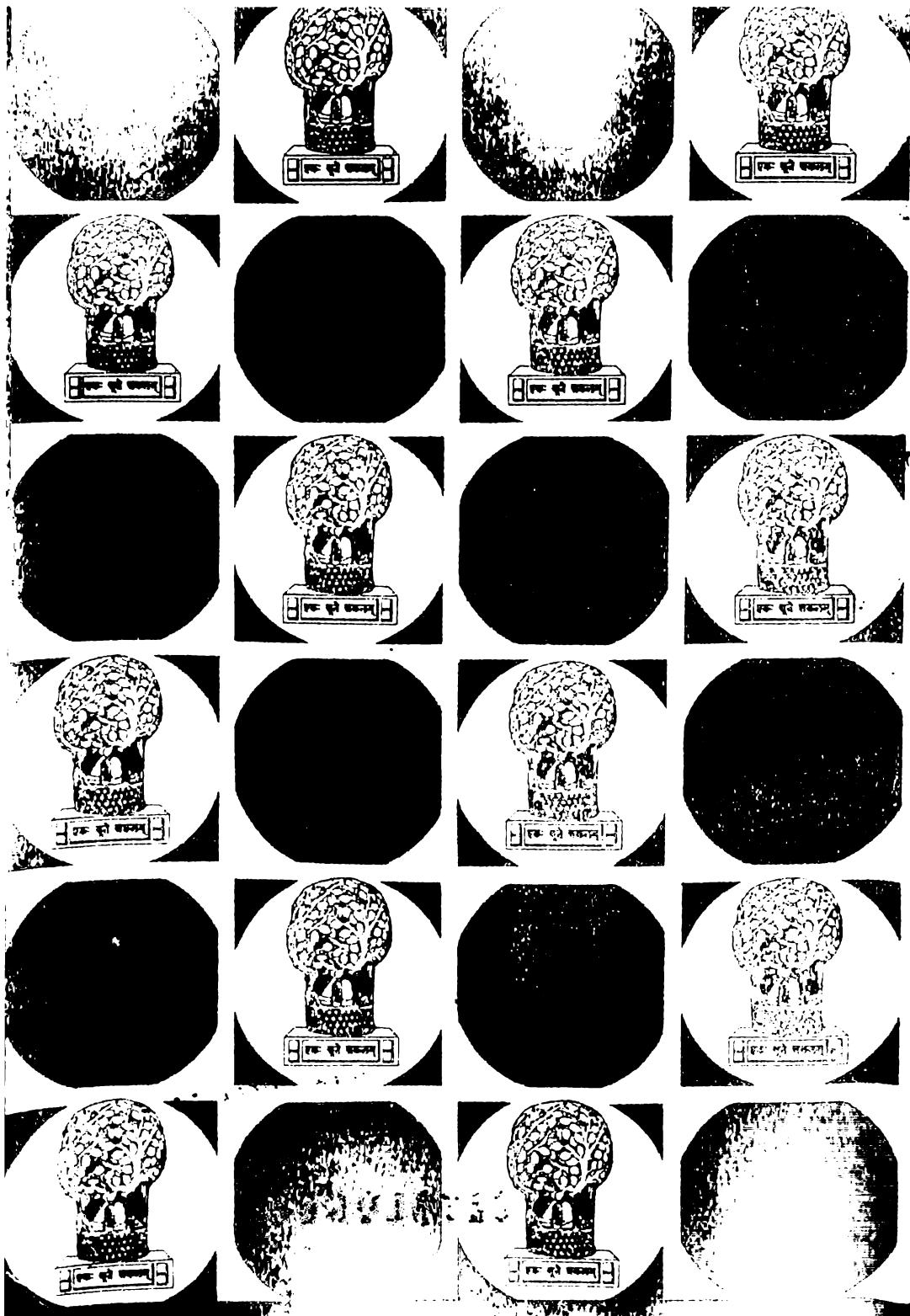


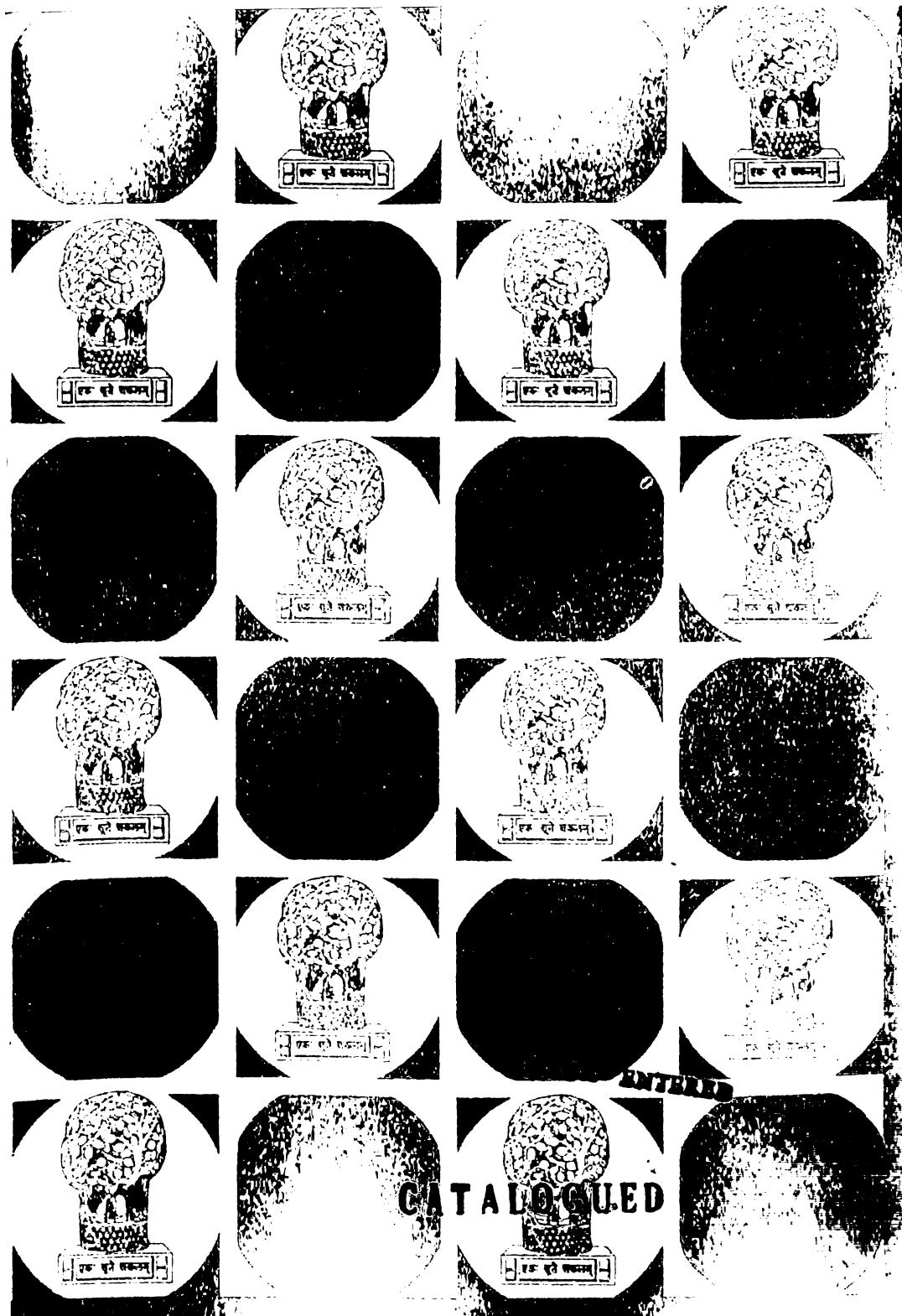
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NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA





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NEHRU
YOU DON'T KNOW





NEHRU YOU DON'T KNOW

Intimate stories and anecdotes by one who
observed him closely for thirty years.

P. D. TANDON



NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA
NEW DELHI

May 1969 (Vaisakha 1891)

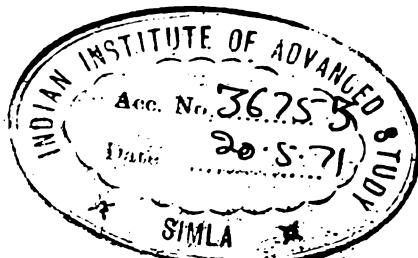
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FOREWORD

MANY BOOKS have been written about Jawaharlal Nehru. He was the first Prime Minister of India; he was one of the outstanding leaders of the Indian freedom struggle; he was one of the most eminent statesmen of the world. But none of these books really gives any glimpse into Nehru the man, that lovable, warm-hearted, colourful personality, the impulsive, generous and noble nature that made him truly great.

It is said that no man is a hero to his valet. This is true in the sense that it is the inner nature and character of persons which show what they really are. From that point of view, Nehru was one of the most interesting personalities because he was great and noble whether seen from afar or from near.

Here is a book which shows him from near and intimately. Mr. Tandon, the writer, had occasion to watch him at close quarters for many years. During the freedom struggle and after, the writer had opportunities to observe and collect many incidents and anecdotes which tell how lovable, kind and generous a man Nehru was.

The anecdotes recounted in this book are unique and could only be gathered by one who knew him well and saw him from unexpected angles and on most unpredictable occasions. They vividly present a humorous, witty and lively portrait of Nehru who was extremely human.

New Delhi
April 26, 1969

B. V. KESKAR

PREFACE

NEHRU WAS ONE of the choicest spirits of our age. Very few can be compared with him in the grandeur of human spirit. Much is already known about Nehru, the great national leader during India's struggle for independence, Nehru the first Prime Minister of Independent India, Nehru the great statesman and world figure. And much will doubtless yet be written on these aspects of one who helped to shape contemporary history. But in these pages we are able to see for the first time the *human* Nehru so dear to us; for the accent here is on his humanity rather than his political sagacity, on his moods and fancies rather than his idealism and statesmanship. Here we have intimate glimpses of the man's dauntless courage, his large-heartedness, his consideration for all sorts and conditions of men, his impatience and irritability, his personal joys and sufferings, his loyalty to his comrades, and the warmth of his heart and the readiness of his sympathy.

This book is not a connected study or a full-length portrait. Its merit, I venture to think, is that it can be taken up by the reader and perused with pleasure at any point. Here are vignettes revealing little-known and half-forgotten details and episodes of Nehru's life. My book, "*The Human Nehru*", has been incorporated in it.

4, ELGIN ROAD,
ALLAHABAD
April, 1969

P. D. TANDON

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COVER PICTURE : *With Folk Dancers*

1. HOW HUMAN !

WHEN I talk or write about Jawaharlal Nehru I am faced with a huge procession of memories. I am lost in the crowd of sweet thoughts and his magnificent deeds bring him back to life before my mind's eye. He was a man with a beautiful physique, exquisite graces and dominating passions.

Now come with me for a while to Anand Bhawan of Jawaharlal Nehru days. The Prime Minister came there for a brief visit one day. After breakfast he came into the drawing-room where a small crowd of distinguished people had collected. He gave a charming smile of recognition to everyone and joined hands in salutation. He stood there adjusting the rose in the button-hole. He suddenly saw some young boys standing in the verandah. He looked at them and stood still. Others around him stood quiet and alert. He did not talk to the big and the distinguished and went out to meet the boys. "How are you?" he enquired. The lads smiled and said, "Panditji, *Sab Theek Hai*," (Panditji, everything is all right.)

"Any difficulty?" he asked.

The boys looked at each other and hesitated to say anything. "Come along, what is the matter?" he enquired.

One of them blurted out, "Panditji, during rains our books get wet and we get drenched with water when we return home."

"Really! Is that so?" he queried affectionately.

He said 'Jai Hind' and went away. The boys echoed, "Panditji ki Jai."

Nehru went to Delhi and sent a man to the market to buy some canvas bags and rain coats for the youngsters. They were bought and shown to him and sent to Allahabad for the boys who had told him that their books and clothes got wet during rains when they returned home from school. He had many big problems, most of the time, to attend to, but the little needs of insignificant people also attracted his attention and he offered help whenever possible.

2. KIND AND GENTLE

ABOUT fifty years ago, some young students went to Motilal Nehru's house to get a donation for Bundelkhand Famine Relief Fund. They were stopped near the portico by a servant. Motilal Nehru was pacing up and down a nearby verandah. He was informed about the students' request. The servant returned to the boys and said, "The Bare Sahib says that he does not give donations for such things." The boys felt a little irritated and said within the hearing of Motilal Nehru, "To what causes does he contribute then ? We will come in future for those causes only."

The Pandit heard this and got angry and ordered that the impertinent boys be turned out of the compound immediately. The master's order was being carried out, when Jawaharlal Nehru, Esq., handsome and elegantly

dressed in completely western style, came upon the scene. He was riding a cycle. He stopped and asked why the boys were being driven out. He was told the whole story and he asked the servant to bring them in and he pedalled off. The students were told that the Chote Sahib was calling them.

The boys feared that the man who was calling them was an Englishman and would thrash them after getting them inside the house. However, they summoned up courage and followed the servant.

As soon as the frightened boys were seated in the room, they were served tea and biscuits. "What's the matter?" enquired Mr Jawaharlal Nehru in a soft, gentle tone. The students by now had realized that they were facing not an irate Englishman, but a compatriot who was kind, considerate and warm-hearted.

They told Jawaharlal Nehru that they were social workers going from door to door to collect funds for the famine-stricken people in Bundelkhand and they had come to his revered father with great expectations, but had met with a rebuff and were being unceremoniously driven out of the grounds.

"Is that so?" asked Nehru a little puzzled and then pulled out a cheque book, straightaway wrote out a cheque for Rs. 101, and handed it to the boys. "I hope you are satisfied now," said Nehru. The boys brimming with joy replied, "Yes sir, we are very happy. Thank you, sir." The youngsters went away triumphantly with the cheque, leaving Nehru a little pensive.

3. UNIQUE COURAGE

NEHRU was not “one man, but a procession of men” who symbolised in him the urges of his people. He represented them as Gandhi did. He echoed the innermost feelings of the Indian people. His presence had a magical effect on huge crowds of men and women. They were like a life-giving tonic to him. He derived his strength from them and radiated hope and vigour to them. When he went to the angry multitudes they became cool and calm. Violent mobs became peaceful in his presence. During 1947 communal riots, he displayed tremendous courage. When he rushed unprotected to save the innocent victims of frenzied hordes, his friends often got frightened and said, “Panditji, they will kill you in their madness”. His reply was, “Then, what? Should I allow these butchers to kill the innocent?” Such was the courage of this man and he has bequeathed it to many people, very particularly to his brave and beautiful daughter, Indira.

His biggest quality was his vast humanity; his profound love for the lowly and the lost. Millions of people loved him and he loved them with all his heart. We remember him because he was a man of great vision. His was no ordinary light. It was a light that shall never dim. In him the nation found a hero, a mover of men, a writer, a philosopher, a statesman and a poet who expressed himself in poetic prose. He was great not because he was Prime Minister of a great country. He was great because he was a most devout lover of mankind. He was India’s unquestioned leader, and the West had a

spiritual affinity with his way of thinking. They understood him and he appreciated their approach to various problems. He had a modern mind which could keep pace with this rapidly changing world.

*“Possessing much, and yet deserving more;
Deserving those high honours which he wore
With ease to all, and in return gain’d fame
Which all men paid, because he did not claim.”*

When you think of Nehru’s past, the sacrifices that he made, and the agony that he suffered in prisons, you will feel that he deserved much more than what he got. Many men are honoured by the positions they occupy, but Nehru honoured the offices he held. His magnificent approach, his kindly deeds, his vast generosity, his width of vision, and his deep humanity captured the hearts of his countrymen and they simply adored him. A conversation with him was a voyage of discovery. I am told that once a Viceroy after listening to Nehru’s high-pitched conversation said that he found it difficult to keep pace with Nehru’s flight of imagination and width of vision. “Mr Nehru, I come from a county in England and my background is not so rich and adequate as is yours,” the Viceroy was reported to have said to Nehru’s embarrassment !

4. ARDUOUS LIFE

NEHRU's life as Prime Minister was an arduous one. He hardly got time to engage in pleasant pursuits. A lot of people visited him. He tried to meet all of them. In the morning he performed some yogic exercises, a very old habit with him, which stood him in good stead. He saw people at breakfast, lunch and dinner, apart from the routine interview hours. He was constantly in demand. He hardly got any rest. Often he gulped down his lunch and rushed back to office, to return only after sunset. I had heard someone say, "Panditji was sometimes seen lunching quite leisurely but then suddenly some idea gripped him and he abruptly stopped eating. There were days when the inmates of the house did not get even a few minutes to talk with him."

After a day's hard work, he used to come to dinner very tired. But even after that he could hardly look forward to restful hours, because quite often there were engagements after dinner. When the engagements were over he sat down to read reports, files and clippings and then dictated to his stenographer.

A close associate of Nehru had told me that at times Nehru was so tired that he fell asleep while talking to people. He would suddenly wake up, talk a little again, put aside his spectacles, and rest his face on the palm of his hand, sleepy. And no wonder! The man who, day after day, went to sleep at two or so in the morning must feel completely fagged out even if he had the constitution of a horse. An American friend of mine, after an interview with Nehru wrote to me, "It was a thrilling ex-

perience to have met the charming Prime Minister. It will long be a memory. But thank God, he did not sleep during my interview as he did in the case of..."

5. THRASHED BY FATHER

ONCE in his childhood, at the age of five or six, Nehru was severely beaten by his father. Two beautiful fountain pens were arrayed on the table of Motilal Nehru. His son was tempted to take one of them. He did not ask his father's permission but picked up one from the table. He said to himself that since his father could not possibly need both of them at the same time, he might as well help himself to one. When it was discovered that one pen was missing from the table, there was a flutter in the house and a vigorous search was made. This frightened young Jawahar, but he did not confess that he had taken the pen. Later it was known that Jawaharlal had removed it from the table. This infuriated his father and he thrashed his son. "Almost blind with pain and mortification at my disgrace I rushed to mother, and for several days various creams and ointments were applied to my aching and quivering little body," wrote Nehru recalling this incident of his early days.

6. "FATHER DRINKING BLOOD"

EVERY evening Motilal Nehru relaxed after the day's hard labour and a number of visitors and friends called on him and Anand Bhawan resounded with his tremendous laughter. Jawaharlal was naturally curious to know what those big people said to each other and he would occasionally peep into the room to have a glimpse of the distinguished visitors. Once in a while his father would pull him out and make him sit near him. One evening Jawaharlal saw his father drinking claret or some other deep red wine. Horrified, he rushed to his mother and told her in fright, "Father is drinking blood!"

7. "I LIKE YOUR FACE"

NEHRU's interests were varied and his sympathies profound. Innumerable people fell victim to his irresistible charm. His fascinating face had some abiding nobility and loveliness about it. He used to get adoring epistles from all sorts of people. Here are a few extracts from a letter of a most talented artist, Amrita Shergill, who died when she was young. She wrote to Nehru, "A little while ago somebody said to me 'you know Jawaharlal Nehru is ill'. I hadn't known it. I never read the papers. I have been thinking of you a great deal but somehow, perhaps for that very reason I hadn't felt like writing.... I should like to have known you better. I am always



PLATE 1 — *Yagnopavit* (Wearing the Sacred Thread)



PLATE 2 — In Cadet's Uniform at Harrow



PLATE 3 — Newly-wedded



PLATE 4 — Anand Bhawan

attracted to people who are integral enough to be inconsistent without discordancy and who don't trail vicious threats of regret behind them... I don't think you were interested in my painting really. You looked at my pictures without seeing them.

"You are not hard. You have got a mellow face. I like your face. It is sensitive, sensual and detached at the same time..."

8. AFFECTIONATELY CONSIDERATE

NEHRU was a shepherd who most gently and carefully looked after the flock around him. I can recall many instances of his very considerate nature; but here I will state only a few. After his release from Ahmadnagar Fort, he travelled all over the country to acquire first-hand information of the events that took place in the wake of 1942 rebellion. I shadowed him almost everywhere in U. P. He addressed mammoth gatherings and I was keenly interested in reporting him fully and faithfully. For me news despatches first and every other thing afterwards. But this was not possible in the company of Nehru. He would command us to be present punctually whenever there was tea, dinner or lunch. At times, his admirers would force him to eat a little fruit or sweet before them which they had brought for him. Never did he taste anything without sharing it with the members of

his entourage. I was very keen to follow minutely the animated conversations that followed between him and his admirers and eating on such occasions was a kind of atmospheric disturbance for me. But his was a different approach.

One day in Ballia after a meeting, I immediately rushed to my typewriter, not realizing it was dinner time, and started beating it furiously to turn out the copy quickly and dump it at the telegraph office. Panditji came to the dining-table. He looked around and found me missing. "Where is that crazy fellow?" he was reported to have shouted. In order to save me from his "wrath", no one gave him any clue of my whereabouts. He thundered, "I can imagine where this man must be."

He came to my little room and holding me by the collar of my "kurta", he dragged me to the dining-hall, repeatedly saying, "To hell with your reporting." I was thrust into a chair. None sympathised with me. Everyone laughed and Panditji joined in. I felt very silly, but was overwhelmed by his affectionate consideration for others. He was always big in a big way.

9. DEEPLY SECULAR

NEHRU fought communalism heroically all his life. The biggest tribute to that great lover of peace will be a world without war, no doubt, but India without communal disharmony will also be a fitting memorial.

After Partition, nothing distressed him more deeply than the communal riots in various parts of the country. Giving expression to his deep sorrow, he said, "I never knew that my admirers were beasts. My heart is soaked with sorrow and the monstrous riots have degraded my country. I went to meet Bapu, but could not look him in the face. I was full of shame."

Before independence communal riots were frequent in India and this worried the national leaders a great deal. In April, 1938, Nehru had gone to Calcutta to attend a very important meeting of the Congress Working Committee. When he was there communal trouble started in Allahabad. I wrote to him immediately requesting him to let me know what students could do during the disturbances to help the people. There were a lot of students those days in the Allahabad University who were eager to help the innocent victims of communal frenzy. As soon as my letter reached him, despite very heavy work on hand, he promptly replied, giving us instructions and chalking out a programme. He said, "Your letter. The way students and young men can help if a serious communal situation arises, is this : a group of them should volunteer and their names should be taken down. They should be ready to come out at a moment's notice. In case there is any excitement or trouble, they should gather together and go to the Congress office and from there to the area affected. In these areas as well as in the central part of the city like Chowk, small groups of five should stand at important places and crossings and patrol in the neighbourhood. Their very presence will inspire confidence in the shop-keepers and residents. Individuals

should not do this work but small groups of five or six. It must be remembered that under no circumstances must these volunteers indulge in any violence.

"The first thing to do is to enrol names for this purpose and to give a list to the City Congress Committee."

Unfortunately communal disturbances even now occasionally oppress us. The Government are vigilant no doubt, but young men and women can do a lot in such unfortunate situations. The guidance which Nehru gave us then holds good even now.

10. NEHRU AND THE MOON

NEHRU was fond of Nature. He loved to watch the moon and the stars and had written how they kept him company when he was in jail.

Some years ago, at the Allahabad Government House, when Sarojini Naidu was the Governor, I introduced a smart, young American woman to Nehru. She was very keen to have a word with him and insisted on meeting him that evening. Luckily, he was in a happy mood of complete relaxation. He suddenly asked an abrupt question which none of us had expected, "What is your measure of greatness, young lady?"

She felt a little unnerved and said, "A great man leads people and makes them like it."

Promptly Nehru said, "Don't you think it is better to lead them without giving them the sensation of leading them?"

"Your greatness is felt all over the world, sir," said the American.

Nehru smiled and said, "It's a frightening prospect."

And then he asked her to look at the new moon and diverted her attention from an embarrassing topic.

She said, "Sir, don't you think the full moon is much better than the new moon?"

"Of course not. I think the new moon is much better than the full moon which starts disappearing and is a symbol of the past. The new moon shows the future and gives promise of more light, night after night."

