

DELHI UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Cl. No 0152.3M73W5 1111J0

Ac. No 125825

Date of release for loan

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below An overdue charge of 5 Paise will be collected for each day the book is kept overtime.



NARAYAN WAMAN TILAK

I FOLLOW AFTER

An Autobiography

By

LAKSHMIBAI TILAK

Translated by

E. JOSEPHINE INKSTER



GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C.4

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS CAPE TOWN

Geoffrey Cumberlege, Publisher to the University

FIRST PUBLISHED 1950

PRINTED IN INDIA BY J. BROWN AT THE WESLEY PRESS AND PUBLISHING HOUSE, MYSORE CITY, AND PUBLISHED BY GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, MADRAS

CONTENTS

Part One

1. Father washes away his Pennies and Pounds 1
2 The Bride of Eleven 7
3. Evil Stars 13
4. Second Flight 22
5 Wedding Procession 26
6 Poona Bangles 30
7 My Father-in-law 33
8 Trials of a Daughter-in-law 38
9 Comfort from Home 43
10 Song and Poetry 46
11 Pearls for a Nose-ornament 51
12 Our First Son 53
13 Sixteen Years Old and Still 57
14 Tilak in Trade 64
15. A Happy Surprise 67
16. The Rich Man's Son 71
17. 'Mad, My Friends, Truly Mad' 77
18 Mahadev 80
19 Birth of Dattu 85
20 My Illness 88
21. Crucial Years 96
22 Oratorical Competition 102
23 Khare's House is in the Other Direction ... 107
24 Tilak's Diary 111
25 Where is My Millstone? 115
26. Resignation 119
27 Conversion 122

Part Two

1 I am led to the Shrine 133
2. Divorce Indeed 137
3 The Headmaster's Help 141
4. Baby's Clothes 147
5. 'O Bird, the Bars of Thy Cage are of Love' 151
6. 'Our Brother-in-law has sent us an Offering' 155
7. The Clerk of Jalalpur 159
8 I Meet a Christian Woman 165
9 Gosavi's Father 169
10. Reunion 173
11 Hospitality 177
12. Presentation and Alms 183
13. Poison or Nectar 188

14. Revolution 191
15. The Famine Child 195
16. A Memorable Occasion 200
17. 'You Have Outstripped Me' 205
18. Our Balance 208
19. Our Growing Family 211
20. Again We Meet 216
21. God's Plan 221
22. Tilak Leads the Way; I Follow After 230
23. My Education 236
24. Rahuri 240
25. Ordination 244

Part Three

1. Eighteen Rupees 253
2. Gopaji 255
3 Castor Seeds 259
4. A Poets' Conference . . . 262
5. The Boy-poet Thombre . 265
6. Exit House Enter Buffalo , 271
7. Nagar 277
8. My 'Sons-in-law' . 282
9 'A Modak among the Karanjies' 288
10 I Wait Eight Years 291
11 Setting up House Anew . . 295
12. My Novel 299
13. A Coward 300
14. Memories of Thombre the Boy-poet 307
15. Satara 313
16 Dattu's Prize Story . . 318
17. *Abhang-Anjali* 322
18. Last Visit to Nagar 324
19 Dattu's Wedding 328
20. Not the Christian but Christ 333
21. Shadows 339
22 'What Fear Hath He?' 347

ILLUSTRATIONS

NARAYAN WAMAN TILAK *Frontispiece*
LAKSHMIBAI TILAK *Facing page* 16
THE FAMILY TREE *End-paper* (back)
SKETCH MAP OF TILAK'S COUNTRY *End-paper* (back)

PART ONE

1 FATHER WASHES AWAY HIS PENNIES AND POUNDS

Mrs Tilak describes the death of her grandfather, her life as a child in her Brahman home, and the eccentricities of her father.

SOME of these few first memories are but tales overheard. My mother and my aunt were standing in the temple of Trimbak when Mother said to her, 'My next child, no matter whether