Nehru always liked the new moon and in *The Discovery of India* he wrote,

"The new moon, a shimmering crescent in the darkening sky, greeted us on our arrival here [Ahmadnagar Fort]. The moon, ever a companion to me in prison, has grown more friendly with closer acquaintance—a reminder of the loveliness of this world, of the waxing and waning of life, of death and resurrection following each other in interminable succession, ever changing, yet ever the same. I have watched it in its different phases and in its many moods in the evenings as the shadows lengthen in the still hours of the night."

The woman casually said that she would like to hear Nehru on the radio and elsewhere more frequently.

"Do you know a colleague told me the other day that I suffer from foot and mouth disease ? I am always delivering speeches and roaming. I don't think you want those to develop any more," replied Nehru amidst laughter and bade good-bye to the little crowd of men and women that had gathered round him.

Nehru was a lover of mountains, the stars, and the sky. Sunset fascinated him. The rising sun inspired him. The moon comforted him. He loved to stand and stare. For several years through the narrow grating of his prison cell, he looked at the star-spangled heavens with the eyes of a poet and a dreamer.

11. *CHURIDAR PYJAMAS*

COLONEL LOUIS JOHNSON was in India for some time as the personal envoy of President Roosevelt. He met Nehru and was charmed by him. He gave expression to his fondness for him in the course of a statement which he issued to the press when he was leaving India. When the Cripps negotiations were going on in New Delhi, Col. Johnson was there and met Nehru frequently. He was intrigued to see Nehru in *churidar pyjamas*. He wondered how anyone could get into them. One day he apologetically enquired, "Permit me to ask, Mr Nehru, how do you get into these *pyjamas*?" Promptly Nehru said, "But they get on me all right." As he said this there was laughter and

later he explained to Col. Johnson the “mechanism” of the *churidar pyjamas*.

Yet another story of this kind. It is said that once in London, Nehru was invited to address a meeting and he went there in a *shervani* and *churidar pyjamas*. As he stood up to speak there was a slight flutter in some corners of the hall, because some people felt that Nehru was wearing only long underwear and had forgotten to put on his trousers !

12. DISCONSOLATE MOMENTS

I SAW Nehru in tears and in most disconsolate moments. On such occasions there was a tragic grandeur on his face. One evening, on his return to Anand Bhawan after he had performed the last rites for his mother, I saw him sitting all alone in his drawing-room under the shade of an electric lamp—picking up this magazine and that and turning a page here and a page there. He was feeling very disconsolate and was trying to overcome his grief. He was making a deliberate attempt to forget all that had happened. But obviously he could not. I watched his face for about half an hour from outside the room and that face seemed to be soaked in sorrow. That look of his still lingers in my memory. That face, that shade, that moment, that expression, will, perhaps, never be erased from my mind.

13. A CRUEL BLOW

GANDHI's death was a very cruel blow to him personally and it made him very sad. He could not forget Bapu and missed him very much. Once when he was returning from London after a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, somebody gave him a book which contained numerous photographs of Bapu. He was flying from Bombay to Delhi. He turned a few pages here and there and then suddenly broke into tears. Those pictures of Gandhiji brought to his mind memories of the past and he could not help crying.

14. A NOBLE SPECIMEN

NEHRU was never petty or small. He was a noble specimen of mankind. In personal dealings he was loving and considerate and very human. By his example, he taught people to be big-hearted and generous. He never encouraged those who virulently spoke ill of others. One day a Congress leader was talking to Nehru in Anand Bhawan and for about half an hour he fiercely denounced a political rival. Nehru heard him patiently and when the man stopped talking, Nehru got up and said, "That man may be guilty of all the things you have said, but those who complain in this manner are not very high-class men."

The complainant was silenced. I realised that to complain was not a very dignified thing. I learnt a big lesson that day. Whenever I am tempted to complain against anyone, I am immediately reminded of what Nehru had said.

15. A CHAMPION OF MINORITIES

THE following incidents were reported to Dr. P. E. Dustoor, formerly of Allahabad University, by the late Major P. S. Mehta who, along with some other military officers, shepherded the peace mission of the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan, to the troubled areas where communal riots had broken out in 1947 after the Partition of India.

On September 1, 1947, Nehru and Liaquat Ali reached Adampur aerodrome. The guard provided for the two Prime Ministers for going to the troubled areas was a bare escort of four jeeps. But Nehru objected to it. He turned to General Thimayya (then Brigadier) and told him that he would not travel in a convoy. "These are orders, Sir," Nehru was told. "Not a very clever order, I am afraid," replied Nehru and insisted that the escort must be cut down to half.

The two Prime Ministers went to the nearest Indian refugee camp at Kamalpur. As soon as the Muslim refugees saw Nehru they shouted, "*Aaya Zalim ! Maar*

Dala, Loot Liya." (The tyrant has come. He has robbed us and killed us). The bitterly hostile attitude of the mob upset the escort and they feared that anything might happen and they wanted to be around Nehru. "But where is Panditji?" they asked anxiously. He could not be traced for some time and this gave them most anxious moments. At last they saw him talking to an old woman whom he was consoling in her misfortune. The crowd which had greeted him as a murderer on his arrival became friendly to him in the old way.

The two Prime Ministers sat listening to the complaints against the Hindus and the Sikhs. A Muslim constable sprang from his seat and said to Liaquat Ali, "*Gandhi aur Nehru hamare maabaap hain. Aap ne kya kiya? Apne to hotel mei baith ke Pakistan liya. Apne kya qurbani kee?*" (Gandhi and Nehru are like father and mother to us. What have you done? You got Pakistan while sitting in a hotel. What sacrifices did you make?)

When the Indian Prime Minister left the Muslim refugees there were no longer cries of "*Zalim aagaya*", which he had heard on his arrival, but "*Wazir-e-Azam Hindustan Zindabad!*" (Long live the Prime Minister of India!).

From there he went to the deputy commissioner's bungalow at Hoshiarpur. Several thousand Hindus and Sikhs had gathered at the place and clamoured for his *darshan*. But Nehru wanted those people to be told bluntly that he regarded them as assassins and would not see their faces. But the crowd insisted on seeing him. Angrily, he rushed out of the room and poured upon them the vials

of his wrath. He called them bandits and murderers, but none dared protest.

He told them that their violence would be met by Government with greater violence. And he shouted, "Be warned! I will not allow this to continue. I will blow you up, if need be, at the cannon's mouth; I will, if it has to be done, bomb you from the air."

None protested, no one showed any anger. And when he left them, the crowd burst into spontaneous and prolonged applause and cheers.

From there he went to the village of Khaspur near Adampur. A crowd of Muslims met Nehru and said that the Sikhs would kill them. He called for Sardar Swaran Singh, the then Home and Revenue Minister of East Punjab, and asked him to see to it that no harm was done to them.

Nehru then proceeded angrily towards the crowd of Hindus and Sikhs which was standing nearby. He denounced them furiously and said that their conduct towards the Muslims was horrible and disgraceful. This had a salutary effect on the crowd and the Sikhs swore on their *kirpans* that they would not kill a single Muslim.

16. COURAGE AND ENDURANCE

NEHRU liked those who had courage and endurance enough to suffer physical pain and inconvenience. He did not like to make a fuss about little physical troubles that he occasionally had. On September 12, 1955 at Khajuraho, two fingers of Nehru's right hand were rather badly injured. He was alighting from the car when a door suddenly banged on two of his fingers and they began to bleed. He was restless and in severe pain, but he did not talk about it. The injured fingers were bandaged and he returned to Allahabad after finishing his tour, his right hand in a sling. One could see in his face the pain that he was suffering, but he tried to give a friendly smile to everybody. All the hand-shaking that day was done with the left hand. Someone said, "Sir, I am sure you are in great pain, but you are facing it bravely." Nehru smiled and replied, "After all, it is a minor injury. Tell me, how are you?"

His fingers were painful and he had difficulty in dressing, shaving, eating and doing other things but he made no fuss about it. He wanted to enjoy his two hours' stay at Allahabad and let others also enjoy it and not depress his friends and admirers by talking about this mishap. However, when he was taking tea holding his cup in the left hand and looking rather uncomfortable, someone asked, "How are your fingers now?" He smiled and said, "Paining quite a lot, but nothing to bother about. They will be all right soon."

Nehru was capable of leading a hard life. He could put up with many inconveniences, and could stand heat and cold fairly comfortably. In summer, when scorching

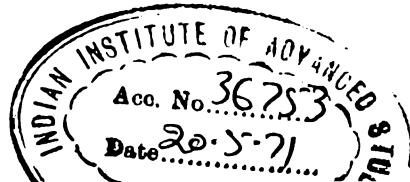
winds blew and Allahabad became a furnace, he used to sit in his study on the upper floor of Anand Bhawan and work the whole day. Nor were there any *khas-ki-tattis*. One day Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri went up to his room to meet him and he found it extremely hot. He asked Nehru why he stayed in that room during the day when it was so unbearably hot. Nehru said that he did not feel the heat particularly and was used to it, besides he liked working in that room, because he had worked there for years. Mr Shastri suggested that something must be done to make the room a little cool, but he did not accept the suggestion, saying, "One should get used to things and should not long for comforts and more comforts."

17. GREAT ZEST FOR LIFE

NEHRU loved speed, and slowness wearied him. He has written, "Perhaps I ought to have been an aviator so that when the slowness and dullness of life overcame me, I could have rushed into the tumult of the clouds and said to myself:

'I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.'"

Despite heavy work and worry, Nehru hardly ever lost zest for life. He was essentially a man of love and



laughter. He laughed heartily and loved to play with children.

In his rare bits of leisure, he made solicitous enquiries about those around him. Once in a while he managed to run away from files and conferences and relaxed. Many years ago, he went to see "Hamlet", but before going to the picture he read "Hamlet" all over again!

18. "REST IS A BETRAYAL"

NEHRU celebrated several birthdays in prison cells, and each birthday painfully reminded him and his people that one more year of a precious life had gone by. About birthdays he wrote, "My chief grievance was that my birthday came so rarely. Indeed I tried to start an agitation for more frequent birthdays. I did not realize then that a time would come when birthdays would become unpleasant reminders of advancing age."

Nehru never sought escape from hard work. He was one of the busiest men in the world. Even when he was not the Prime Minister, he did an enormous amount of work and very often, despite his good health, he felt extremely tired and exhausted. On July 27, 1942, he called me to his study in the afternoon to dictate something for the press. He started dictating, but he fell asleep in the midst of it. I quietly sat watching his tired

face. He relaxed on a comfortable arm-chair and snatched a few minutes of rest. When he woke up, he asked me how long he had slept and had I to wait for long? "Panditji, you dozed only for a few minutes. I wish you had rested a little longer. You seem to be very tired," I said.

"I do not think so. I am feeling quite fresh. Let us continue the work," he said abruptly.

After a few fleeting moments of rest the work began again. He always seemed to be repeating to himself, "Rest is the betrayal of the millions who never rest." He was really condemned to hard labour.

19. THE NEHRU TEMPER

THERE are innumerable instances of Nehru losing his temper. Let me narrate a good one that I know. In early 1955 he came to Allahabad to lay the foundation-stone of the Allahabad Railway Junction Station. A big show was planned, and several thousand rupees were spent in order to make the function a great success. The Minister for Railways and top-ranking officials of the railway department had reached Allahabad a few days before the function to supervise the arrangements. Everything was made spick and span. The railway department was in charge of the function. Money flowed freely and the arrangements were really good. However, at the

eleventh hour, a “tragedy” took place. The loudspeakers did not function and this infuriated Nehru. People from all corners assembled in the public meeting started shouting, “Can’t hear, can’t hear”. Nehru was disgusted. He had hoped to speak to the people of his home-town for quite some time, and he felt that men, women and children who had waited for long to hear him would go back disappointed. This hurt him, and he said, “What are these arrangements? This is amazing incompetence. This is scandalous incompetence. I am disgusted. These officials know how to sign papers only”.

Someone tried to explain, but Nehru gagged him saying, “No explanations, please. In two minutes a battle is lost. When a battle is lost, it is lost and I do not want to know how and why.”

He waited for a few minutes expecting the loudspeakers to return to life, but nothing happened for a long time. His patience was exhausted. “Someone deserves to be dismissed for this incompetence. You are incompetent; you are incompetent,” cried Nehru in anger and despair, pointing towards some officials who were standing on the dais.

Nehru rebuked the officials; the public enjoyed the fun. Some people wanted to leave the meeting, believing that they would not be able to hear Nehru, but others stopped them saying “Wait, Panditji will bang these officials further and that will be good fun.” The public waited. Nehru flared up again and again and shouted at the officials. Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Minister for Railways, was there at the meeting and felt greatly embarrassed.

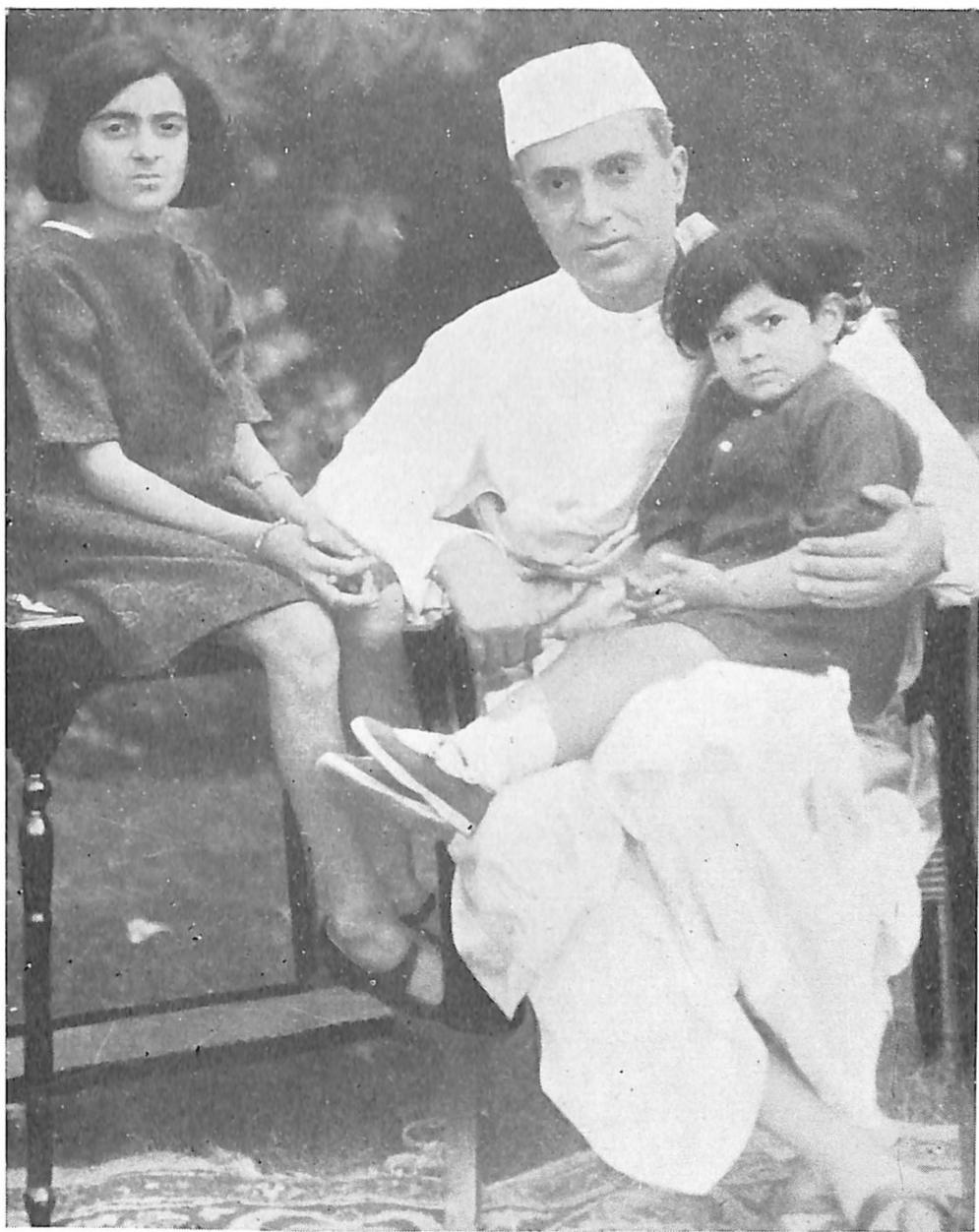


PLATE 5 — With His Daughter Indu and Niece Chandrakala

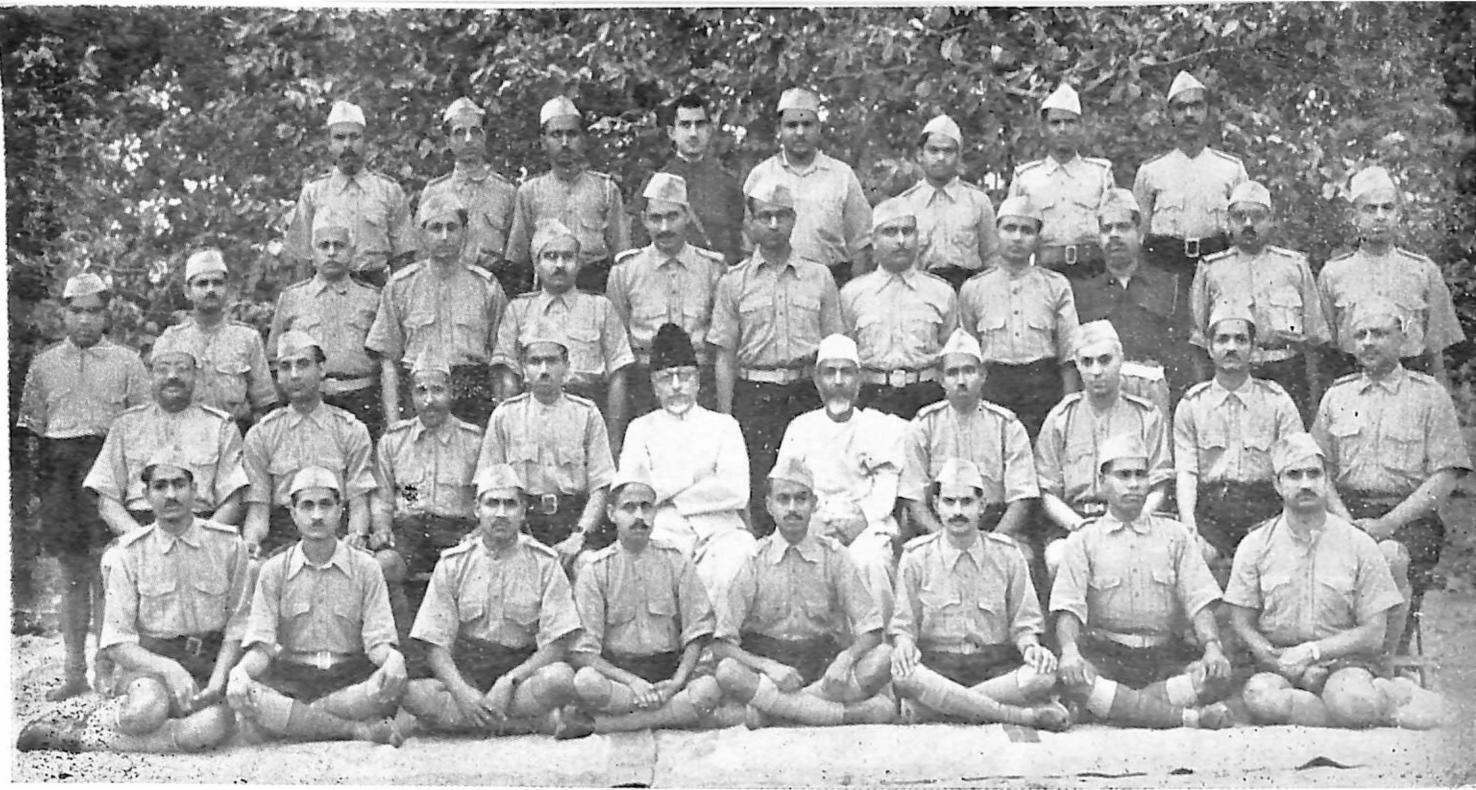


PLATE 6 — WORKERS' TRAINING CAMP AT HINDI VIDYAPITH, ALLAHABAD

Top Row (L. to R.) — Dr. B. V. Keskar (2nd), Sri Mohammed Yunus (4th), Sri Mangla Prasad (5th)

Second Row from Top — Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri (2nd), Th. Malkhan Singh (3rd), Sri R. S. Pandit (4th), Sri K. D. Malaviya (5th), Sri K. C. Tandon (6th), Sri Z. A. Ahmed (7th), Sri P. K. Khanna (8th), Sri Muzaffar Hussain (9th), Sri Ganga Sahai Chaube (10th)

Sitting on Chairs — Sri Sri Prakasa (1st), Sri S. K. D. Paliwal (3rd), Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (5th), Babu P. D. Tandon (6th), Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (8th), Sri A. G. Kher (9th), Sri Chandra Bhal (10th)

(The above are some of the prominent men in the group)

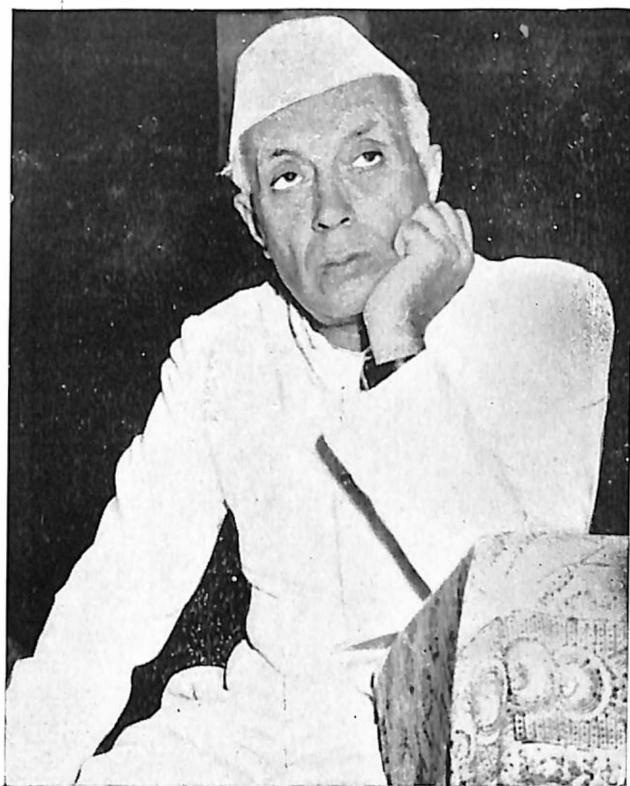


PLATE 7 — A Moment of Sorrow

Mr P. D. Tandon

Herewith a cheque for Rs 40/-
for 2 months for this phone.

This phone should be exchanged
and in future, i.e. Oct/Nov month,
payments for it may be started
from our office.

Vijay Lalchand Pandit

Lalchand Pandit

or

J. Nehru
21/11/54

PLATE 8 - To P. D. Tandon

After frantic efforts, the loud-speakers were set right and Nehru addressed the gathering and apologized to the people for the inconvenience caused to them.

After the meeting Nehru returned home a little sad; the officers looked weary and exhausted after a sound rating by the Prime Minister.

The reader may ask if the author of the book also had any taste of the famous Nehru temper. Those who had anything to do with Nehru could not escape it. However, I had only one such unhappily happy experience.

The late Mrs Purnima Banerji was the Secretary of the Allahabad City Congress Committee and she one day invited me to attend a meeting which was to be held in the City Congress Committee Office. I went there to report the proceedings, but as soon as Nehru saw me, he asked, "How are you here? It is not open to the press. You had better go out."

This abrupt command enraged me. Some Congressmen told him that I was invited to the meeting and then he called me in. I was unhappy, because it was my first experience of this kind as a journalist, and I was determined not to take it lying down. I sat in front of Nehru and I must have looked very angry. After a while he asked me again to leave the meeting. I left the place and was almost mad with anger. A little later I was again called in. I sat quietly, protesting non-violently. I tore all the papers that I had with me for taking down notes and struck the end of the pencil against the floor and sat frowning. Nehru watched all this and looked very annoyed at my non-violent protest.

The meeting ended and I quietly stood in a corner, feeling hurt and humiliated. Mrs Pandit and the late Mr R. S. Pandit came up to me and asked me to see them next morning at ten. Nehru saw them talking to me and he pulled aside Mrs Pandit saying, "You should not talk to a man who is not in his senses." And they all walked off. I returned home angry and revengeful. I said to myself that if I did not act courageously when I was young, should I do so when all my teeth were gone? The worst that could happen to me, if it could happen at all, was that I would be dismissed from the *National Herald*. And that was, after all, not much, I argued with myself. I drafted a letter, but could not decide whether to send it to Nehru or not. As I was typing it, the lights went out. I could not send the letter that day. Till late at night, I continued loitering on the lawns, feeling miserable and itching for revenge. I was very tired and fell asleep. Next morning when I woke up, I felt that I was stupid to have been so much agitated at the incident. "After all, Nehru is so good, and so charming when he is angry," I said to myself and seemed to have forgotten everything. But it was not so and after a few hours I felt that it was because of cowardice that I was not taking my "revenge" and was afraid to write an unpleasant letter to Nehru. Ultimately, I wrote the letter and dispatched it to him. It was a nasty note in which I strongly protested against his attitude towards me in that meeting. After dispatching it, I felt greatly relieved. My servant took the letter to Anand Bhawan and on his return he told me that Panditji was upstairs. The letter was sent to him. He came down promptly, angrily calling, "Tandon". Some-

one told him that I was not there and a servant had brought the letter. I heard the story with satisfaction. He had insulted me and I, too, had succeeded in offending him. I felt that we were quits.

I had an engagement with Mr R. S. Pandit that morning, and I went to Anand Bhawan, but dreaded facing Nehru that day. Mr Pandit took me to his study and started dictating a statement. As I was writing, in came Nehru. He stood by my side and said curtly, "*Ap ka khat mila, koi aklamandi ka khat nabi tha*" (Got your letter. It was not a wise one). I was confident of my attitude and I stood up promptly to reply. I measured a few inches taller than he and that gave me some kind of confidence. In measured tones I said, "There was no question of being wise or foolish. You insulted me and I thought I must protest."

"Protest!—protest for what? You are a funny man," he said angrily and pulled me out of Mr Pandit's study and asked me to follow him to the drawing-room.

"Do you think I insulted you deliberately?" he asked.

"I won't say that you insulted me deliberately, but you insulted me all the same," I said a little firmly.

"All the same, all the same," he repeated almost violently and pushed me into a sofa. I remember having made myself quite comfortable in it, because I had had little sleep the night before and was feeling very tired. I told him that if he insulted me publicly like that, no one would respect me in the city and it would be impossible for me to function.

He walked up and down the room calling me "a

strange man, a funny man!" And then added, "You claim to be a public man; you claim to be a journalist, but you are all nerves. My mind is full of national and international problems. I have no time to insult anybody. If you go to China, or Spain, if you...if you..."

At this stage I interrupted him saying, "There is no question of my going to China. I have not money enough even to go to Phaphamau" (a station next to Allahabad). This, it seemed, disturbed his chain of thought and he stopped speaking for a while and then asked a little concernedly, "What do you mean by saying that you have no money to go even to Phaphamau?"

I explained to him what I meant, and he said that that was a different matter altogether and again repeated, "You are a strange man. You are a bundle of nerves."

All this went on for a while and then either Mrs Pandit or the late Mr R. S. Pandit (I do not exactly now remember who) entered the room and said, "Tandon, don't you realize that you are annoying Bhai (brother) a lot?"

"Am I?" I enquired.

The unpleasant conversation had to come to an early end, because Nehru was dressed up in red shorts and khaki shirt (Congress uniform) and he was to go to Gorakhpur to deliver the historic speech for which he was sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

After this unhappy episode, I wrote a letter to my editor explaining the whole incident and sought his advice in the matter. I expressed my desire to be relieved of my job.

The editor summarily dismissed my letter saying,

“Do not be a fool. It means you have not yet understood Panditji.”

I continued going to Anand Bhawan as usual, but avoided coming face to face with Nehru.

One evening, I was lying on the Anand Bhawan lawns, waiting for some news. Nehru, after attending to his mail, came down for tea and looking at me he said rather brusquely, “Why are you lying there? Come here.”

I said to myself, “I was lying quietly on the lawns and yet Panditji shouted at me. But if he insults me today, but if he insults me today:....” I kept on repeating to myself as I walked up to him.

“Don’t you feel cold? Why don’t you sit on the verandah or in the drawing-room? Come and have a cup of tea,” he said a little softly.

I had avoided sitting on the verandah and was afraid to enter the drawing-room after the incident, and I was thoroughly unprepared to be invited to tea that evening by Nehru, whom I had offended only a few days before. However, I went to the dining-room and felt very embarrassed as I sat by his side for a cup of tea. He talked politely and I sank within myself. Any other man, after that day’s incident, would have sacked me from the paper of which he was the Chairman and would not have ever bothered about me. But Nehru was not like others.

The death of Mr Shyama Prasad Mukerjee, the Jan Sangh leader and an eminent parliamentarian, in a Kashmir prison, created much resentment in India. There was a demand for an immediate enquiry into the causes that led to his death. Leaders of the opposition parties in Parliament went to see the Prime Minister in that con-

nection. The situation in regard to Kashmir was very grave and Sheikh Abdullah was openly defying Nehru and the Government of India. Mrs Sucheta Kripalani, who then was in the opposition, led the delegation, was taken into confidence at the Prime Minister's office by a friend and was told that it would be desirable if the leaders of the opposition parties did not see Nehru that day as he was very worried and the situation in Kashmir was very serious. However, Mrs Kripalani said that she, at least, should meet him and he could confide in her. She saw Nehru and told him all that the mother of Mr Mukerjee and others had told her in Calcutta and how keen they were to have an enquiry into the whole matter. Nehru lost his temper and this hurt Mrs Kripalani and she said that she had gone there as a friend to co-operate with Nehru, but if he was not willing to give her a patient hearing, she might as well raise the question on the floor of the House. Nehru immediately realized that Mrs Kripalani had come to him because of the regard she had for him and banging his hands on the table, he said, "Sucheta, do not mind what I say. I am terribly worried. The situation in Kashmir is very delicate."

The storm of temper blew itself out and then Nehru met other opposition leaders also in a very friendly manner and explained the whole situation to them.

Nehru had a very high standard of decency. Political differences did not make him oblivious of normal, decent conduct in life. Human considerations always got priority in his scheme of things. Mr C. Rajagopalachari had differences with the Congress Working Committee in 1942, because he had accepted the theory of self-deter-

mination for the Muslims of India. This made him very unpopular in the country and even Gandhiji despaired of him. In April 1942, a meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held at Allahabad and C. R. went there to attend it.

People were greatly agitated against him and they were determined to greet him with black flags. A couple of us went to receive C. R. but he did not arrive by the scheduled train. Some Hindu Mahasabhaites had gathered with black flags at the railway station and were determined to shout anti-C. R. slogans on his arrival. When we returned to Anand Bhawan, Nehru came to know this and felt hurt. Next time when we were going to the station to receive C. R., he also got into the car, despite the fact that he was very busy at Anand Bhawan, saying, "Let us see who shows black flags to C. R. in Allahabad."

We were afraid that an unseemly situation would develop if Nehru went to the station, and some of us requested him not to go there as it was not necessary. We feared that he would get furious at the behaviour of some Hindu Mahasabhaites and things would get worse. However, he ignored our request and said, "You think I am afraid of them?" He went to the railway station and there were ugly scenes as we had anticipated. I clearly remember his asking me to tell him the names of those who were behind the demonstration and I did so. He snatched the black flags from some people and beat a few of them mildly with their own flag sticks. There was confusion on the platform and some unfortunate things happened. When Nehru met the leader of the demonstration, he shouted at him, saying, "You dare insult my

guest in Allahabad. I will have nothing to do with you in future. You shut up."

The Sabha leader bandied words with him and some students and coolies somehow felt that he was insulting Panditji and they got infuriated and started thrashing him with sticks and fists. This pained and baffled Nehru and we stretched out our hands to provide an umbrella for the Hindu Sabha leader to protect him from the heavy shower of blows and with great difficulty we rescued him. He was badly injured. Nehru too must have got a few blows on his hands while protecting him. My wrists and fingers were rather badly bruised. There was considerable excitement on this occasion and several demonstrators were beaten. However, C. R. did not arrive even by that train and the anti-C. R. demonstrators were as disappointed as we were. When C. R. at last came by another train, there was no demonstration !

The Sabha leader who was injured enjoyed popularity in the city and some people were angry at Nehru's behaviour, not knowing that he had no hand in the thrashing that the Sabha leader had got. Nehru had rather sought to protect him. It was the angry crowd which had pounced upon him and assaulted him. Later Nehru wrote a letter of apology to him and expressed his grief over the injuries caused to him.

Most politicians would have let C. R. face the music and let him know how unpopular were his views on self-determination, but Nehru did not take that attitude. He felt that C. R. was his guest and was coming to his home-town and it would be an insult to him if C. R. was treated with scant courtesy in Allahabad.

Nehru was often accused of losing his temper easily. It was true that this hurt people. He realized that, in a way, this was his weakness and often apologised for it. His anger did not last long and he meant no ill to anybody. Writing about this weakness he said, "I am afraid, I am a very weak mortal, making mistakes frequently and sometimes using harsh words, but always my mistakes have been overlooked and harsh words passed over."

Nehru often got sick of security arrangements. When he saw a crowd of people, he wanted to go to them and move among them, but he could not do it the way he liked. He did not want to hide himself in a closed car when people lined the roadside to have a glimpse of him. On August 8, 1955, when Nehru saw a huge car at the Bamrauli aerodrome which was waiting to take him to Anand Bhawan, he angrily asked, "What is this? Is there no open car? Always wrong arrangements! Is there no jeep? I will feel suffocated in that closed car. After some time you will start taking me in a coffin."

The officials at the airport were upset. They did not know what to do, because the Home Ministry's instructions were that the Prime Minister should not be taken in an open car as far as possible. However, a jeep was brought and its hood was partly removed and partly torn away quickly. When the open jeep was provided for his journey to Anand Bhawan, he became his normal self again.

Nehru, seeing that the district magistrate was not a light-weight, asked him if he could get into the back seat of the vehicle. "Yes, sir," said the perspiring

district magistrate and with an effort he managed to tumble into the vehicle, hitting his head against an iron bar.

Nehru had expected some such thing. He burst into laughter and the crowd joined him to the embarrassment of the district magistrate. But the same iron bar of the jeep hit Nehru on the head that very evening when he was returning home after addressing a public meeting. At night when the district magistrate was again seen at Anand Bhawan, there was laughter and Nehru enquired about his injury. They were soon seen showing their very minor head injuries to each other to the amusement of the people standing by.

20. A WORTHY LEADER

SEVERAL years ago, Sir Stafford Cripps, accompanied by Jawaharlal Nehru, went to Allahabad University to address the students. A big crowd had gathered there to hear the distinguished guest. Sir Stafford pulled out a paper from his pocket, looked at it again and again as he spoke, and somehow did not make much of an impression on the listeners. Nehru was not to address that meeting but as soon as Sir Stafford sat down, students from all sides of the hall shouted, "Panditji must speak, Panditji must speak. Pray, speak ! We are keen to hear you. Do not disappoint us."

Nehru laughed at this uproar and stood up reluctantly, affectionately complaining against students compelling him to speak when he did not want to. He addressed the audience in English and was heard with rapt attention. It was a great performance and we felt extremely proud of him. And once again, we vividly realized how great and able our leader was.

21. A LONE FIGURE

NEHRU, despite so much work and friendship, felt a little lonely. His colleagues used to say that he hardly had any friend to whom he could wholly confide his thoughts and feelings. Once an American couple went to see him at Anand Bhawan. He talked with them and when they came out I asked them to give me their impressions of Nehru. They said, "Oh, he seems to be feeling terribly lonely. We wonder if he can speak his heart out to anybody."

Nehru, despite enormous friendships all over the world, was a very lonely person. After his wife's death this loneliness had persisted with him and even in great gatherings he felt a little lonely. During Kamala's life, he was far too busy with national affairs to be able to spend enough time with her. After her death, Nehru realized how greatly she had influenced him. Those who knew her feel that if Kamala had lived, Nehru might

have been a different person. He did not marry again, because he knew that his orthodox countrymen who adored him, and whom he loved so well, would not like it. And more than that, as Mrs Huthéesing has said, when Nehru was younger, he might have felt that it would be unfair to Indira to give her a step-mother.

He has written in moving terms about his wife:

"With her inordinate pride and sensitiveness she did not want to come to me and ask for help, although I could have given her that help more than any one else. She wanted to play her own part in the national struggle and not be merely a hanger-on and a shadow of her husband. She wanted to justify herself to her own self as well as to the world. Nothing in the world could have pleased me more than this, but I was far too busy to see beneath the surface and I was blind to what she looked for and so ardently desired.

"In spite of her serious condition she clung to the future. Her eyes were bright and vital, her face usually cheerful. I had taken from her what she gave me. What had I given to her in exchange during these early years? I had failed evidently and, possibly, she carried the deep impress of those days upon her.

"Except for a little schooling, she had had no formal education. Her mind had not gone through the educational process. She came to us as an unsophisticated girl, apparently with hardly any of the complexes which are said to be

so common now. She never entirely lost that girlish look, but as she grew into a woman her eyes acquired a depth and a fire, giving the impression of still pools behind which storms raged. She was not the type of modern girl, with the modern girl's habits and lack of poise. Yet she took easily enough to modern ways. But essentially she was an Indian girl, and, more particularly a Kashmiri girl, sensitive and proud, childlike and grown-up, foolish and wise. She was reserved to those she did not know or did not like, but bubbling over with gaiety and frankness before those she knew or liked. She was quick in her judgement and not always fair or right, but she stuck to her instinctive likes and dislikes. There was no guile in her. If she disliked a person, this was obvious and she made no attempt to hide the fact. Even if she had tried to do so, she would probably not have succeeded. I have come across few persons who have produced such an impression of sincerity upon me as she did.....

“I felt empty and purposeless. I was going back alone to my home, which was no longer home for me, and there by my side was a basket and that basket contained an urn. That was all that remained of Kamala and all our bright dreams were also dead and turned to ashes. She is no more, Kamala is no more, my mind kept on repeating....

"My past life unrolled itself before me and there was always Kamala, standing by. She became a symbol of Indian women or of woman herself. Sometimes she grew curiously mixed up with my ideas of India, the land of ours which was so dear to us, with all her faults and weaknesses, and so elusive and full of mystery. What was Kamala? Did I know her, understand her real self? Did she know or understand me? For I too was an abnormal person with mystery and unplumbed depths within me which I could not myself fathom."

The same emotional streak is noticeable in his *Autobiography* where, referring to his father's death, he writes :

"I found it difficult to realize that he had gone. Three months later I was in Ceylon with my wife and daughter, and we were spending a few quiet and restful days at Nuvara Eliya. I liked the place, and it struck me suddenly that it would suit father. Why not send for him? He must be tired out, and rest would do him good. I was on the point of sending a telegram to him to Allahabad."

22. PRISON DAYS

FROM Naini Central Prison, Nehru wrote long, interesting letters to his daughter which are included in *Glimpses of World History*. In his first letter to Indira on her thirteenth birthday, he wrote, "On your birthday, you have been in the habit of receiving presents and good wishes. Good wishes you will still have in full measure, but what present can I give you from Naini Prison? My presents cannot be very material or solid. They can only be of the air and of the mind and spirit, such as a good fairy might have bestowed on you, something that even the high walls of prison cannot stop."

Very often Nehru in Naini Prison thought of his home, family and his comrades struggling outside. He gave vent to his feelings and emotions in his letters. He observed, "I have had time enough here in Naini Prison to read or write what I wanted to. But my mind wanders and I think of the great struggle that is going on outside, of what others are doing and what I would do if I was with them... Strange that we should be so near and yet so far away! In Mussoorie you were several hundred miles away from me. Yet I could write to you as often as I wished, and run up to you when the desire to see you became strong. But here we are on either side of the Jumna river—not far from each other—but the high walls of Naini Prison keep us effectively apart.

"Meanwhile you sit in Anand Bhawan, and Mummie sits in Malacca Jail, and I here in Naini Prison—and we miss each other sometimes, rather badly, do we not? But think of the day when we shall all three meet again!"

I shall look forward to it, and the thought of it will lighten and cheer up my heart."

Nehru never felt defeated in prison and the undying hope that India would be free never left him and it sustained him in moments of grief and pain. The cheering war-cry '*Inqilab Zindabad*' thrilled him in his cell as it did outside. Nehru in one of his letters observed :

"As I sat here today to write to you, faint cries, like distant thunder, reached me. I could not make out at first what they were, but they had a familiar ring and they seemed to find an answering echo in my heart. Gradually they seemed to approach and grow in volume, and there was no doubt what they were. "Inqilab Zindabad!" "Inqilab Zindabad!" The prison resounded with the spirited challenge, and our hearts were glad to hear it. I do not know who they were who shouted our war-cry so near us outside the Jail—whether they were men and women from the city or peasants from the villages. Nor do I know the occasion for it to-day. But whoever they were, they cheered us up and we sent a silent answer to their greeting and all our good wishes went with it."

Like all prisoners, Nehru eagerly waited for the interview day. Those who have been in prison, alone can tell what this day means for the prisoner.

"Perhaps, with luck, I may see all of you tomorrow. For tomorrow is my interview day, and in Jail the *mulāqāt ka din* is a great day. I have not seen Dadu¹ for nearly

¹ Pandit Motilal Nehru

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

H.G.WELLS
JULIAN HUXLEY
G.P.WELLS

To Indu Darling

With love and all good wishes for the coming
Year — and in the hope that a study of the
science of life will help her to learn the
greatest of all arts — the art of living.

Papa

New Year's Day 1935

Alvord District Jail

Do not be frightened by the size or weight of this book.
And do not, at first, try to read it from end to end, or else
you will get terribly bored with it. Dip into it and read
the chapters that interest you. There is plenty in it that
is interesting and that will help you to understand
the wonderful panorama and development of life.
Later, perhaps, you will read the whole book.
It is worth it.

PLATE 9 — To Indu

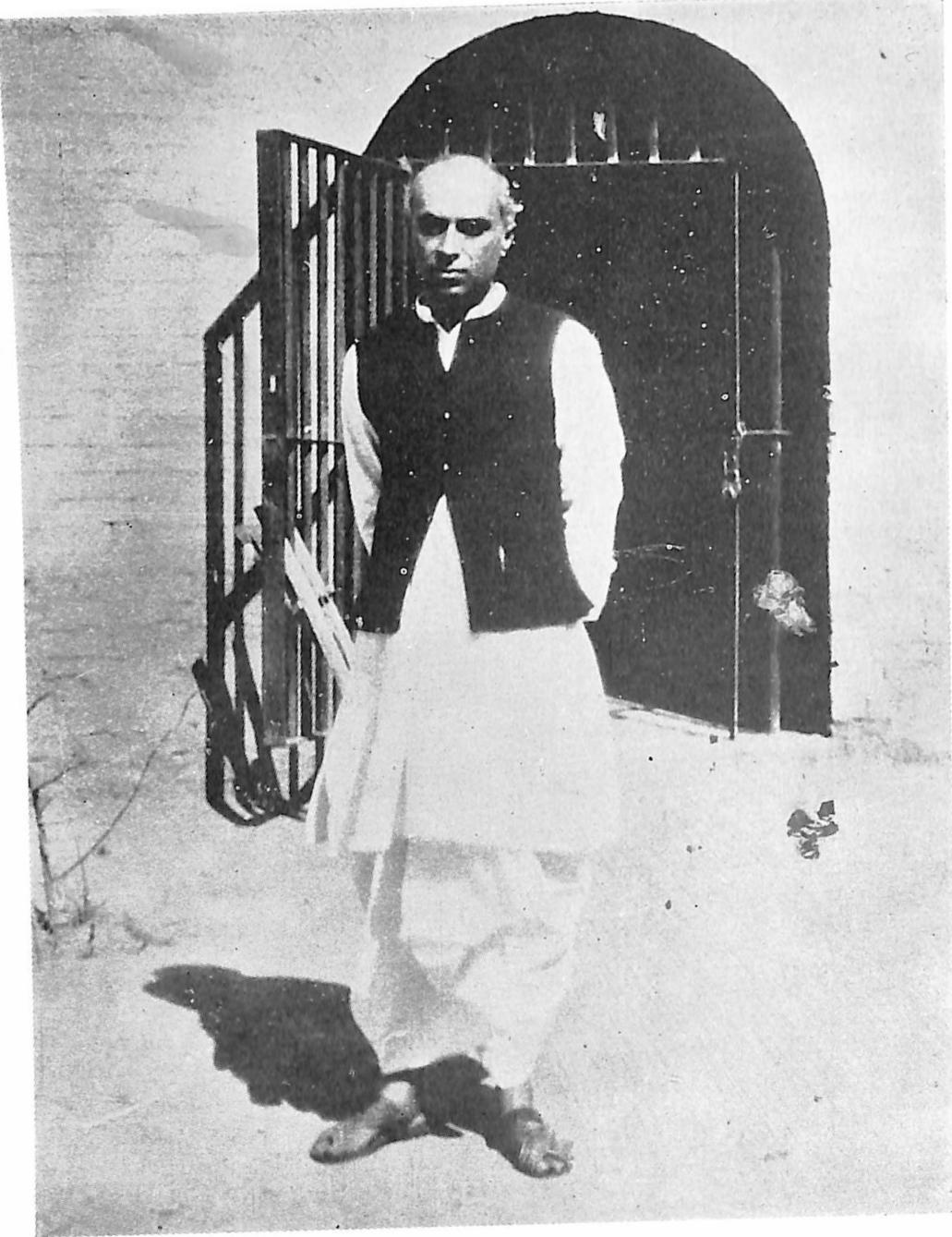


PLATE 10 – At The Prison Gate

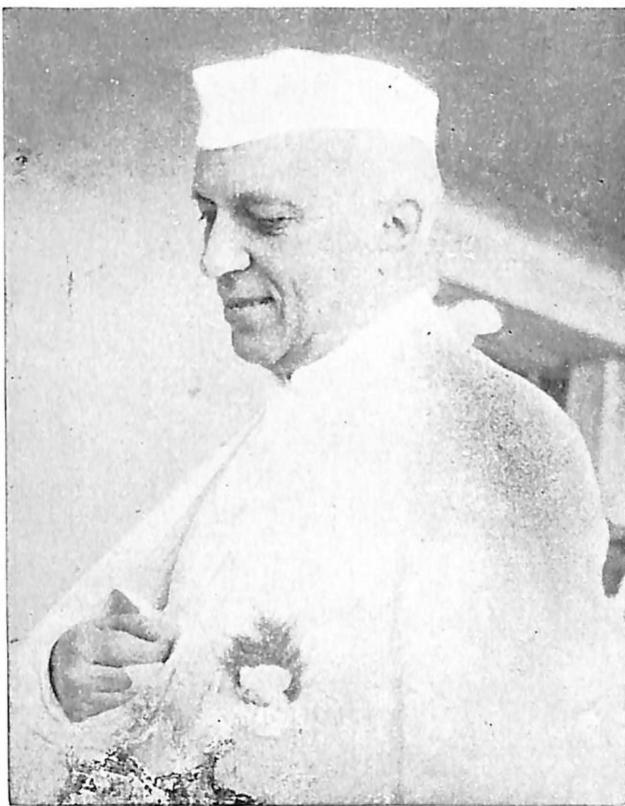


PLATE 11 — Smiling Through It



PLATE 12 — Enjoying a Joke

two months. I shall see him I hope, and satisfy myself that he is really better. And I see you after a long, long fortnight, and you will bring me news of yourself and of Mummie."

The dear ones did not turn up that day and it was a disappointment to Nehru. Next day he wrote : "None of you came today to interview us and the *mulāqāt ka din* has been rather a blank day. We were told that Dadu was not well."

Two days later Motilal Nehru and others interviewed him in the Naini Central Prison and he recorded the following in a letter :

"It was good to see you all yesterday. But I had a shock to see Dadu. He was looking so weak and ill. Look after him well and make him fit and strong again. I could hardly speak to you yesterday. What can one do in a short interview ? I try to make up for all the interviews and talks we have not had by writing these letters. But they are poor substitutes, and the make-believe does not last long ! Still it is good sometimes to play make-believe."

Little things of the outside world often have much significance and excitement for prisoners. Even the passing of an aeroplane over the prison cells excites them. In Nehru's words, "One of the welcome excitements of our prison existence at Naini was the passage of aeroplanes over our heads. Sometimes we were lucky, we saw a plane in the early winter morning when it was still dark and the stars were visible. It was a beautiful sight as it

sailed by against the dark background of the early morning sky."

Here is yet another interesting observation by Nehru, "In Naini there were thousands of parrots, and large numbers of them lived in the crevices of my barrack walls. Their courtship and lovemaking was always a fascinating sight, and sometimes there were fierce quarrels between two male parrots over a lady parrot, who sat calmly by waiting for the result of the encounter and ready to grant her favours to the winner."

Nehru has written, "I have developed strange habits in prison. One of these is the habit of getting up early, earlier even than the dawn. I liked to watch the coming of the dawn and the way it gradually put out the stars. Often I have watched the contest between the moonlight and the dawn, in which the dawn always wins."

Nehru spent many precious years of his life in the Naini Central Prison. He was cut off for a long time from the strife and struggle of the outside world and it must have oppressed him. Days in Naini Central Prison were dull and wearisome, but he busied himself with reading, writing, spinning, gardening and in other activities. Those were the days which tormented his sensitive soul.

23. "DO YOU KNOW JAWAHARLAL?"

I ONCE addressed a meeting at Ewing Christian College, Allahabad, which was presided over by Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri. The subject of my talk was "Do you know Jawaharlal?" I narrated several human stories about Nehru, and Mr Shastri also recalled a few interesting incidents of Nehru's life.

A day before the general elections in 1937, Mr Shastri said, Nehru went to address a big public meeting at Mirzapur and when he found that there was no loud-speaker for his use and people were rushing towards the rostrum, he shouted at the organizers and asked, "Have you never heard that in this world there is a thing called a loud-speaker? Have you never seen it? How am I to address this big crowd without a loud-speaker?" The local leaders at Mirzapur got unnerved, but that did not improve the situation and the crowd continued moving towards the dais till there was no space to put one's foot upon. It was all a sea of human heads. Nehru got irritated at the behaviour of the crowd and he jumped over them and started running over their heads. Then suddenly the crowd realized that Nehru had got angry and was leaving the meeting and they started shouting, "Sit down, sit down", and immediately everybody sat down quietly and he addressed the meeting.

When Nehru was returning home, he said to Mr Shastri, "Did you see my performance today—how I controlled the crowd?" Mr Shastri stated that he was impressed and added, "I was feeling bad that you were wearing your sandals and you trod over their heads."

Nehru told Mr Shastri that on account of his sandals he himself felt embarrassed all along but could not help it. "In the heat of excitement, I forgot all about it when I jumped," observed Nehru.

Another story that Mr Shastri related was about Nehru's considerate nature. After an election meeting in 1937 Nehru was returning to Allahabad with a couple of colleagues. He himself was driving the car. It was a cold, winter night and there was fog all around. It was difficult to drive, but he decided to see everyone home. As he was driving along a cow crossed the way and despite his best efforts the car hit the animal, breaking one of her horns. It was dark, and perhaps none noticed the incident, but Nehru stopped the car to meet the owner of the cow. After a few minutes some people passed that way and when they saw Nehru worrying about the accident, they requested him to get along and not to bother, but he did not leave before he made them promise to send the owner of the cow to Anand Bhawan next morning. When the man came and met Nehru, he got a substantial sum for the treatment of his injured cow.

24. HOW UNDERSTANDING !

Most people know about Nehru's being impatient of incompetence. Those who worked with him and lived around him knew how much he disliked inefficiency. They had to be extremely alert all the time in order to be efficient according to the Nehru standards.

One day at Anand Bhawan, Nehru called for his secretary, Mr S. D. Upadhyaya. He was not there. He was soon informed about his master's call. He was taking his food, but he left it and rushed to Anand Bhawan, his light body swinging left and right and loose, long garments obstructing his hurried march to the place. When he reached Nehru, his face was flushed and he seemed to be panting for breath. "Why have you come running?" asked Nehru. Upadhyaya told him that he was in his house having a meal and was a little delayed. "But have you finished your food or not?" enquired Nehru.

Upadhyaya looked away, feeling a little shy and slightly nervous, and then with some hesitation said, "I haven't finished it but there is no hurry."

Nehru felt sorry that his secretary was disturbed while having his food and he said, "No hurry! In future, do not come when you are called, if you are having your meal."

Nehru, no doubt, wanted efficiency, but not at the cost of human considerations.

25. HOW THOUGHTFUL !

FOR several years a Danish lady, Miss Anna Ornsholt, served as a governess to the children of Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit at Anand Bhawan. She was quite often in charge of the entire household and had to deal with the rather pampered servants of the Nehrus. One day the driver was rude to her and there was some unpleasantness between them. The driver did not know English and the governess knew little Hindustani, but both of them managed to convey their anger to each other. The driver in rage told the governess to "Quit India", a popular slogan which most people had learnt. This hurt the governess very much and she must have felt an alien, at least for a while, even in that friendly home, where she had spent several happy years. When Nehru came to know this, he realized the feelings of the Danish woman, and he was angry with the driver.

One of the Pandit daughters told me later that Nehru had asked the driver to submit a written apology to Miss Ornsholt and that was done.

26. DESIRE TO BE SELF-SUPPORTING

NEHRU at an early age became a whole-time Congress worker and he felt that he was a financial burden to his father. He mentioned this to Gandhiji. His desire was to stand on his own feet. The Mahatma wrote to Nehru :

“Shall I try to arrange for some money for you? Why may you not take up remunerative work? After all you must live by the sweat of your brow even though you may be under Father's roof. Will you be correspondent to some newspapers? Or will you take up a professorship?”

Nothing of the sort! He had no time for anything except politics. His dominating passion was to serve his people with all his might. He gradually realized that it mattered little if he did not earn as long as there was no urgent need for it. Serving the country in a big way was far more important than to make money.

27. A PROPHETIC JUDGEMENT

MOTILAL deeply loved his son. He brought him up in the lap of luxury and was very proud of him. Father and son used to exchange letters regularly when Jawaharlal was at Harrow. Here are some interesting extracts from them:

“You must bear in mind”, Motilal wrote, “that in you we are leaving the dearest treasure we have in this world, and perhaps in other worlds to come. We are suffering the pangs of separation from you simply for your own good. It is not a question of providing for you, as I can do that perhaps in one single year's income. It is a question of making a real man of you, which you

are bound to be. It would be extremely selfish—I should say sinful—to keep you with us and leave you a fortune in gold with little or no education.

“I think I can without vanity say that I am the founder of the fortunes of the Nehru family. I look upon you, my dear son, as the man who will build upon the foundations I have laid and have the satisfaction of seeing a noble structure of renown rearing up its head to the skies...

“I never thought I loved you so much as when I had to part with you, though for a short time only. Perhaps it is due to my weak heart. But my sense of duty to you is as strong as it ever was and as for the poor weak heart, it is in your keeping. I have not the slightest doubt that you will rise to all my expectations and more...

“I am not only quite satisfied with your work”, Motilal continued, “but really proud of you. If you only go on working steadily, as you are sure to do, the day is not far distant when your country will be proud of you...”

Motilal advised Jawaharlal to play as many games as possible and asked him to engage a professional coach whenever he liked. He regularly wrote to Jawaharlal’s teacher and got reports from him about his son’s progress. He ordered a Bombay firm to send mangoes regularly to Harrow.

Tendering advice was not a one way traffic. Son also advised his father to take care of himself. On October 19, 1906, he wrote, “Be careful about yourself, this time for my sake, and not work too hard as you unfor-

tunately often do. You may think this boldness on my part to give you advice, but, dearest father, it comes from my heart and as such, I hope, you will receive it."

Motilal was prophetic in his judgement about his son's future. He always expected much from him and the son hardly ever disappointed him. Talking about his son's connection with Harrow and admission into Trinity, he said, "It would be something for any man to speak about his connections with these great institutions, but in your case it will be the institutions who will own you with pride as one of their brightest jewels. I am sure they will profit as much as you will by your connection with them. Go on working, my dear boy, as you have been—good, solid, steady work, interspersed with a fair amount of recreation, amusement and exercise—and you will shine out as one of the leading lights of your time."

28. RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION

NEHRU got angry and felt very unhappy when stories of gross administrative incompetence were brought to his notice. He wanted the administrative machinery to move smoothly and efficiently. In October 1953, a few pensioners went to Anand Bhawan to complain to Nehru that they had not received their pensions for four or five years. The shivering, emaciated old men attracted a lot of sympathy at Anand Bhawan that day and almost

everybody advised them to place their case before the Prime Minister. Even the officials, who were present there, felt somewhat ashamed when they realized that the old men had not had their pensions for the last few years. One of them said to the pensioners, "You need not fear anybody. This delay is criminal. You must bring it to Pandit Nehru's notice."

The Prime Minister came out to meet the visitors and when he saw these old men standing in a corner, he went up to them and politely enquired, "*Kaho Bhai kya bat hai? Acche to ho*" (Tell me brothers what is the matter? I hope you are all right.) One of them almost broke down and with a trembling voice said, "*Huzoor char sal se pension nahi mili. Bhuko mar rahe hain.*" (Sir, we have not received our pensions for four years. We are dying of hunger.) Nehru was shocked. He exclaimed, "What? Have you not had your pensions for the last four years?" They bowed respectfully and replied, "Sir, what we are saying is correct. You can ask the district magistrate."

This deeply hurt Nehru. The face that had been wreathed in smiles took on the furrows of irritation. He promptly summoned the district magistrate, and when he appeared, said to him, "Do you hear what they say? This is shocking. This is incredible. What have you to say about it?" The district magistrate tried to explain things, but Nehru interrupted, "Explanations will not do. See to it that they get their pensions without any further delay."

The pensioners exclaimed with tearful gratitude, "*Huzoor salaam! Ap ki meharbani se bhukhe logon ka pet*

bhar jayaga." (Thank you, sir. Thanks to your kindness, hungry men will now have food.)

This incident so upset Nehru that he immediately turned away and was in no mood to talk to anybody for quite some time.

29. A CHILD WITH CHILDREN

MRS WELTHY H. FISHER, wife of the late Bishop Fisher of Calcutta, has made some interesting observations about the human side of Nehru. She once wrote, "It was a part of his genius and a part of his character that he enjoyed the people who came to him, and especially that he enjoyed the children. I had watched him on several different occasions, when he was relaxing from perplexing problems of state. Whenever there were boys to talk to, the Prime Minister became a boy. It was my good fortune in 1953 to be at Gwalior when the Prime Minister came there after his visit to Sanchi. There was an evening entertainment on the top of the fort given by the boys' school there. The students had put on an excellent play and had given a generous entertainment when they called on Nehru to speak. He ran to the microphone like a boy, and becoming one of them, said, "Everyone else that has been performing on this stage to-night has had an elaborate costume on. And how do you expect me to perform without one?" He ran on in this vein, and left the boys

a little higher in stature than they were before. After '*Jana Gana Mana*' had been sung, we remained standing to allow the Prime Minister to go out first to his waiting car and plane. This he did, but somewhere in the audience he had picked up a girl and a boy both five or six years old, and flanked by these two he walked briskly through the standing audience, laughing and joking with the children. A boy with boys and a child with children. Flexible and winsome, he gave everybody a good time including himself.

"His love of children was well-known but this was no ordinary love of children that we all possess to a more or less degree. His love for them was hilarious and cropped out on every occasion."

30. CHILDLIKE HABITS

AGE did not make him a cynic. His childlike habits and youthful exuberance remained. He loved to roam in the realm of thought, but he was capable of enjoying fun and frivolity also. In 1940 the inmates of Anand Bhawan played *holi* with great gusto. Nehru vigorously participated in the frolic and for about two hours coloured water flowed in the Anand Bhawan compound. There was a lot of fun that day. When a photograph was being taken on the occasion, Nehru climbed on Acharya J. B. Kripalani's shoulders and sat there adjusting himself with the help of

others. Kripalani kept on laughing and saying, "Jawahar, you are not a light little child. For goodness' sake get down." Nehru insisted on being photographed like that !

31. TOUCHING COURTESY

It often happens with great men that they have neither the time nor the inclination for smaller and less important things like descending from the heights of national and international affairs to commonplace matters. This was not the case with Nehru. Dr P. E. Dustoor, formerly of Allahabad University, has in his possession a letter which illustrates the graciousness that marks Nehru's dealings with his fellowmen. In 1947-48 Dr Dustoor made an extensive lecture tour of America. He had been sponsored by the East and West Association of which Pearl Buck was the leader and guiding spirit. At the end of his tour Pearl Buck requested him to return to America soon for another lecture tour. Dr Dustoor said he would like to, but was not sure whether the Government of India would release the dollars he would need for the purpose. Upon this Pearl Buck promptly said she would write to Nehru about it and it would be a simple matter. She was evidently as good as her word, for right enough Dr Dustoor received a letter from Nehru. The date of the letter, April 5, 1948, is particularly significant, for it was only a couple of months after the assassination of Mahatma

Gandhi. There had been the post-Partition holocaust in the previous September; the Father of the Nation had just been cruelly struck down; and Nehru was obliged to carry the entire burden of responsibility for running the country in these tragic circumstances. He might have been easily forgiven for overlooking such a small matter; that he did not must evoke our admiration and respect. Indeed, he not only replied to Pearl Buck's request, he even wrote directly to Dr Dustoor himself, "Pearl Buck has written to me about your very successful visit to America and has suggested that you should go there again in October next. I am very glad to learn of the good work you have done in America and I shall be happy if you could go there again. I am not quite sure what I can do to help you in this. Could you indicate to me what might be done?"

Reporting the episode Dr Dustoor said to me, "You can imagine how happy I was to get this letter. It reached me in Copenhagen in June that year after having chased me round America and half of Europe. I was touched by the courtesy and considerateness of the man. He had walked with kings but not lost the common touch."

NEHRU had a peculiarly tender regard for his old friends and acquaintances. This loyalty was evident even in minor matters. Mr A. P. Dube, who was an old acquaintance of Nehru, wrote to him a letter requesting him to give him a copy of his photograph which he wanted to put in the Bar Library of the Allahabad High Court. In March 1955 when Mr Dube approached Nehru at Anand Bhawan, he was delighted to know that Nehru had brought the photograph for him from Delhi. His face beamed with joy. When Nehru saw him, he said, "I have brought a good photograph for you. I hope you will like it." The old man was immensely pleased and when the picture was handed over to him, he was overwhelmed with joy and immediately left for the High Court with the precious gift in his hand.

Hardly had Mr Dube left Anand Bhawan when Nehru was faced with another visitor, this time rather a strange one. A woman known to the Anand Bhawan family approached him with a request. Nehru asked her what she wanted and she unfolded an application and requested him to sign it, because his recommendation would assure her achieving her purpose. "You want me to write a recommendation!" said Nehru a little amused and left the place. The woman having failed to get a recommendation from the Prime Minister, approached his daughter, Mrs Indira Gandhi. But there, too, she met with little success. Mrs Gandhi told her politely that she won't be able to help her. This did not discourage the determined woman and while leaving Anand Bhawan she

said, "All right, I will meet Panditji next time and I am sure he will help me."

33. INSTINCTIVELY GENEROUS

NEHRU was instinctively generous. When he gave you something, he felt shy and a little hesitant as though he felt that he had not given enough. He was particularly considerate towards those whom he personally knew and tried to help them in all possible ways. Sensitive men must have found it difficult to ask any favour from Nehru for they knew that he felt embarrassed. He helped people, forgot the good turns he did, never referred to these and never wanted anything in return. In the pre-independence era, all sorts of people approached him for help which was hardly ever denied. I remember that in early 1942 a Congressman, who had suffered much in the Satyagraha Movement, came to Anand Bhawan and asked Nehru for some money. He went up to his room and sent quite a substantial sum for the visitor through his private secretary. But the Congressman threw the currency notes away in the corridor of Anand Bhawan saying, "Nehru is my captain and I must get more money to get over my present difficulties." Nehru was informed about it and he quietly sent more money and the man went away saying, "*Jawaharlal Nehru Ki Jai*".



PLATE 13
Cheerio 1

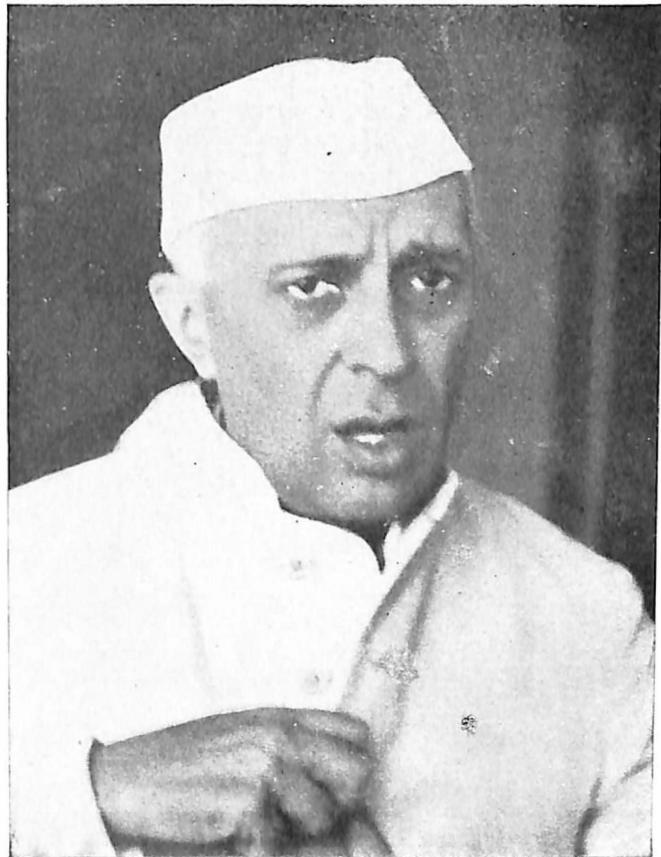


PLATE 14
Angry Nehru



PLATE 15

Playing With the Pet

PLATE 16
Carefree



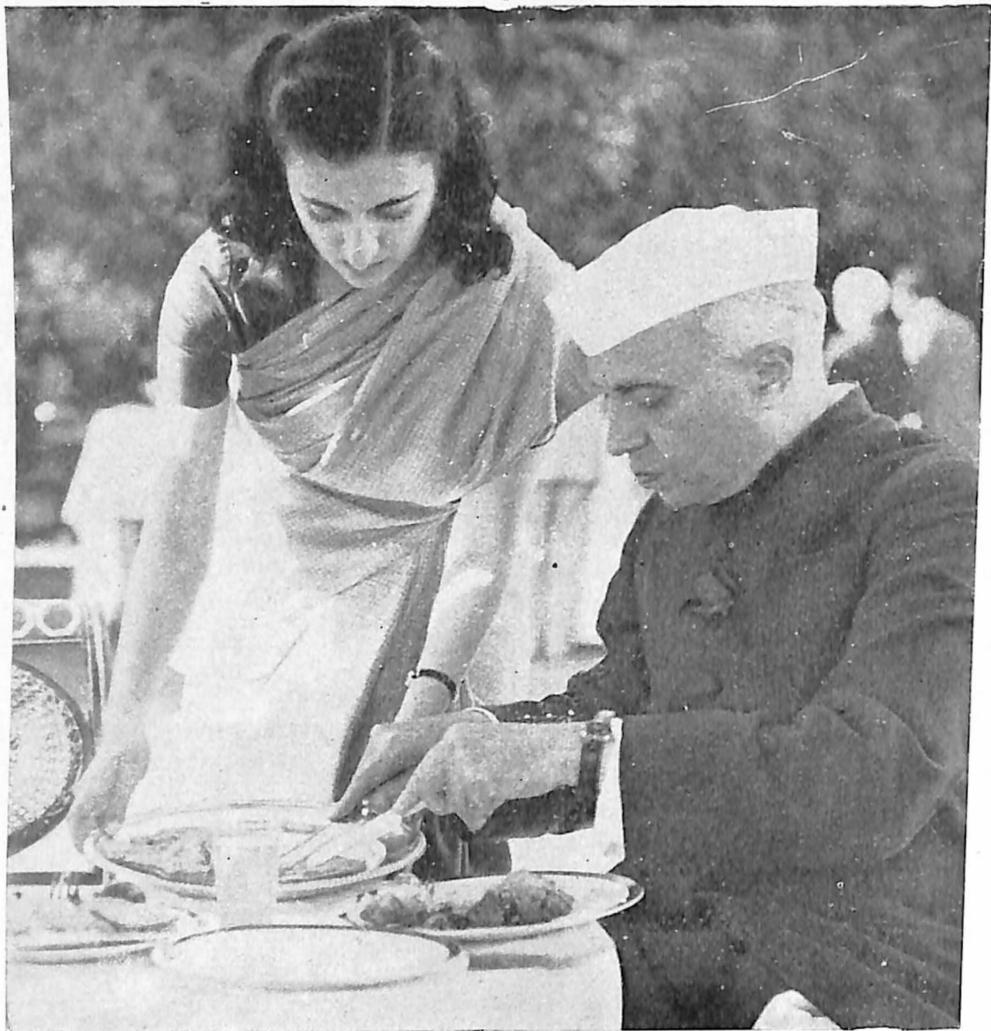


PLATE 17 — Having a Meal

34. THE NEHRU WAY

LET me recall a minor, personal incident which made a deep impression on my mind. There are many generous men, but very rarely does one come across people who are generous in the Nehru way. I was working as a correspondent of the *National Herald* in 1941 and I had no telephone at my residence. A telephone was badly needed and he came to know about it. As Chairman of its Board of Directors he could have asked the *National Herald* to instal a telephone at my place. But he did not do that. He said, "Look here, I understand you have no telephone. I cannot write to the *Herald*. Get a telephone and I will pay for it."

He immediately handed over a cheque to me. Again on August 2, 1942, when he was leaving for Bombay to attend that fateful meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, he called for me and said, "You know I am going to Bcmby. I am likely to be arrested. Take these forty-four rupees for the coming two months. Your phone should not be disconnected in the event of my arrest. Here is a letter also for you. Keep it with you and when you require money for the phone approach Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit or Indira Nehru Gandhi or B. N. Verma." The letter said :

"Mr. P. D. Tandon,

Herewith a cheque for Rs. 44/- for two months for the phone. This phone should be continued and in future, that is, October onwards, payment for it may be obtained from one of these—

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit,
 Indira Nehru Gandhi,
 or
 B. N. Verma.

J. Nehru
 2-8-42”

35. MOVING THOUGHTFULNESS

THAKUR CHANDRA SINGH GARHWALI, one of the military officers who had refused to fire on unarmed men in Peshawar and was consequently sentenced to transportation for life, was released in 1941, when Nehru was in Dehra Dun jail. Chandra Singh wrote a letter to Nehru after his release and acquainted him with his problems. Nehru realized that Chandra Singh had come out of jail after so many years, had little contact with the outside world, and would, naturally, welcome some help. He wrote the following letter to Chandra Singh from jail:

“*Priya Chandrasinghji,*

Ap ka patra mila. Apke chhotne ki khabar sunkar mujhe khushi hui. Ap Anand Bhawan me bahut itminan se jab tak chahen raben, hamare mehaman hokar. Mujhe afsos hai ki mai khud wahan nahi hun apse milne ko. Jab Bapuji apko bulaven, ap Wardha jaaye aaur jitne din tak kahen wahan unke pas rabiye. Phir vapas Allahabad akar Anand Bhawan me thairiye. Maine Mahadeva Bhai se zikra kar diya tha.

Apka, Jawaharlal Nehru”

{Dear Chandrasinghji,

Received your letter. I was glad to hear of your release. You may surely stay in Anand Bhawan as my guest as long as you like. I am sorry that I am not there to meet you. When Bapuji (Gandhiji) calls you to Wardha, go there and stay with him for as many days as he wants. After that, return to Allahabad and stay at Anand Bhawan. I have told Mahadeva Bhai about you.

Yours
Jawaharlal Nehru]

36. ANGRY BUT HELPFUL

It was dark. Nehru had just addressed a meeting in Panna (Vindhya Pradesh) on September 11, 1955. He was sitting in the car ready to go. The road was muddy. The crowd was huge. The car moved slowly and Nehru was watching the crowd. All of a sudden some villagers lay prostrate before the car. Some people said it was an attempt to stop the car and make him hear their grievances and others maintained that they bowed in "*Shastang Dandvat*" to pay homage and incidentally tell him their tale of woe also. Nehru looked at them for a while, trying not to be irritated and to let the thing pass. But then suddenly, he burst out, "What is this nonsense? Who has taught them to behave like this?" He jumped out of the car on to the slushy ground. His daughter tried to

stop him, but she was asked not to interfere. The security officers begged him not to go into the crowd in the darkness and he said, "What nonsense are you talking?"

There was a lot of confusion and the villagers who had stretched themselves before the car got frightened and tried to run away. The police also made attempts to drive them off as quickly as possible, but Nehru shouted, "What are you doing? Don't treat them like that. I want to meet them and talk to them and hear what they have to say." Soon the 'offenders' were brought before Nehru and he angrily enquired, "Who has taught you to behave like this? What do you mean by lying down before the car?" He reprimanded them for a while, and then asked them to tell him what they had to say. He heard them patiently and ordered that an enquiry should be made into their grievances immediately. The villagers went away shouting, "*Jawaharlal Nehru ki Jai*".

37. GENUINE FRIENDLINESS

WHETHER Jawaharlal Nehru was near at home or in far-away lands, he never forgot his friends. He was human in a unique way. Several years ago, he was in Yatung (Tibet) for two days after a very tiring journey. He was on his way to Bhutan. He was glad to have the opportunity of seeing things for himself in Tibet and what the Chinese had done to the people of the Land of the Lamas.

He stayed in Tibet with the Indian Trade Agent, Mr K. C. Johorey. Indian Officers were greatly heartened to have Nehru in their midst in those difficult days.

One day in Tibet he heard on the radio that Dr Bhagwan Das, father of Mr Sri Prakasa, had passed away. He looked visibly sad. He switched off the radio and asked for a little paper to scribble something. Almost immediately he wrote the following—

“En Clair—Foreign New Delhi—

Please convey following message to Sri Prakasaji—
Begins. The expected and inevitable has happened. Nevertheless it is sad to think of the passing away of the grand old man your father. Indira and I send you our love from far-off Tibet—Jawaharlal.” He handed it over either to the Indian Trade Agent, Mr K. C. Johorey or his wife, Mrs Sudha Johorey, with the direction that it should be immediately sent to Mr Sri Prakasa in India.

The officers there were very much impressed the way he wrote the message. He carefully gave every minute instruction in regard to its transmission. He didn't forget to write En Clair (in clear language) because he knew that the message might be sent as usual in code as it was from the Prime Minister.

Wherever Nehru went he charmed the people. In Tibet big crowds followed him despite the obstacles placed by the Chinese officers. He drew people like a magnet. There was something really very magnetic about him. Mr Johorey said that the officers in his presence felt inspired and encouraged and were willing to take to most hazardous undertakings at his bidding. Nehru was India's pride and glory !

NEHRU was highly emotional. He was greatly attached to his friends, family and comrades, and in a very human way. When his mother was lathi-charged by the police, he was in jail. He was greatly agitated over it. Writing in his *Autobiography*, he said, "My mother was knocked down from her chair, and was hit repeatedly on the head with canes. Blood came out of an open wound in the head; she fainted, and lay on the roadside...I wondered how I would have behaved if I had been there. How far would my non-violence have carried me? Not very far, I fear, for that sight would have made me forget the long lesson I had tried to learn for more than a dozen years, and I would have reckoned little of the consequences, personal or national."

Nehru always had great respect for Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and once in a distressed state of mind in jail, this emotional attachment took the form of a strange dream. Writing about it Nehru had said, "In the heat of that summer afternoon I dozed off, and I remember having a curious dream. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was being attacked on all sides and I was fighting to defend him. I woke up in an exhausted state, feeling very miserable, and my pillow was wet with tears. This surprised me, for in my waking state I was not liable to such emotional outbursts."

He often suppressed his feelings, but he was an intensely emotional being. His deep emotions were elegantly mirrored in his writings and exquisite face.

39. HIGH STANDARDS

My mind goes back to 1937 when for the first time I saw Nehru at close quarters. He was attending to some papers in the All-India Congress Committee office at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad. I went to see him in connection with some trouble over the hoisting of the national flag at the Sir P. C. Banerji Hostel of Allahabad University of which I was a resident in those days. A big map of India was hanging behind him on the wall and he looked at it a couple of times. When he had finished his work he asked me to tell him briefly what I had come for. I acquainted him with the situation at the hostel and then asked him when I could see him again. He said, "*Kabhi na aao to babut accha ho*" (it will be very good if you do not come at all). I felt a little irritated and then suddenly he laughed and asked me to see him next day at Anand Bhawan. I reached there at the appointed time and when he saw me, he started saying, "In this country people have a habit of wasting time."

I felt a little embarrassed and told him that I could come at some other time if he was very busy. "No, I am not referring to you, sit down and I will just talk to you," he said politely and I felt relieved. To my surprise he continued talking to me for about an hour, and all the time I was eager to leave him as quickly as possible, because I did not want to be counted amongst those "who have a habit of wasting other people's time". He told me that an English couple were living in the next room and he never heard their voices, but if two Indians were there instead they would talk so loudly that it would

him to her. He seemed to be irritated with her and said, "Yes, she has a habit of dragging others into her own quarrels," and walked away.

I did not know what to do and how to convince Nehru that she had written to him palpable falsehoods against me and she was not to be believed. Perhaps, he knew that.

Those days, I was living in Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, by the courtesy of Acharya J. B. Kripalani, the then General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. I consulted a few friends there in regard to the letter that was sent by that woman to Nehru and I decided to address a letter to him explaining my position.

I remember having written something like this :

"I understand that someone has sent a letter to you against me. I may be permitted to say that she has indulged in terrible untruths. I know how you hate petty, personal quarrels of individuals and yet I am writing to you about this matter. If you are interested in hearing the other side, you may send for me."

He did not send for me. He never referred to it. I am sure the letter did not prejudice him against me. He treated me fairly despite the fact that a person very well known to him had bitterly complained to him against me. I felt happy that Nehru generously forgot all about that letter and did not say anything to me. But the woman had shown remarkable ingenuity for concoction.

41. NOBLY SENSITIVE

NEHRU fumbled for words when he spoke in Hindustani. About thirty years ago, he went to unveil a portrait of Rabindranath Tagore in the Sir P. C. Banerji Hostel of Allahabad University. He had deep admiration and love for the poet, who had died when Nehru was in jail. He saw the picture of Tagore hanging on the wall and old memories crowded before his vision. He was lost in thought. He addressed the audience on the genius of Tagore. He spoke with feeling. He was choked with emotion and suddenly he concluded his talk with the sentence — "*Mujhe khushi hai, tasvir be-naqaab karne main.*" (I am happy to unveil the portrait.) Later I heard many students repeating again and again the last sentence of Nehru's speech, not because there was much in that sentence, but because of the way he had said it.

Nehru was a man of varied tastes. Many years ago he visited Mohen-jo-daro and he was so much obsessed with the glory of ancient India, that for over a month after his visit wherever he went, he invariably talked of Mohen-jo-daro. At Allahabad University he spoke on this subject and held his audience spellbound. He concluded his speech with this quotation :

*“Lord though I lived on earth, the child of earth,
Yet was I fathered by the starry sky.”*

NEHRU instinctively revolted against injustice and could never tolerate it, particularly when it was done before his very eyes. Here is a story which tells of his instinctive reaction to injustice. On August 9, 1942 he was arrested along with other members of the Congress Working Committee and was on his way to Ahmadnagar Fort. The news had gone round the country and there was great resentment at the arrest of the national leaders. When the train reached Poona, a crowd of young boys shouted, "*Gandbiji ki Jai*", "*Jawaharlal Nehru ki Jai*", and the police threatened to lathi-charge them. Nehru heard it and he rushed to the door of the compartment angrily shouting, "To hell with the lathi-charge. Dare you lathi-charge the boys?" Nehru could not go out of the compartment as the way was totally blocked by a huge police officer whom he could not dislodge from his position. This further infuriated him and he leapt out of the window of his compartment regardless of the consequences and was making for the sergeant who was the offender, but a European police officer, Mr Sharper, came to the rescue of the sergeant and grasped Nehru firmly in his powerful arms. In the words of Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "Jawahar struggled hard to wriggle himself out of Mr Sharper's iron embrace and made the best of the situation against a fool of an Indian constable who came within reach of his fist and free arm. As the situation was thus developing, down jumped Shankerrao Dev out of the window and was rushing towards Jawaharlal obviously to release him, uttering as he ran, cries to that

effect. But his progress was impeded by some policemen who suspended him with his bare *langoti*, by legs and arms, and restored him to his compartment. So was Jawaharlal helped to the compartment too and the train steamed off from Poona."

43. NEHRU AS A NURSE

NEHRU was a good nurse. If you were in his company and fell ill, you could depend upon his affectionate care. I am told that he used to keep vigil night after night to attend on his ailing colleagues in Ahmadnagar Fort. "The patient feels confident in his presence and the trouble is considerably reduced," said a colleague of his.

Nehru and other members of the Congress Working Committee were imprisoned in Ahmadnagar in 1942. He was very helpful to his colleagues. He attended most devotedly on those who were ill and helped them all in gardening and sports. Every day the little garden in that gloomy place improved due to the labours of Nehru. He was always busy "digging and delving, sieving and stocking, weeding and watering."

"Nehru used to be up and about quite early," said Dr Pattabhi, "engaged in preparing, arranging, cleaning and cooking things for one and all, toasting bread, preparing omelette, frying potato, supervising the 'cooker', cutting beet-root, slicing tomato and what not. In the pantry too he was equally alert."

44. "LIVERY OF FREEDOM"

HE understood things quickly and reacted to situations sharply. He had a knack for epitomising feelings and reactions in a phrase. He described khadi as a "livery of freedom". This immensely pleased Gandhiji and he wrote to Nehru, "Your calling khadi 'livery of freedom' will live as long as we speak the English language in India. It needs a first-class poet to translate into Hindi the whole of the thought behind that enchanting phrase. For me it is not merely poetry but it enunciates a great truth whose full significance we have yet to grasp."

45. NEHRU AS AN "ATTENDANT"

MOTILAL NEHRU was struck by Jawahar's concern for him when both of them were in jail together. He wrote, "Hari would do well to take a leaf out of Jawahar's book in the matter of serving me. From early morning tea to the time I retire for the night, I find everything I need in its place. The minutest detail is carefully attended to and it has never become necessary to ask for anything which had so frequently to be done at Anand Bhawan involving a fair amount of shouting. Mahmud lends a helping hand now and then but the chief burden falls upon Jawahar. I hate myself for being so lazy and taking up such a lot of Jawahar's time which could be much better utilised in other ways. But he anticipates everything and leaves

nothing for me to do. I wish there were many fathers to boast of such sons."

46. ROBUST HEALTH

NEHRU enjoyed robust health and he was proud of it. He took regular exercise and was rarely below par. Writing about his health he once said, "I had been fortunate about my own health, and in spite of the strains and irregular life of Congress activity I had, on the whole, kept well. Partly, I suppose, this was due to a good constitution I had inherited, partly to my care of the body. Illness and weak health as well as too much fat seemed to me a most unbecoming state of affairs, and with the help of exercise, plenty of fresh air, and simple food, I managed to keep away from them." This was as it should be, for his good health was not only his great asset but the nation's too.

47. A SYMPATHETIC SOUL

SUFFERING in any part of the world struck a sympathetic chord in Nehru's heart. He was surprised if people referred to tragedies and casualties lightly and indifferently.

Nehru visited the *National Herald* office as often as he could when he was the Chairman of its Board of Directors.

One day, he walked into Mr Chalapathi Rau's room and asked him about the latest news. He casually said that some twenty-five people had been killed in an air-raid on London. Nehru was a little surprised at his casual reply and said, "Some twenty-five. Don't you think it is horrible enough?"

Referring to this incident, Mr Chalapathi Rau, who is now editor of the *National Herald*, has written, "That was the severest rebuke I had ever received in my life, I felt. I was no longer callous, and I hope I have had that lesson in my mind, whenever I have known of suffering in any part of the world."

Yes, readers of the *National Herald* are witness to it.

Nehru's vision was not limited to India; he saw his country in a world setting. Fascist tyranny in Spain roused his indignation. The bombing of Yalu affected him deeply. To him the miseries of mankind were his own and would not let him rest. He was an aristocrat turned revolutionary; an agitator had become the chief administrator of his country. Tenderly brought up, he was a hardy man who refused to luxuriate in the creature comforts of life that surrounded him at the Prime Minister's House.

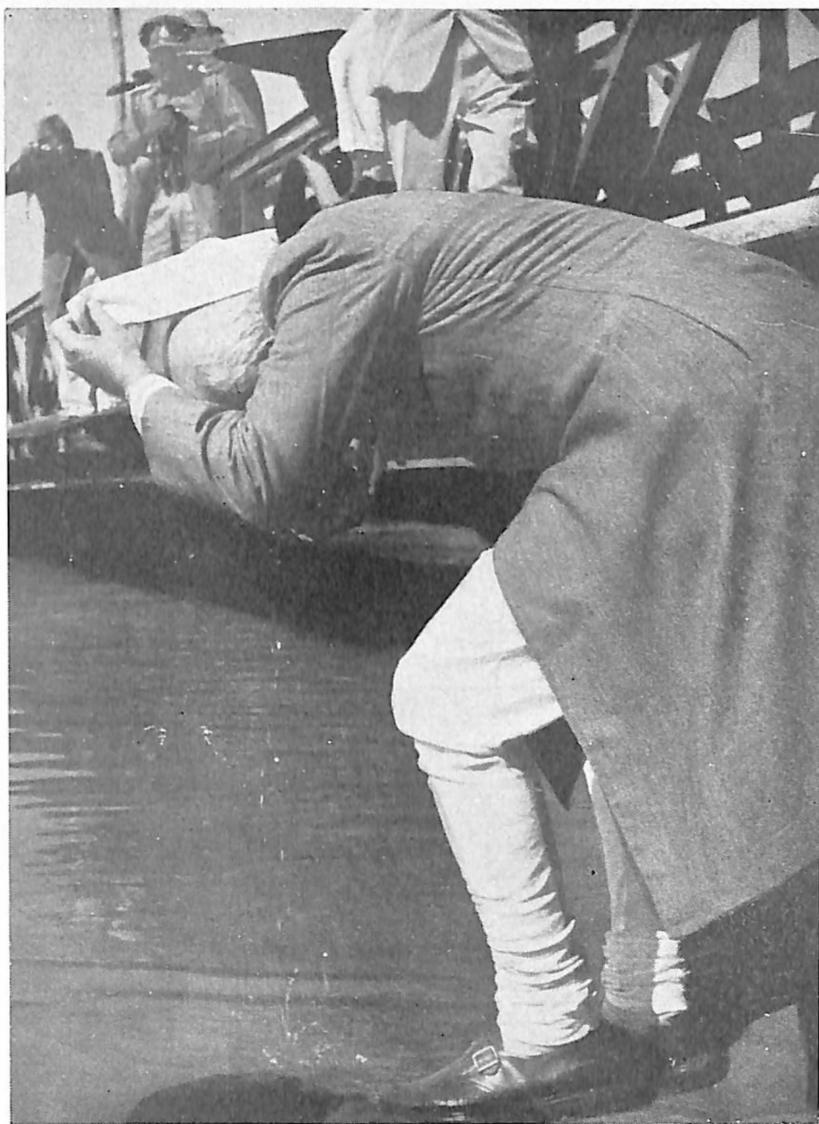
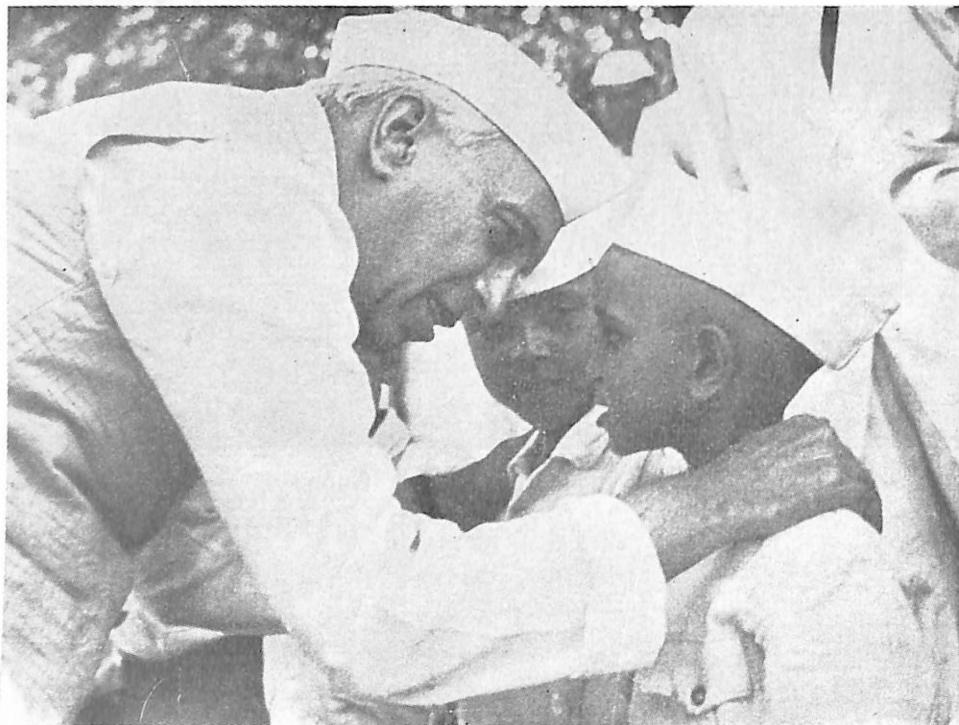


PLATE 18 — On the River Ganga

PLATE 19 — With His Young Friends



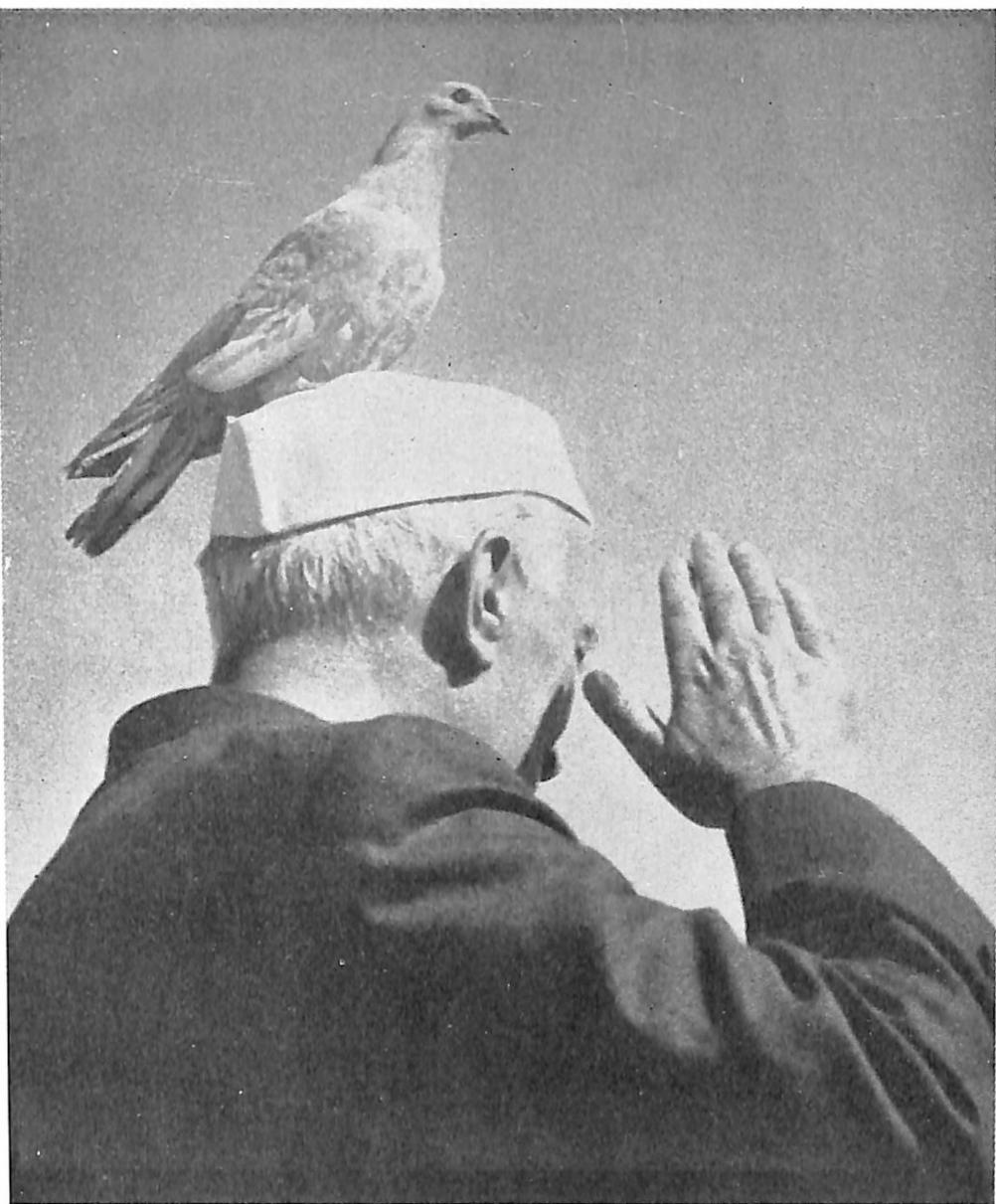


PLATE 20 — Prince of Peace

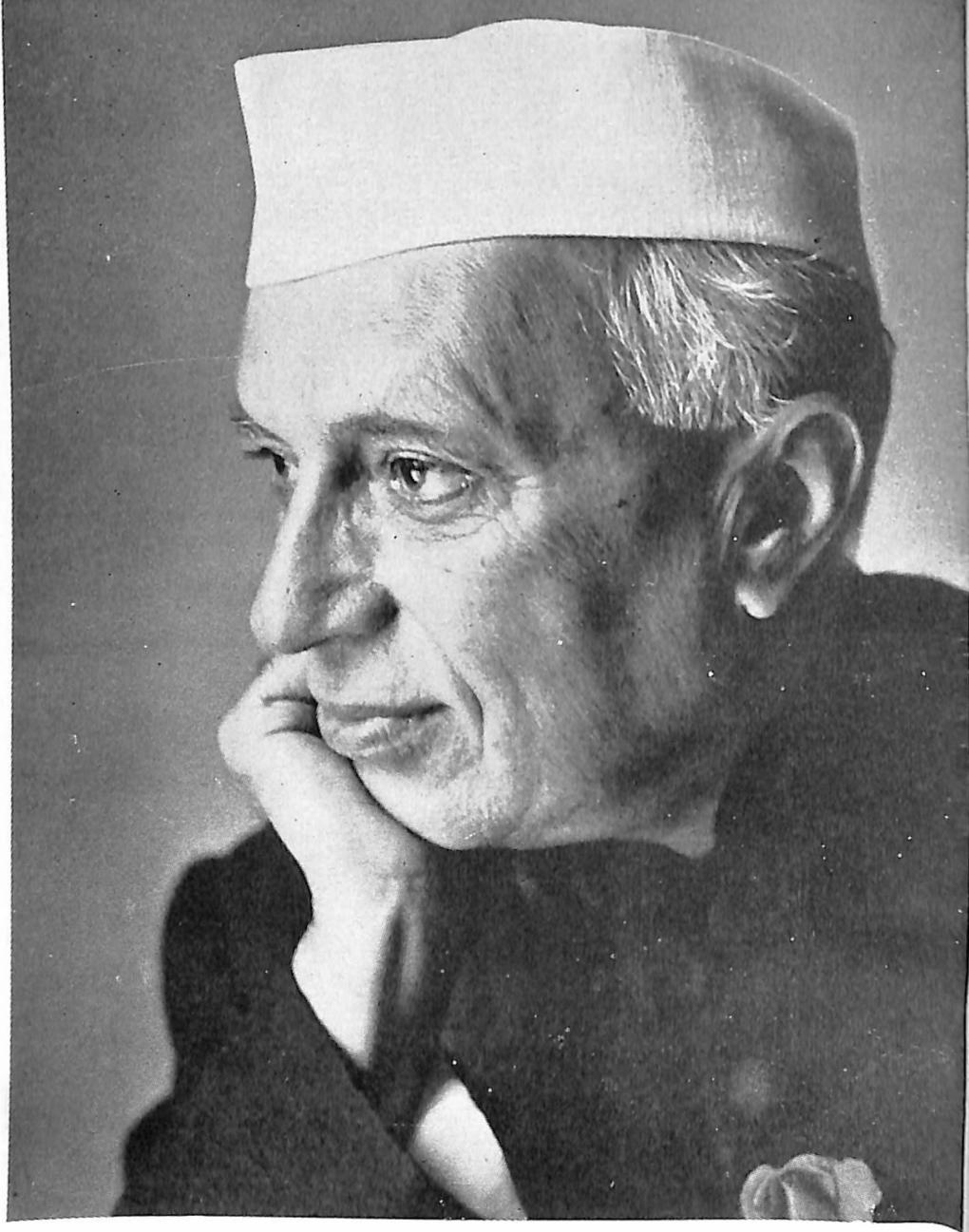


PLATE 21 — The Thinker

48. TREMENDOUSLY POPULAR

NEHRU had a genuine love for the masses. His highest ambition was to bring light and cheer into the homes of the poor. People loved him and he was proud of his popularity and often felt overwhelmed with the affection that people bestowed upon him. Whenever they saw him they ran after him and looked at him with gaping eyes. Whenever they could, they touched his feet and cheered him. They laughed, when he smiled; they looked sad, when he frowned; they were frightened, when he was angry. His greatest strength was his popularity with the masses. He often challenged the most important men in the country, when he differed with them and felt that they were forcing things on him. He occasionally sought, unconsciously and indirectly, a vote of confidence, when he said—"Either follow me or leave me." None dared leave him.

49. "I AM ONE OF YOU"

NEHRU wanted people to be disciplined and have self-respect. He did not like them touching his feet, because he felt that it was not very dignified and was a bad habit which should be discouraged. He got irritated when people touched his feet. He forbade them politely, but very often they did not heed his advice in this matter. One day talking to a group of people, he said, "Bhai,

why do you touch my feet? I am one of you, I am nothing in particular. You should not touch anyone's feet. Keep your head high and back erect. You should not bow before anybody."

50. CONCERN FOR THE SICK

NEHRU and his wife Kamala used to take very great interest in the Congress Hospital. When Kamala was going to Switzerland for treatment, she requested Gandhiji, if she died in Europe, to try to see that the hospital which Nehru had established in Swaraj Bhawan and which she had laboured to keep alive, was put on a permanent footing, and Gandhiji told her that he would do what he could.

Whenever Nehru got time in Allahabad, he visited the Congress Hospital and made enquiries about the late doctor, K. C. Mitra, who was medical superintendent of the hospital almost since its inception.

Nehru frequently visited the hospital in the old days. He would go round and meet the patients; his presence always cheered and comforted them.

Dr Mitra one day almost regretfully stated that he had treated several eminent leaders, including Motilal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and J. B. Kripalani, at least, for minor ailments, but had never had an opportunity of treating Jawaharlal, not that Nehru avoided going to Dr Mitra, but that he hardly ever fell ill.

Once an old Congress worker was admitted to the hospital and Nehru went there daily to see him and help him in all possible ways. Dr Mitra, recalling the incident, said, "When the old man was dying, he told Nehru that he did not mind because he was fortunate enough to have seen Nehru's face so many times during the last days of his life."

51. OVERBURDENED WITH AFFECTION

HE was highly sensitive and very much alive to the fact that his countrymen sincerely loved and respected him and obeyed his commands ungrudgingly. He was tragically aware that he had not been able to do all that the men and women of India expected of him and the achievements of his Government were far below the expectations of the people. Yet he struggled hard against mighty odds and never despaired. He was determined to serve his countrymen till the last breath of his life. He had said :

"I have had such honour and glory as no individual is likely to have. I have been overburdened by this tremendous affection of the people. You made me your Prime Minister, that surely is a place of great responsibility and great honour. To be the Prime Minister of a country like India is a tremendous responsibility. But the affection and honour that you have given me is something which no Prime Minister is likely to get. For that, I am infinitely

grateful. The place you gave me was the place in the hearts and minds of the millions of people in India. I wonder about it. I am in the evening of my life, and yet there is the old fire which still burns in me and till my body is reduced to ashes I shall serve the people, who have given me so much confidence and affection, to the utmost of my ability."

Nehru was a dreamer and an idealist and I often wonder if he should have taken to this horrid business of politics but this mover of men could not keep away from it because he was born at a time when his fellow-countrymen were groaning under the yoke of foreign rule and were engaged in a struggle to achieve freedom.

52. TOUCHING CONCERN

NEHRU's concern for his employees and other poor men around him was touching. Even in jail he did not forget them. When the Anand Bhawan sweepress was alive, he always met her whenever he came to Allahabad and made solicitous enquiries about her. I remember that in 1943, he wrote a letter to his sister from Ahmadnagar Fort asking her to get the house of the old woman repaired as the rains were about to set in. In another letter, he said that the pay of the Anand Bhawan servants should be increased because in the absence of the Nehrus the responsibility of watchmen and others had considerably

increased. Only Nehru could think of increasing the salaries of servants when they had no work to do !

He once wrote from jail to his sister that on January 26, Independence Day (now Republic Day), the Anand Bhawan employees should, as usual, be given uniforms. He added that Ganga, a former employee of the A.I.C.C. office, who occasionally carried his mail to the post office, should be included in the list. Despite big problems that almost always occupied his mind, he never forgot his servants.

53. GANDHI LOVED NEHRU

GANDHIJI liked Nehru for his human qualities and wide vision. He was extremely fond of him and, in fact, treated him like his own son.

In 1946, I brought out a book on Nehru and requested Gandhiji to write a foreword to it. He sent it along with a personal letter in Hindi which said;

“Poona, 30-9-45

Brother Tandon,

I am sorry that I could not send anything for your book earlier. One reason was that I was short of time and the other was my unwillingness to write anything. But how was it possible for me to refuse to write anything on brother Jawaharlal? Now I only hope that my foreword will not reach you too late.

Yours
M. K. Gandhi”

MRS PANDIT's description of the human qualities of her brother makes delightful reading. In 1944, writing for my book, *Nebru Your Neighbour*, she said :

“But above all he is human and it is for this reason he is most loved by those who really know him. To see him at his best one must watch him in the family circle—listen to the laughter and the fun which fill the room when he is there, watch him playing with little children, look at his face when he is ministering to the need of some sick person. Then you see the real man and you get a glimpse of the amazing power he has of entering into the feelings of other people, of being able to share so fully their joys and sorrows... You see also his strength and the depth of his love.

“Jawaharlal is a lovely person. Look at him when he is deep in thought. His eyes gaze into the future, sad eyes in a pale stern face. What does he see—What does he think? The things for which the best years of his life have been spent are crumbling around him, ideals are being mercilessly shattered, the world is steeped in hatred and cruelty and ignorance. Yet one knows instinctively that Jawaharlal is undaunted and his eyes see through the darkness to that new world-order which must come and of which he is the symbol.”

Many tributes have been paid to Nehru, but Gandhiji's words of praise for him are the most accurate and true. Said the Mahatma, "He shines easily as father, brother, writer, traveller, patriot or internationalist. Nevertheless, it is as an ardent devotee of his country and its freedom on whose altar he would sacrifice all his other loves. His nationalism is equal to his internationalism."

55. A STALWART COLLEAGUE

NEHRU was closely associated with the *Independent*, an English daily, which was started by his father at Allahabad and which later closed down. He did not have a very happy experience with it and perhaps decided never to associate himself with any newspaper in future. However, he became the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the *National Herald*, a Congress daily, which was started at Lucknow in 1938, and occupied this position until he joined the Government of India. The finances of the paper always worried him. Of those early days Mr K. Rama Rao, its first editor, wrote, "A meeting of the Board of Directors was often a painful affair during the first three years. The sight of gaping deficits was never happy. 'Take away Anand Bhawan,' Nehru would say. 'Sell it and feed this paper, if only you can keep it alive.' Without going to that extreme, we could somehow manage. It was enough for us that he was with us."

Nehru was the *National Herald's* greatest asset. Those who worked on the paper found in him a stalwart colleague and a true comrade. He was a source of great inspiration to them.

One night, he returned to Lucknow after touring a few neighbouring districts. He straightaway drove to the *National Herald* office and wrote out the report of his tour which was published the next morning ! The editor was greatly surprised when he read it. It was so excellently done that he could not associate it with his district correspondents. When he came to the office, he discovered that Nehru himself had reported his speech that day. "No wonder the reporting is superb," the editor remarked.

56. "NEVER WRITE OUT OF FEAR"

WHEN Nehru trusted a man, he hated to interfere with his work or question his integrity. He always advised the *National Herald* to be bold and courageous in its criticisms. He did not mind if the editor criticized the Congress policies and actions also, though the paper was the official organ of the Congress. "Whatever you might write," Jawaharlal Nehru used to say repeatedly, "never write out of fear. The *Herald* has a special responsibility to bear, a peculiar role to play, in the formation of national opinion. Cowardice is a contagious crime. Be brave, if

you lead, others will follow. If you hesitate, others will tremble, many others will collapse."

Several years ago at Lucknow, some Congress leaders were reported to have complained to Nehru that the *National Herald* was giving them a considerable headache and often criticized them severely. For a while he kept quiet, but when the charge was repeated, he flared up and, as the story goes, exclaimed, "What do you want me to do? Do you want me to tell the editor that he should praise us all the time? Don't you know that your editor Chalapathi Rau is a very able person and his integrity is above question? What is the use of having an editor who is just a flatterer?"

The critics were dumbfounded. It was this attitude of Nehru towards the paper that gave it a unique tone and a rare status in the field of journalism. It is perhaps only in this paper that the managing directors have consistently refrained from interfering with the work of the editor.

57. NEHRU AS A NEWSMAN

IN December 1941, Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit decided that she would not participate in political activities for two months for reasons of health. She did not want the people to press her to accept engagements in January and February 1942 and she asked me to publish a note about it

in the *National Herald*. She was talking to me about it in the Anand Bhawan corridor when Nehru came. "What is going on here?" he asked casually. I explained. "But how will you draft this message?" asked Nehru with the air of an expert newspaperman. Then, immediately, he added, "Give me some paper and I will write it out myself." I welcomed the opportunity. He was in a good mood and he wrote out the following in his own hand:

"Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit has been keeping bad health for some time and has repeatedly been advised by her doctors to take rest and avoid travel or tiring activities. She is therefore restricting her activities as far as she can. She will visit Cawnpore to attend the District Satyagraha Conference on the 20th December and on the 24th she will leave for Cocanada to preside over the All India Women's Conference session. Apart from these two engagements she wishes to take rest and she trusts that her friends will not ask her to attend any functions for at least two months."

58. ANTI-DELHI

NEHRU loved his home-town, Allahabad. It was difficult to think of it without Nehru. To many of us Allahabad without him is an orphaned city. Whenever he heard of ugly incidents in his home town, he felt greatly hurt and

regretted them. He would not have left Allahabad for Delhi, if he could have helped it. He did not like Delhi and in one of his writings he said:

“I do not know what effect a fairly lengthy residence in New Delhi might have upon us, because it has been my experience that it has a very numbing effect on individuals, and results in a weakening of their intellectual faculties, certainly their physical faculties. May be, we might be affected that way, but I hope not. New Delhi, as it has been constituted thus far, is something unique in India and something entirely apart from India. It does not represent India although it contains many eminent Indians. How far it is possible to change this atmosphere of New Delhi and bring it more into line and more into touch with real Indian atmosphere I do not know, and it is up to all of us to try to do so.”

59. A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

ANAND BHAWAN, Nehru's home in Allahabad, has become a place of pilgrimage. For many years now, it has remained practically unoccupied and looks desolate, but desolation in Anand Bhawan is much more pronounced during Magh Mela than at any other time of the year. People visit this place all the year round.

During Magh Mela, pilgrims visit Bharadwaja Ashram, which is just across the road, and hardly ever fail to visit Anand Bhawan. Crowds of people continue pouring in there almost every day, but they miss their hero, Nehru, whom they used to meet during Magh and greeted with "Jawaharlal ki Jai".

Nehru referring to these visitors has written :

"Our house attracted crowds of pilgrims. It lay conveniently situated near one of the places of pilgrimage, Bharadwaja, where in olden times there was a primitive university, and on the days of the Mela an endless stream of visitors would come to us from dawn to dusk. Curiosity, I suppose, brought most of them, and the desire to see well-known persons they have heard of, especially my father... Our political slogans they knew well, and all day the house resounded with them. I started the day by saying a few words to each group of twenty or fifty or a hundred as it came one after the other, but soon this proved an impossible undertaking and I silently saluted them, when they came. There was a limit to this, too, and then I tried to hide myself. It was all in vain. The slogans became louder and louder, the verandahs of the house were full of these visitors of ours, each door and window had a collection of prying eyes. It was impossible to work or talk or feed or, indeed, do anything. This was not only embarrassing, it was annoying and irritating. Yet, there they were,

these people looking up with shining eyes, full of affection, with generations of poverty and suffering behind them, and still pouring out their gratitude and love and asking for little in return, except fellow-feeling and sympathy.”

It is a melancholy thought that on Nehru's birthday and on Independence Day, when there are festivities and celebrations in many homes all over the country, Anand Bhawan, which was the centre of great political activities for many years and which was visited by India's greatest men and by many eminent foreigners, wears almost a deserted look.

Some elderly people say that when Anand Bhawan was being constructed, someone had prophesied that none of the Nehrus would be able to live in that building for long periods. It is difficult to decide whether it was superstition or prophecy.

Nehru spent several years in prison, his wife had to be away from Allahabad for treatment and Indira remained in foreign countries for study for some years. Since Independence, Nehru, his daughter and grand-children made Delhi their home and Anand Bhawan remains practically unoccupied.

Anand Bhawan is a place of historical importance. Many important decisions in the fight for India's freedom were taken in this home. It is a place of many memories. Several leaders were arrested at Anand Bhawan and quite often its furniture and other articles were attached by the Government.

Once the late Pandit Motilal Nehru and Dr Syed Mahmud were served with warrants of arrest there in

the early morning when they were still in their beds.

Nehru wrote the following in his *Autobiography* about the visits of police to Anand Bhawan in those days :

“Soon after our first arrest in December 1921, the police started paying frequent visits to Anand Bhawan, our home in Allahabad. They came to realize the fines which had been imposed on father and me. It was the Congress policy not to pay the fines. So the police came day after day and attached and carried away bits of furniture. Indira, my four-year-old daughter, was greatly annoyed at this continuous process of despoliation and protested to the police and expressed her strong displeasure. I am afraid those early impressions are likely to colour her future views about the police force generally.”

During his stay at Anand Bhawan in the old days, Nehru received all sorts of visitors. The poor went to him for help. The harried and the harassed approached him for relief. Most of the time people surrounded his house and, at frequent intervals, shouted “*Jawaharlal Nehru ki Jai*”. He was often disturbed by visitors but he knew that sheer love for him brought people to his house. He came out on to the verandah as often as he possibly could and talked to them most informally and gently. He had a smile for almost all of them and often he made kind enquiries about them. It was always very interesting to see Nehru meeting and talking to people. The expression of his face changed in quick succession, as he advised them, consoled them and admonished some of them.

Nehru had a lively sense of humour and could occasionally suffer an idiot or two. In olden days, after a day's hard labour he would chat with one or two idiotic visitors to Anand Bhawan in their own dialect and made fun of them. It was enjoyed by those who watched it and it was a relaxation for Nehru.

Nehru kept Anand Bhawan in perfect trim. This was only natural as cleanliness and order were a passion with him. At the same time, I think, he was fully aware that Prime Ministership could not be a permanent thing for anybody, politics being a dangerous game.

Some people might have thought that since Nehru lived at Delhi in the Prime Minister's House, his home at Allahabad cost him practically nothing. But there were servants, gardeners, and the caretaker who looked after the house. Often big sums were spent in getting Anand Bhawan beautifully painted and renovated. It cost him quite a sum to maintain his paternal home.

Two or three times in a year Nehru visited Allahabad and looked after his home with great care. Quite often, he brought excellent saplings and had them planted in the Anand Bhawan garden. Whenever he was in Allahabad, he went round inquiring about the plants and trees.

60. THE NEHRU BARRACK

NEHRU's other home in Allahabad, apart from Anand Bhawan, was Naini Central Prison for quite a long time. "Place where our beloved leader Nehru was incarcerated by the British during our struggle for freedom. Long live Indian Union. And long live Nehru!"—these words are inscribed at the gate of the barrack in the Naini Central Prison where Nehru lived as a prisoner during the struggle for freedom.

This inscription thrilled me when I visited Naini Central Prison to see the cell in which Nehru lived. It was formerly called "Kutta Barrack". It is now a sacred and dedicated place. No prisoner is kept there. It is like a memorial to Nehru and prisoners and officials call it the Nehru Barrack.

It will be interesting to recall Nehru's impressions and experiences in this yard which was formerly used for dangerous criminals. Nehru has written in his *Autobiography* :

"I was in Naini Central Prison... My enclosure was apart from the big enclosure containing the gaol population of between 2,200 and 2,300. It was a small enclosure, circular in shape, with a diameter of about 100 feet, and with a circular wall about 15 feet high surrounding it. In the middle of it was a drab and ugly building containing four cells. I was given two of these cells, connecting with each other, one to serve as a bath-room and lavatory. The other remained unoccupied for some time.

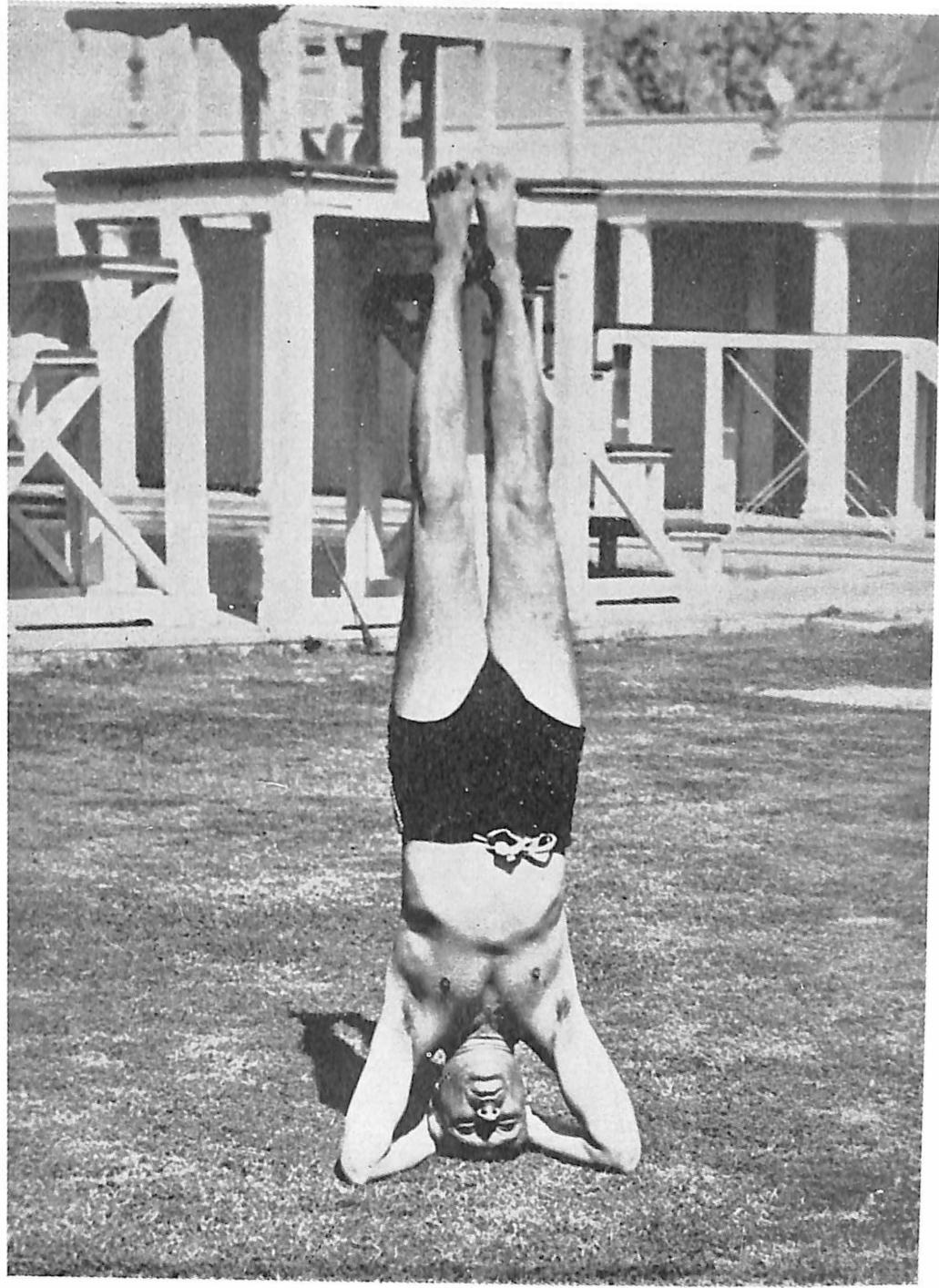


PLATE 22 — *Shirshasana*

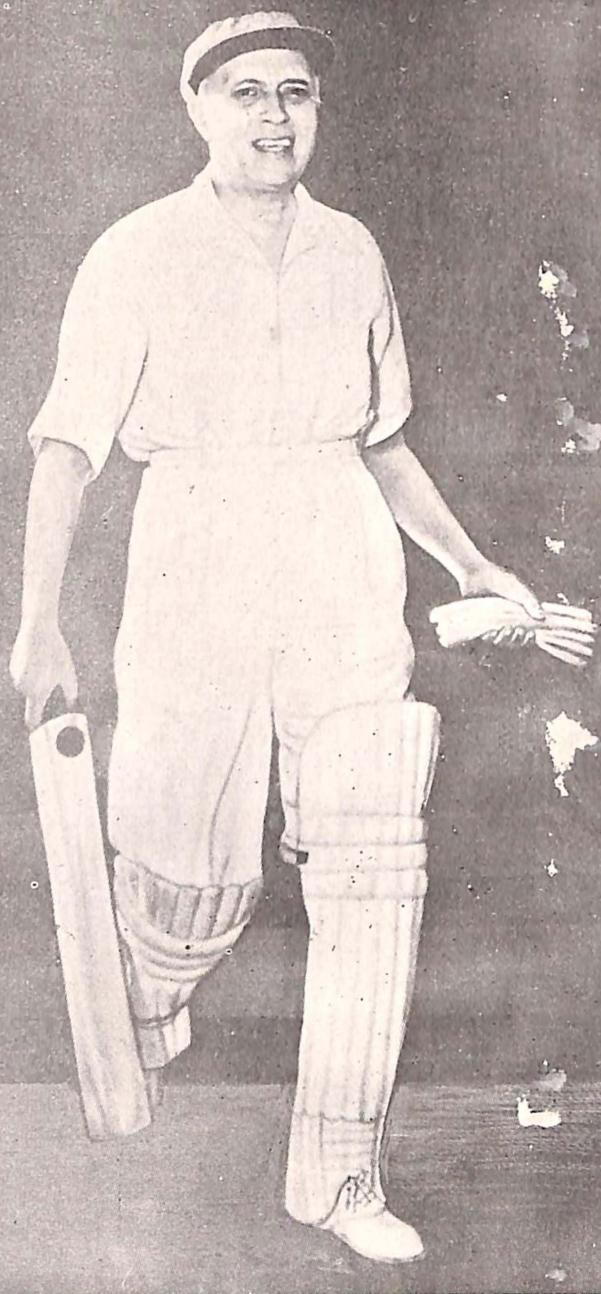


PLATE 23 — Sportsman Nehru

“The hot weather had already begun, and I was permitted to sleep at night in the open, outside my cell in the narrow space between the inner building and the enclosing wall. My bed was heavily chained up, lest I might take it up and walk away, or, more probably, to avoid the bed being used as a kind of scaling ladder to climb the wall of the enclosure. The nights were full of strange noises.

“My barrack and enclosure were popularly known throughout the gaol as the Kuttagbar—the Dog House. This was an old name which had nothing to do with me. The little barrack had been built originally, apart from all others, for especially dangerous criminals who had to be isolated.”

61. MILLIONS ADORED HIM

NEHRU always enjoyed immense popularity in the country and millions adored him. Wherever he went, vast crowds gathered merely to catch a glimpse of him and for his part he loved to move amongst them freely. But he could not easily do that when he became Prime Minister. Firstly, he had very little time to meet people and talk to them and, secondly, the Government would not take any risks with his life. In a country where a Gandhi could be

murdered, anything could happen. He had to abide by security measures and those who guarded him and were responsible for his safety could not let him go about alone anywhere and everywhere. He resented this, but accepted it as a measure of discipline. This made him unhappy and uncomfortable and once he was heard saying to Lord Mountbatten at the Bamrauli aerodrome, "How uncomfortable I feel when I am not able to mix with people as I used to."

62. CONTEMPT FOR WEALTH

WHEN Motilal Nehru died the entire responsibility of the Nehru family naturally fell on his son Jawaharlal who had led a life almost free from anxieties and domestic worries. Motilal Nehru had left no will and Jawaharlal was afraid lest the family should think that now after his father's death everyone was dependent upon him for everything. He did not want anyone to have this impression. He wrote a letter to his sister Krishna in which he said that after Father's death she and Mother should consider themselves "the real owners of Anand Bhawan and all that father had left". Vijaya Lakshmi had already been married and therefore Nehru did not include her in this generous offer.

In this money-mad world, it is difficult to come across men who have genuine contempt for wealth. Nehru

was one such rare individual who was utterly indifferent to money. Nehru believed with A. P. Herbert that money was the “bane of bliss and source of woe”.

Speaking in Parliament on April 11, 1955, he said, “I have no respect for property at all, except for some personal belongings... The House will forgive me if I say I have no property-sense. It is a burden to me to carry property about. In life's journey one should be lightly laden. One cannot be tied down to a patch of land, or building, or something else. So I cannot appreciate this tremendous attachment to property”.

Nehru disliked those who bragged about wealth. He felt that it was vulgar to be obsessed with the idea of money. Once he was having dinner with a group of business leaders in the city of New York and someone said to him, “Mr Prime Minister, do you realize how much money is represented at this table? I just added it up, and you are eating dinner with at least 20 billion dollars.” Nehru felt offended at the vulgar exhibition of money-madness and for long he did not forget it. He often mentioned this incident to Mr Chester Bowles at New Delhi.

His father too never liked to hoard money, because “it seemed to him a slight on his own capacity to earn whenever he liked and as much as desired.” Shortage of money never bothered Nehru, because he always felt that he could earn enough in case of necessity.

For the first eleven years of his life Nehru was without a sister or a brother and he was a little sad about it. When his sister Vijaya Lakshmi was born, he was immensely pleased, but the doctor, after the birth of

the child, told Nehru that luckily it was a girl and not a boy who would have shared his father's property. This hurt Nehru and he felt angry. Describing his feelings, he wrote the following in his *Autobiography* :

"I had long nourished a secret grievance at not having any brothers or sisters when everybody else seemed to have them, and the prospect of having at last a baby brother or sister all to myself was exhilarating. Father was then in Europe. I remember waiting anxiously in the verandah for the event. One of the doctors came and told me of it and added, presumably as a joke, that I must be glad that it was not a boy who would have taken a share in my patrimony. I felt bitter and angry at the thought that anyone should imagine that I could harbour such a vile notion."

Nehru did not very much relish getting involved in financial matters. He had little respect for money. He thought that money was a burden and a liability, though he admitted that in this world one could not do without some money, but hankering after it, he considered, a despicable occupation. He wrote :

"I was not particularly anxious about making both ends meet. Almost I looked forward to the time when I would have no money left. Money and possessions are useful enough in the modern world, but often they become a burden for one who wants to go on a long journey. It is very difficult for moneyed

people to take part in undertakings which involve risks; they are always afraid of losing their goods and chattels."

63. GENUINELY GENEROUS

ONE morning in early 1942, an old Congress worker came to Anand Bhawan and he had brought with him some extremely fine-spun Khadi yarn to present it to Nehru. Nehru greatly appreciated it and wanted to take it to Wardha for Gandhiji. I was standing in the Anand Bhawan corridor and he called me aside and asked, "How much should the man be paid?"

It was a difficult question for me to answer as I knew his approach to money. If I mentioned a small sum he might feel that I was petty, and if I suggested a big sum for a very small thing, he might think me to be funny. Luckily for me, his daughter came along and he left the matter to her. She paid the man handsomely and his face beamed with joy. He had not gone to Anand Bhawan in the expectation of getting any money, but he was happy that Nehru appreciated his little gift and rewarded him generously.

64. EATING HABITS

He did not like people to cut or peel fruit for him. He regarded this as an unclean habit. He ate sparingly and at fixed hours. He did not like too many things to be served at one time. He was a small eater and took a balanced diet. He appreciated good dishes, but he did not overeat on that account.

Many years ago, at a Congress leaders' camp, a colleague of his had prepared very good *kheer*. Nehru had a plate of it, enjoyed it and praised it. This encouraged his friend who had prepared it and he insisted on Nehru having one more helping. This amazed him and he asked, "Why do you insist on my taking more of it?"

His friend said that since it was delicious and he liked it also, he should have more of it. "This is funny! If it is delicious, it does not mean that I should overeat and upset my digestion," replied Nehru.

Several times, I watched Nehru taking his meals, but he never overate. However, he was not a slow eater. He used to think even when he was eating. Sometimes, a friend told me, Nehru would suddenly stop eating, and rush up to his study, leaving others at the table a little amazed.

Once at Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, I watched him having an informal lunch, the food was served in Indian style and he sat on the floor, cross-legged, along with others. It was just an ordinary meal, but it was well cooked. He seemed to relish it, but ate rather hurriedly. He was no food-faddist. Simple food pleased him.

He disliked people wasting food. He often denoun-

ced in public speeches the habit of leaving plenty of food in dishes. "It is wrong to believe that it is aristocratic to leave food in one's plate. It is a crime to waste food," he once said.

It must be admitted that in India most people have no idea of a balanced diet and eating habits in middle class families are haphazard and irregular. Their ideas of hospitality are also very queer. A host believes that it is his duty to overwhelm his guest with good food and the more the guest eats, the greater is his honour and happiness.

Nehru was a different type. He was very particular about his diet and got irritated when anyone tried to feed him with all sorts of things or at odd times. One day he was guest of the Chief Minister of a certain State. It was about 10 o'clock at night. Dinner was over. Nehru was sitting in a room discussing some serious matters with an important person. He was absorbed in conversation, but every half an hour something was placed before him to eat or drink. First a plateful of *pan* (betel leaves) was offered to him. He was annoyed and he asked the man to take it away and leave him in peace. Then came a glass of milk. As soon as he saw it, he shouted "Take it away. What strange habits you have in this house!"

65. AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY

HE appreciated it when crowds did not make noise around him. He got irritated when organizers of meetings shouted, "Sit down. Sit down" and when every man started telling the other, "Be quiet. Be quiet." He expected people to behave in a befitting manner at public meetings. If they didn't, he asked the organizers to leave the crowds to him. He could tackle them much more quickly and successfully than all the organizers put together. He did not like people reading addresses at meetings in his praise and making demands at the same time. Once he said that it was undignified to present addresses and then make demands on the same occasion. He hated to hear long addresses and crude poems, badly recited. Nehru's aesthetic sensibility was of a very high order.

66. ANTI-FASCIST

THROUGHOUT his whole life Nehru met the most important men of the world on terms of equality. In 1935, when he was in Britain he was requested by a friend to see Lord Halifax, who had had no opportunity of seeing him when he was in India as Viceroy and wanted to meet him. But that was not sufficient reason for Nehru to see Lord Halifax when Nehru was in England.

In 1936, when he was on his way to India after his wife's death, and passed through Rome, he refused to meet Mussolini. Despite his dislike for fascists, he would have liked to see one who was playing an important part in the affairs of the world those days, but Nehru declined to see him, because he did not want to be misunderstood and misrepresented by fascist propagandists.

67. “THE SECRET OF PANDITJI”

“JAWAHARLAL NEHRU must have been naughty as a boy, obstinate, perplexed, chivalrous and cheerful. He did not change. If he were not a political leader or Prime Minister, he would have discovered India more, written more books and gathered good royalties. If he were not writing books he would have kept himself busy swiping flies and catching butterflies. At Prime Minister's House, there was no lack of either flies or butterflies. They came in endless succession from morning till late in the night. The more he swiped the flies, the more they came to trouble him. The smile changed into a frown, the chin stood out more dauntlessly; he looked perplexed and thoughtful. But he asked the world to hit him hard because he was still the naughty boy who could take it. And it was safe to hit him hard because he never hit back.

“Jawaharlal was not true to type. His smiles and frowns were not typical. Politicians thought he was too honest to be one of them.

"He kept his freshness of heart—the dauntless boy, intent on his butterflies, willing to be cheated but incapable of cheating... He mellowed and not withered under age and though the frame was that of an Elder Statesman, the heart was that of Peter Pan... India had changed, and Panditji to some extent but not Panditji's spirit.

"The secret of Panditji was that he had the heart of a child, a child's innocence, a child's freshness, a child's sense of wonder. Guns and planes were wonderful toys to him; production plans were picture puzzles; crowds meant excitement; exhibitions were wonderlands; travel was a voyage of discovery; colleagues were playmates; obstruction was irritation. He had lost his temper, without losing his head and though he would like to command people, he did it like an old comrade.

"He braved, dared, suffered, befriended and succeeded without becoming a cynic. Without any group loyalty behind him, he was India's leader when veterans were available; though knowing the West more than the East, he was Asia's symbol. With his shining vision and stubborn sense of destiny, he became one of the world's statesmen.

"It was not the Prime Minister but Panditji that mattered. Whoever was the Prime Minister, we wanted Panditji always with us with his sense of adventure and his sense of fun."

[From *Shankar's Weekly*]

68. NEHRU IN ALLAHABAD

If you watched Nehru at Allahabad, you could find that he was a different man from what he was at Delhi and elsewhere. In his home-town, he was just Jawaharlal Nehru of Anand Bhawan, who spent many years working with his fellow-citizens, sharing their sorrows and joys. Whenever he landed in Allahabad, he seemed to be reminded of the days that were no more and thought of those dear ones who had gone away.

Every time he came to Allahabad, hundreds of people went to Bamrauli aerodrome, stood on the roadside or gathered at the Anand Bhawan gate, covered him with flowers and shouted "*Jawaharlal ki Jai*". Why? Had they not seen him before? Had they not seen him for years together? Were they not tired of seeing him? Had they not seen him much more than people in other parts of the country? Why did huge crowds collect at the Anand Bhawan gate every time they came to know that he was going out, or returning home?

They were not really tired of seeing him. They just adored him. They were very proud of their neighbour and fellow-citizen—Jawaharlal.

And how did Nehru respond? From the aerodrome to Anand Bhawan, he drove in an open car, stood in it for quite some time, gave smiles of recognition and affection to the waiting crowds.

At Anand Bhawan, he met as many old friends and comrades as possible. Ministers of the U. P. Government and others came to Allahabad not to meet the Prime Minister but Jawaharlal Nehru. They could meet

Jawaharlal Nehru of the good old days only there and revive old memories. When Nehru and his old comrades met at Anand Bhawan and chatted informally, it looked very much like a family reunion where Indira Gandhi played the role of an ideal hostess. She knew what to do and how to tackle the visitors. She knew what her Papu wanted and she did not like the idea of Allahabad people feeling that the Nehrus were now changed persons and had little regard for their friends and neighbours. She tried to see that during her father's stay in Anand Bhawan, every visitor was given due attention.

When Nehru was in Anand Bhawan, he came out on to the verandah to meet people as frequently as he could and they watched him most lovingly. He talked to them for a while and then became pensive. Everyone present stood quietly and adoringly stared at him. His white, silvery hair, which did not experience barber's scissors frequently, flowed down the nape. The crop on the head was scanty and uneven.

His little baton served as a barometer to his changing moods. When he was thinking something he grasped it firmly, still more firmly. His slightly protruding lower lip quivered and he muttered something to himself. For a while this mood of intense thinking continued, and then he relaxed. The grip on the baton was loosened, he smiled, held it lightly and passed it from one hand to the other. And then, suddenly, he asked, "*Kaho, sab theek bai?*" The crowd felt happy. He smiled, said *Jai Hind* and slipped away.

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I watched him closely on April 15, 1956 when he was returning to Anand Bhawan after addressing a couple of meetings in the Allahabad villages. He was very tired. On the sands of the Ganga his car moved majestically and the cool, bracing breeze refreshed him. When the car came on to the bridge, he got up and turned his eyes this side and that in order to have a full view of the mighty river. He seemed to be deriving some strength from it.

Then he came to his constituency. Thousands of people thronged round his car. The police arrangements failed and the crowd surrounded him. He stood on the seat of the car receiving flowers from the people. They shouted again and again, "*Jawaharlal ki Jai*". The car moved slowly and he kept standing in it, perhaps saying something like this to himself—"In this area, where the people love me so much, a Sadhu ventured to oppose me in the last general elections. But, why not? Anyone can oppose anyone in this democratic country."

The car moved on and he took many rightabout turns to see the people in front of him and behind him, and gave them a cheering smile.

Came Anand Bhawan. Deafening shouts of "*Jawaharlal ki Jai*" filled the air. He joined his hands in salutation, smiling gently and was overwhelmed with the love of his neighbours.

It was now late in the evening. He looked very tired and exhausted. A group of pressmen were waiting for a press conference. When it was time for him to appear and he did not, I made enquiries about the delay. Someone very feelingly said, "He is ready but too tired,

and is just having a nap." I suggested, "Don't by any chance disturb him. There's absolutely no hurry."

A few minutes later he came down to the drawing-room to meet the pressmen. He looked extremely exhausted. I had some hand in arranging the press conference and I felt a little guilty of tiring him still more. However, the conference was held. He was very weary. His voice was soft and feeble. At that moment, he looked too tamed to show any temper. His tone was tender, and the look too gentle.

Next morning he went to the Allahabad Municipal Museum with a little basket which contained a few things which his father and mother had used. These he presented to the Museum. From there he drove to the aerodrome. Again quite a crowd gathered there to bid him good-bye. He shook hands with friends. He patted a few comrades. He fondled some children and walked towards the plane perhaps saying to himself, "I would love to come home more frequently. But, then, one can't fulfil all one's dreams."

69. NEHRU'S ESTIMATE OF NEHRU

UNDER the pseudonym *Chanakya* and under the heading RASHTRAPATI, Nehru contributed an article about himself to *The Modern Review* in November 1937. The Pandit's personality was essentially subjective, but in this interest-

ing exercise in self-delineation, he portrayed himself with an objective detachment.

In this article, Nehru the man analysed and explained Nehru the politician, and made gentle fun of the latent demagogue and dictator in him. He wrote :

“Rashtrapati Jawaharlal ki Jai!”

“The Rashtrapati looked up as he passed swiftly through the waiting crowds, his hands went up and were joined together in salute and his pale hard face was lit up by a smile. It was a warm personal smile and the people who saw it responded to it immediately and smiled and cheered in return.

“The smile passed away and again the face became stern and sad, impassive in the midst of the emotion that it had roused in the multitude. Almost it seemed that the smile and the gesture accompanying it had little reality behind them; they were just tricks of the trade to gain the goodwill of the crowds whose darling he had become. Was it so ?

“Watch him again. There is a great procession and tens of thousands of persons surround his car and cheer him in an ecstasy of abandonment. He stands on the seat of the car, balancing himself rather well, straight and seemingly tall, like a god, serene and unmoved by the seething multitude. Suddenly there is that smile again, or even a merry laugh, and the tension seems to break and the crowd laughs with him, not knowing what it is laughing at. He is god-like no longer but a human being claiming kinship and comradeship with the thousands who surround him, and the crowd feels happy and friendly and

takes him to its heart. But the smile is gone and the pale stern face is there again.

“Is all this natural or the carefully-thought-out trickery of the public man? Perhaps it is both, and long habit has become second nature now. The most effective pose is one in which there seems to be least of posing, and Jawaharlal has learnt well to act without the paint and powder of the actor. With his seeming carelessness and *insouciance*, he performs on the public stage with consummate artistry. Whither is this going to lead him and the country? What is he aiming at with all his apparent want of aim? What lies behind that mask of his, what desires, what will to power! What insatiate longings!

“These questions would be interesting in any event; for Jawaharlal is a personality which compels interest and attention. But they have a vital significance for us for he is bound up with the present in India, and probably the future, and he has the power in him to do great good to India or great injury. We must therefore seek answers to these questions.

“For nearly two years now he has been President of the Congress and some people imagine that he is just a camp-follower in the Working Committee of the Congress, suppressed or kept in check by others. And yet steadily and persistently he goes on increasing his personal prestige and influence both with the masses and with all manner of groups and people. He goes to the peasant and the worker, to the zemindar and the capitalist, to the merchant and the pedlar, to the Brahmin and the untouchable, to the Muslim, the Sikh, the Parsi, the Christian and the

Jew—to all those who make up the great variety of Indian life. To all these he speaks in a slightly different language, ever seeking to win them over to his side. With an energy that is astonishing at his age, he has rushed about across this vast land of India, and everywhere he has received the most extraordinary of popular welcomes. From the far North to Cape Comorin he has gone like some triumphant Caesar passing by, leaving a trail of glory and a legend behind him. Is all this for him just a passing fancy which amuses him, or some deep design or the play of some force which he himself does not know? Is it his will to power of which he speaks in his *Autobiography* that is driving him from crowd to crowd and making him whisper to himself :

*I drew these tides of men into my hands
and wrote my will across the sky in stars.*

“What if the fancy turns? Men like Jawaharlal with all their capacity for great and good work are unsafe in democracy. He calls himself a democrat and a socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness, but every psychologist knows that the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart and that logic can always be made to fit in with the desires and irrepressible urges of man. A little twist and Jawaharlal might turn a dictator sweeping aside the paraphernalia of a slow-moving democracy. He might still use the language and slogans of democracy and socialism, but we all know how fascism has fattened on this language and then cast it away as useless lumber.

“Jawaharlal is certainly not a fascist either by conviction or by temperament. He is far too much of an

aristocrat for the crudity and vulgarity of fascism. His very face and voice tell us that :

*Private faces in public places
Are wiser and nicer
Than public faces in private places.*

“The fascist face is a public face and it is not a pleasant face in public or private. Jawaharlal’s face as well as his voice is definitely private. There is no mistaking that even in a crowd, and his voice at public meetings is an intimate voice which seems to speak to individuals separately in a matter-of-fact, homely way. One wonders as one hears it or sees that sensitive face what lies behind them, what thoughts and desires, what strange complexes and repressions, what passions suppressed and turned to energy; what longings which he dare not acknowledge even to himself. The train of thought holds him in public speech, but at other times his looks betray him for his mind wanders away to strange fields and fancies and he forgets for a moment his companion and holds inaudible converse with the creatures of his brain. Does he think of the human contacts he has missed on his life’s journey, hard and tempestuous as it has been; does he long for them? Or does he dream of the future of his fashioning and of the conflicts and triumphs that he would fain have? He must know well that there is no resting by the wayside on the path he has chosen, and that even triumph itself means greater burdens. As Lawrence said to the Arabs :

“‘There can be no rest-houses for revolt, no dividend of joy paid out.’

"Joy may not be for him, but something greater than joy may be his if fate and fortune are kind—the fulfilment of a life purpose.

"Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist. And yet he has all the makings of a dictator in him—vast popularity, a strong will directed to a well-defined purpose, energy, pride, organizational capacity, ability, hardness, and with all his love of the crowd, and intolerance of others and a certain contempt for the weak and inefficient. His flashes of temper are well-known and even when they are controlled, the curling of the lips betrays him. His overmastering desire to get things done, to sweep away what he dislikes and build anew will hardly brook for long the slow processes of democracy. He may keep the husk but he will see to it that it bends to his will. In normal times he would just be an efficient and successful executive, but in this revolutionary epoch Caesarism is always at the door, and is it not possible that Jawaharlal might fancy himself as a Caesar?

"Therein lies danger for Jawaharlal and for India. For it is not through Caesarism that India will attain freedom, and though she may prosper a little under a benevolent and efficient despotism, she will remain stunted and the day of the emancipation of her people will be delayed.

"For two consecutive years Jawaharlal has been President of the Congress and in some ways he has made himself so indispensable that there are many who suggest that he should be elected for a third term. But a greater disservice to India and to Jawaharlal himself can hardly be done. By electing him a third time we shall exalt one man

at the cost of the Congress and make the people think in terms of Caesarism. We shall encourage in Jawaharlal the wrong tendencies and increase his conceit and pride. He will become convinced that he alone can bear this burden or tackle India's problems. Let us remember that in spite of his apparent indifference to office, he has managed to hold important offices in the Congress for the last seventeen years. He must imagine that he is indispensable, and no man must be allowed to think so. India cannot afford to have him as President of the Congress for a third year in succession.

“There is a personal reason also for this. In spite of his brave talk, Jawaharlal is obviously tired and stale, and he will progressively deteriorate if he continues as President. He cannot rest, for he who rides the tiger cannot dismount. But we can at least prevent him from going astray and from mental deterioration under too heavy burdens and responsibilities. We have a right to expect good work from him in the future. Let us not spoil that and spoil him by too much adulation and praise. His conceit, if any, is already formidable. It must be checked. We want no Caesars.”

Nehru himself referred to this article in the course of an interview which he gave to Prof Tibor Mende of France and which was published in the *National Herald* of Lucknow on April 27, 1956. He said, “It amused me to write it. I remember sitting down one night and I was just thinking, and I wrote it down just to please me, to amuse me. And I sent it to a friend in my hand-writing. I did not even have it typed or copied. I had written it down. Then, she later sent it, without mentioning my

name to a magazine and it was published. For a year or two, nobody knew who had written it. And I was very much interested in finding out the reactions of people."

When the name of the writer of the article became known to the people, they were greatly amused and since then this piece has been quoted more frequently than any other writing of Nehru's.

70. A GREAT REHEARSAL

REPORTING Nehru for many years was a fascinating assignment. For me Nehru alone was news and Anand Bhawan the home of all news. Many reported and unreported incidents come to my mind and I feel excited about them. In pre-independence days there was something unique in reporting Nehru. He was an agitator, a mover of men, a freedom fighter and a leader who was genuinely and universally loved by the masses. One day after reporting his speeches in villages, I was returning with him and Ranjit Pandit to Anand Bhawan. The car failed on the way and we were stranded. A good *ekka* was put at our disposal. Leaving the car with the driver, we moved towards Anand Bhawan. In Chatham Lines a group of soldiers seeing Nehru sprang to attention and saluted him. He, somehow, did not respond. He told Mr Pandit that the soldiers had committed a mistake. If any officer saw them they would be penalised. "Bhai, the ways of the

heart are different. They love you and they took the risk," Ranjit Pandit explained.

Nehru said that they might feel that he neglected them. He felt that he should meet them and we moved back. When the soldiers saw Nehru they were very happy and saluted him again. He made enquiries about them and they were delighted. After a minute or two we boarded the *ikka* and resumed our journey. Whenever I saw Nehru taking salutes at parades, I was reminded of that incident. That was a rehearsal of the shape of things to come.

71. A BUMPER CROP OF NEWS

NEHRU was always a bumper crop of news for reporters. Before independence, he mostly travelled by train. Seeing him off at the Allahabad railway station and receiving him there was always interesting and exciting. Often after tendering the railway ticket at the station gate, he would stand in the portico and dictate statements to waiting press correspondents. We enjoyed and appreciated his agility and thanked him for sparing us the trouble of running to Anand Bhawan. One day a press correspondent said, "Panditji, is this the only news to-day?" After a little pause, he replied, "Come to Anand Bhawan and you might get more. But now I must go home. I am already delayed."

FOR many years the major portion of my time was spent at Anand Bhawan sojourning on the lawns, in the drawing-room, and in the corridors. I did not think it necessary to go anywhere else for news. Letters, visitors, guests and inmates of Anand Bhawan made news almost every day. It was a hub of political activity and the hero there had a rare human side which often provided good stories.

One evening I passed through Anand Bhawan and I saw lights in Nehru's room. I was surprised. "But he can't be there. He is in Benares. He left only a few hours ago," I argued with myself and walked ahead. But I would take no chances. "If he happens to be there, I will make a scoop today," I told my companion. He called me a fool and insisted on continuing the walk. I moved a few yards yonder, but then to my companion's annoyance I left him. I returned to Anand Bhawan feeling that I was foolish to have come back.

"Bansi, why is there light in Panditji's room ?," I asked. He smiled and said, "Chote Sahib has come back." I rushed to Nehru's room and looked at him a little amazed. "So you are surprised," he said. "Yes, Panditji ! But what's the matter ?" I enquired. He said that there was some trouble in the plane and he had to discontinue the journey. He dictated a small statement and he smiled when he said, "I returned home, leaving luggage and Upadhyaya behind."

AS FAR AS I remember, it was September 1963 when Jawaharlal Nehru came to Lucknow and stayed in the Government House. His old and respected comrade the late Seth Damodar Swarup went to see him. He was hard of hearing, but hardly ever missed an opportunity of seeing Nehru when he came to Lucknow. He went to the Government House and Nehru received him warmly and affectionately. He shouted something in Seth's ears, but he could hardly follow anything. However, he was very happy that Panditji talked to him. After a few minutes, Nehru said to someone standing nearby, "I don't know what to do. He does not follow anything. Hardly his fault."

He sat by the side of Seth and patiently heard him talk. He made no further attempt to make him hear anything. He just nodded his head and occasionally smiled. Seth returned home immensely pleased. After the interview I asked, "Sethji, so you had an interesting talk with Panditji?"

He replied, "Jawaharlal is a jewel of a man. He never forgets his old comrades. He is so busy and yet he gave me time to meet him. How sweet!"

Nehru greatly liked J. P. despite sharp, political differences with him. When he decided to leave the Congress, Nehru sent for him and persuaded him not to do so. According to a highly reliable source, Nehru advised him for quite some time, like an elder brother, and in a most affectionate manner, not to leave the Congress, but J. P. went on saying, "Nahi Bhai, Nahi Bhai (No brother,

No brother), I can't change my decision."

He left the Congress and Nehru was unhappy over it. However, they continued to be dear friends and frequently corresponded with each other. One day in irritation or something like that, J. P. addressed a letter to Nehru as "My dear Prime Minister," when normally he used to write "My dear Bhai." Nehru felt a little hurt at it and he wrote to J. P. that he was Prime Minister to millions of people in the country, but he was Jai Prakash's brother. This touched J. P. After Nehru's death, he said, "I can never forgive myself for that mistake."

74. "A SHOCK-ABSORBER"

NEHRU was a very sensitive person, but life's experiences had hardened him a little in certain matters. He had acquired a capacity to endure shocks with equanimity. Death of dear comrades and relations always shook him to the roots, but soon he got over his personal grief, and took life as it came. One day Rafi Ahmad Kidwai went to Nehru and said that *The National Herald* was in a very bad way and it might be necessary to close it down. Kidwai felt that Nehru would be greatly upset at the news and would surely and quickly do something once again to save his paper. He knew that Nehru greatly liked the *Herald* and respected its high standard of journalism. But Kidwai was astounded when he said, "Rafi, I have become

a shock-absorber. I have endured many shocks. I will quietly endure this too."

Commenting on it Kidwai said, "My tactics failed. Perhaps he knew that I would never allow the *Herald* to die."

75. A MEMORABLE HOLI

MORE than thirty years ago once Holi was celebrated on a large scale in Anand Bhawan in which J. B. Kripalani, Sucheta Kripalani, Lal Bahadur Shastri, K. D. Malaviya, Padmaja Naidu, Mrs Pandit and her daughters and other leading Congressmen participated. I too was present on the occasion as a neighbour-newspaperman. My journalism those days was mainly confined to Anand Bhawan and Swaraj Bhawan which were great centres of news. In a way I was a privileged journalist because I represented Nehru's *National Herald*. The former editor of the paper, Mr K. Rama Rau, in his characteristic style enthusiastically described me as "*Herald's* ambassador to Anand Bhawan" in his autobiography, *The Pen As My Sword*. I was not at all interested in the riot of colours that swept over Anand Bhawan that morning, but I was interested in a news story which I got from Nehru. I quietly settled down in a room there and started writing for the paper. When Panditji did not find me in the assembled crowd, he asked, "Where is that funny fellow ?

He was just here. 'Where is he hiding himself?"

Someone disclosed that I was writing something in a room. Soon a few persons rushed to drag me out. I ran for "safety" with papers in my hand. Nehru shouted, "Tandon, don't run. Stop!"

I halted half-dead, dreading my fate. I was thoroughly drenched, face coloured with vengeance with all sorts of powders. I must have looked very funny and everyone laughed heartily at my plight. But Panditji was still not satisfied. He pushed me into a little pond. I hit against an iron tube which was covered with water and my right leg was injured. I came out of it bleeding. Panditji saw it. He soon got some medicine and applied it on the wound which was minor. The injury was slight, but I was depressed. Nehru banged, "Why the hell are you putting on a mournful look?"

I told him in a melancholy tone that with great labour I had written a news story for the *Herald*. I wanted to be first with the news but all the sheets were completely drenched with water and colour and I could not make out anything.

"On Holi day people should forget their sorrows and should not mourn," he advised. It is true that on that day people should forget their sorrows and not mourn, but how to forget Panditji and how not to mourn his absence on the Holi day when we vividly remember that he used to meet hundreds of people most warmly on this occasion and play Holi with them?

NEHRU had a great sense of humour. He often joked with old comrades and enjoyed making fun of some of them. At any dinner table he used to be the centre of attraction. He often invited his friends and comrades to a quiet breakfast or a meal and would discuss with them various matters. One day a newspaper editor, who had known Nehru quite well, went to him for breakfast. One other great journalist was also present at the table. The conversation flowed leisurely and they enjoyed Panditji's company. The editor peeled a banana and ate it. He did not know where to deposit its skin. The table was so elegantly arranged that he could not locate the place for it. Quickly and quietly he pushed it below the table cover and none noticed it. The vigilant Nehru, after a while, asked jokingly and a little astonishingly, "Mr Editor, you have eaten the banana, I am sure, but where have you kept its skin?"

'Mr Editor' got perplexed and others present at the table enjoyed his embarrassment. Quietly, he pulled out the skin from below the table cloth and put it on an empty plate. Panditji had a hearty laugh.

77. HOW CONSIDERATE !

MANY years ago Nehru wanted to take me to Indonesia with him. I was called to the All India Radio Station in Allahabad and an officer from Delhi tried to extract a reply from me in the affirmative then and there on the phone. I was summoned to the All India Radio Station twice or thrice in this connection. I hesitated to give any reply on the phone and asked the officer to write to me as that would give me time to take a decision. I was told that I would go with Nehru, but would return alone by boat and arrangements had been made.

The prospect of going to a foreign land with Nehru was exhilarating, but the thought of returning alone was rather depressing. The Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in a letter wrote to me, "This is about the Hon'ble Prime Minister's visit to Indonesia. As at present arranged, he will leave Cochin on the afternoon of Friday 2nd June 1950 by sea. A very small party of journalists will accompany the Prime Minister on the voyage from Cochin and we have included you among the party. We are informing our Embassy at Djakarta about your arrival and requesting them to render all possible assistance in securing accommodation etc., during the Prime Minister's stay in Indonesia."

I somehow decided not to go. I had heard that several leading Delhi special correspondents were desperately eager to avail themselves of the opportunity and would love it if I refused the kind invitation as that would, at least, enable one of them to get smuggled in. I

felt that in the circumstances it would be better if I declined the privilege and so I did.

After a few weeks Nehru came to Allahabad. In the Anand Bhawan corridor he was pacing up and down with Lal Bahadur Shastri and as he saw me there he asked me rather sternly, "*Ham ne aap ko Indonesia jane ki dawat di. Aap tashreef nahi lae*" (I invited you for a trip to Indonesia, but you didn't come).

I was sure that the Prime Minister had suggested my name and that was why frantic efforts were made to extract a "yes" from me on the phone by the officer that day. For a moment I stood quiet struggling for a suitable reply and then I said hesitatingly, "Panditji I was to go with you and return alone. I was informed that the sea would be very turbulent in that time of the year, and it would take quite a few days to return. I felt I would be bored stiff lying in a boat..." I could hardly complete my reply when he said, "You are a strange person. I had made nice arrangements for showing you the naval exercises on the way and you would have been very well looked after. On way back I had to bring with me an eminent Indonesian in my plane. You should have joined the trip."

I respectfully and apologetically told him that I would wait for some other opportunity. It never occurred to him again to repeat the invitation and I could never think of suggesting any such thing to him. The fact that without my requesting him for anything he went out of his way to plan for my return journey also so nicely shows how considerate he was even to men of little consequence.

78. A DEVOTED FATHER

NEHRU gave remarkable training to his daughter. He was, perhaps, sure that one day Indira would acquire great eminence and would lead the country. He wrote long letters to her with a view to widening her mental horizon and gave her chosen literature to read. In 1935, he presented *Science of Life* by H. G. Wells, Julian Huxley and G. P. Wells to Indira and on it he inscribed :

“To Indu darling

With love and all good wishes for the coming year—and in the hope that a study of the *SCIENCE OF LIFE* will help her to learn the greatest of all arts—the art of living.

Papu

New Year's Day 1935

Almora District Jail.

Do not be frightened by the size or weight of the book. And do not, at first, try to read it from end to end, or else you will get terribly bored with it. Dip into it and read the chapters that interest you. There is plenty in it and is interesting and that will help you to understand the wonderful panorama and development of life. Later, perhaps, you will read the whole book. It is worth it.”

RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI once sharply differed with Nehru on a certain matter when he was a minister in the Union Cabinet. He went to Govind Ballabh Pant and discussed it with him. Pant somehow agreed with Kidwai and said that he would support him when the question came up for discussion. Kidwai felt greatly encouraged and when the time came he vigorously opposed Nehru on the point, waiting all the time for Pant's promised support. He was, however, disappointed because Pant did not oppose Nehru at all. On the other hand, he seemed to be supporting Nehru. Narrating the incident to me one day Kidwai said, "You know, I was almost shocked at Pantji's attitude." When the meeting was over Kidwai went up to Pant and complained, "You had promised to support me, but you did not speak at all. What was the matter?"

Pant smiled and said that he had not the heart to oppose Nehru. "You know he is so good. But rest assured that when the time comes I will get the needful done," Pant assured.

His colleagues always held him in great esteem and had real affection for him.

Nehru was basically a very decent person. Crudity he disliked. He loved to be correct in all matters. When my book "The Human Nehru" was published, a gentleman went to present a few copies to him. Nehru thanked him for it. When he asked him to autograph a copy for him, he declined and said, "It would be improper for me to autograph this book. It has not been written by me.

The right person to autograph is P. D. You had better ask him to do that."

The gentleman later realised the impropriety of his request. He had forgotten that Nehru was not like most other leaders. When the incident was narrated to me, I was greatly impressed by Nehru's graceful behaviour. He had a high sense of propriety and decorum.

80. TOOK LIFE AS IT CAME

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU had watched the mighty river Ganga in its various moods. Whenever he was near the great river he looked at it with eyes full of awe and amazement, and seemed to be deriving great strength from it. He has written most eloquently about it. I had seen him many a time on its bank gazing at it in reverence and wonder. One evening as he was driving on the Ganga bridge he stood up in the car and had a panoramic view of it. He was muttering something to himself.

But one day he looked at the river most helplessly and sorrowfully, with eyes dry and lips stern. The ashes of Feroze Gandhi were consigned to the river at Sangam and as the swiftly moving currents carried them away he was a picture of grief. He had often watched the Ganga taking ashes of his dear friends and relatives to its bosom but at that time he looked extremely grieved. He knelt in a boat and continued looking at the river intently for

quite some time. Others beside him stood full of sorrow, some wiping their tears. For a while Nehru too bowed, rested his forehead in the palm of his left hand. We felt he too was in tears. But when he raised his head, the eyes were dry and the face pale and stern. He looked at his relatives, they looked at him, deriving strength and solace from his presence. He stood quiet for a while and it was obvious that a storm was raging within him. Feroze's memory seemed to be haunting him and Indira's loneliness was oppressing him.

After a while he said, "All right, now let us move." Everyone stood quiet, not moving at all. He looked at them, they looked at him. His face was wreathed in sorrow. Then slowly he stepped out of the boat and others followed.

Personal grief and sorrows of mankind often afflicted the extremely sensitive soul of Jawaharlal Nehru. But he had learnt to take life as it came, and had the capacity to get over his grief rather quickly because he knew that too much mourning for anything did not do any good to anybody in any way. But that day on the river he looked very unhappy and disconsolate. Those who saw him cannot easily forget that look of his—sad, shattered and sorrowful.

81. A GREAT WRITER

NEHRU was a very fine writer. His autobiography is a remarkable book. Whatever he wrote had the stamp of his personality. Mr M. Chalapathi Rau, who knew Nehru well, has written the following in *Gandhi and Nehru*, “It was not composition, it was expression without complication, though not without reservations or pauses or dramatic effects, but with an unfailing sense of rhythm. To his sense of history, he added a sense of rhythm which gives his writing movement and harmony. The manuscript was so clean that it would be worthy of the best of museums; it was near perfect copy.”

Nehru was a superb draftsman. He drafted many historical resolutions for the Congress. Independence Pledge was one of them. He wrote it in his study in Anand Bhawan. When he had finished it, he asked his daughter to read it aloud because he wanted to know how it sounded. She read it. Nehru remarked, “You read it well, Indu. But do you realize that by reading it aloud, you too are now pledged?”

82. BELOVED OF MILLIONS

NEHRU roused so much enthusiasm, interest and love in his countrymen for about four decades that they continue to be interested in his legend and are ever eager to know things about him. People are familiar with his unique

political record and heroic services for his country but there are many interesting things about him which are not known to most people.

Gandhiji was very fond of him and treated him like his son. He trusted Nehru implicitly and had full faith in his integrity. Once the Raja of Aundh went to Bapu and said that princes were keen on introducing some constitution in their States. Bapu suggested to him that the best thing for him to do would be to contact Jawaharlal Nehru if the princes were keen that the constitution should reflect the urges and the aspirations of the people. He further advised him that the princes should request Nehru to become their Chief Minister and Nehru would tell them what to do.

In 1948 Bapu went on a fast. Nehru hardly believed in any such thing and yet quietly, due to some inner urge, he also started fasting along with Gandhiji. When Bapu broke the fast, Nehru casually told him during a conversation that he too was fasting. Bapu was moved on hearing it and as soon as Nehru left, he wrote to him, "Now break your fast. May you live for many years and continue to be the Jawahar of India. Bapu's blessings."

Nehru was loved by innumerable people. He was strikingly handsome. One day a large number of young girls went to listen to him at a public meeting. After he had finished speaking, Sarojini Naidu humorously remarked, "Jawaharlal, do not think that those pretty maids had come to listen to your speech. They had come to see your handsome face."

One evening some young girls went to see Jawaharlal. He had not put on his cap at that time. Sarojini

Naidu quipped, "Jawahar, put on your cap at once otherwise your bald head would disillusion these young ladies."

83. NO FUSS ABOUT FOOD

NEHRU did not want people to make a fuss about his meals. When he was Prime Minister, an official note was issued on June 18, 1956 about his food. It said, "The Prime Minister is anxious that no special and out-of-the-way arrangements might be made for his meals. He would like to have the normal food of the place he visits. The only thing that might be remembered is that he likes as simple food as possible, whether Indian or after the European style, and that he is not used to spices and chillies at all. While he eats meat, he does so sparingly and has far more vegetables. He likes a full vegetarian meal...normally he takes coffee with hot milk in the morning and a cup of weak tea in the afternoon."

84. HIS OWN SECRETARY

THERE are very few statesmen and politicians who do not take help from their secretaries and others in their political work or don't sign statements prepared by others, but Nehru did not issue any statement in his name which he did not write himself. No one wrote even his formal speeches. None dared even suggest any such thing to him, because he did not like it. He was his own private secretary as far as those things were concerned.

85. UTTERLY SINCERE

NANDITA KRIPALANI, grand-daughter of Rabindra Nath Tagore, lived in Swaraj Bhawan with her husband Mr Krishna Kripalani for some time. One day Nandita's hand was severely burnt when she was handling an electric plug. She was in severe pain, but she took it very bravely. Nehru was doing some important work in Anand Bhawan. When he heard about the incident he promptly rushed to Swaraj Bhawan to see Nandita. He did not go there at his convenience just for a formal call. He was shocked to see the condition of her hand and repeatedly said, "Nandita, let me know if I can do anything." His genuineness did console her.

86. MAN WITH A MESSAGE

NEHRU's broad-mindedness and generosity and humanness made a very powerful impact on my mind. I always adored him for his breadth of vision and humanitarian attitude. Not very long ago, I saw him in a dream helping some young children and a few helpless people. Indira was standing by his side. It is no wonder that he still lives within us. He was not a man of the moment. He was a man with a message. He was one of those who got less in life and deserved more. It can rightly be said of him :

*“Just his conceptions natural and great;
His feelings strong, his words enforced with weight...
View the whole scene, with critic judgement scan,
And then deny him merit if you can.”*

87. HIS IDEAS ENDURE

A MAN really dies when his ideas lose their validity and his lead is forgotten by the people. Nehru is no more, but his ideas endure. Many people all over the world realize the authenticity of his vision. His contribution to the India of today is deep and abiding. He made the nation conscious of technological advance in the world. He made his countrymen think in a big way and plan in a big way. He gave the nation a scientific approach. He

put India on the map of the world. He expounded principles which have deep roots and a stirring appeal for mankind. He saturated the people with the philosophy of secularism and made them rise above the pettiness of communalism and sectarianism. He made them realize the value of planned economy. He gave India a modern mind, a modern approach and a modern outlook in the modern age. He was a fighter for peace and he passionately stood for the liberation of man. He was a maker of history and he has made a powerful impact on the people of his generation. He was a symbol of hope and progress and a powerful instrument of historical forces. His nobility of nature and dignity of purpose made him India's most loved leader. "He harmonised the temper of science with the spirit of art." He was free from fear and his spirit was brave. Gandhi tried to raise politics to the level of a church, Nehru endeavoured to invest it with great dignity and wide vision. He combined in him charm and magnificence in an unusual measure. He looked into millions of eyes and millions of eyes adoringly and softly centred on him. This procession of looks served as a mighty bridge between him and his people, and on which he stood firmly and defiantly, confidently facing the biggest problems of India with calm courage. His writings mirrored his faith, his ability, his intellectual sensitivity and grace.

NEHRU always believed that rest was betrayal of the millions who never rest. And did he not say, "*Aaram haraam hai ?*" Some people feel that Nehru was fair to the country, but not fair to himself because he exhausted himself in the service of the nation. They maintain that if he had taken enough rest or retired, he would have lived much longer. But they do not know that he did not want to live for the sake of living only. He would have hated to live, even for a moment, if he was not in a position to work actively for the people of India. He was determined to work till the last moment of his life. Indeed, he died the way he wanted to.

89. A BORN HERO

NEHRU was a born hero. No leader in living memory was loved so much by his people as Nehru was. They adored Gandhi and worshipped him like a god, but in Nehru the masses found a man of their choice on whom they lavished deep and abiding love. They admired his virtues and willingly overlooked his shortcomings. To the people of India he was a symbol of love and nobility. He gave a direction to their lives and an aim to live and die for. When he died, millions of people in their hearts registered the death of a part of themselves. He was one

of the noblest and sweetest spirits of his time. He lived magnificently and made a tremendous impression on his fellowmen. He was an aristocrat who turned a revolutionary; an artist who became an agitator in the cause of India's freedom. He deeply loved his people and they adored him. When Nehru died, millions of people all felt empty and purposeless.

90. MASTERPIECE OF MAGNIFICENCE

NATURE produced in Nehru a masterpiece of magnificence and patriotism. Freedom movements moulded him into a perfect patriot and great leader of men. He was a man of great dynamism and tremendous faith. Coming generations will be poorer for they will miss Gandhi and Nehru. India will have some Prime Minister or other in years to come, but there will be none so magnificent, so great and so humane as Nehru was. We are not likely to have the like of him again.

Nehru is no more. "These words descend upon our consciousness like gigantic rocks falling into the sea. Is it credible? Can it be thought of?" None wants to believe it because we need Nehru more urgently today than ever before. We need his leadership, his compassion, his humanity, his love, his width of vision and his unique courage. But now we shall have to do without him. For, Fate has decreed it so. It is a terrible arbitrari-

ness of Nature, but we shall have to accept it. In our work alone can we make Nehru live. In each one of us a little of Nehru lingers and that is the most magnificent part of us. "May the pain we feel, that stabs our hearts each time we think Nehru is no more, be for each of us an admonition, a warning, an appeal; be worthy of the leader who trained us, who loved us, who inspired us."

91. NO ESCAPE FROM GREATNESS

WHAT is the difference between Nehru and other leaders? Nehru used to lead and no leader or party was big enough to lead him when the lead was in doubt. He could stand successfully the onslaught of unpopularity and was big enough to face calmly big gusts of opposition. He knew how to lead, because he was a born leader of men. His one distasteful handicap all along was that he had to deal with the small-mindedness of his critics but his confidence in the masses always heartened him.

Nehru's image is safely enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen. He needs no monuments and memorials to keep him alive. He will live as long as people yearn for peace and love peaceful co-existence. He will live as long as mankind values the noble urges of the human heart. He will live as long as there is place for greatness in the world.

Nehru now belongs to history. Generations to come will marvel at the magnificence and vast humanity of this remarkable man. He will be discussed for years to come and there can be no escape from his greatness.

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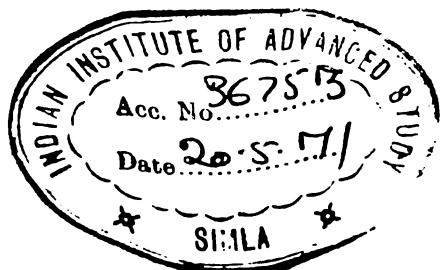
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15. CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA	<i>Dr. Lallanji Gopal</i>	1.50

16. KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM	<i>Shri Basudha Chakravarty</i>	2.00
17. SANKARACHARYA	<i>Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan</i>	2.00
18. AMIR KHUSRAU	<i>Shri Saiyid Ghulam Samnani</i>	1.75
19. NANA PHADANAVIS	<i>Dr. R. N. Deodhar</i>	1.75
20. RANJIT SINGH	<i>Shri D. R. Sood</i>	2.00
21. R. G. BHANDARKAR	<i>Dr. H. A. Phadke</i>	1.75
22. HARI NARAYAN APTE	<i>Dr. M. A. Karandikar</i>	1.75
23. MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR	<i>Justice T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar</i>	2.00
24. MIRZA GHALIB	<i>Shri Malik Ram</i>	2.00
25. RAMANUJACHARYA	<i>Shri R. Parthasarathy</i>	2.00
26. SURDAS (<i>Hindi</i>)	<i>Shri Vrajeslwar Varma</i>	1.75
27. ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR	<i>Shri S. K. Bose</i>	2.00





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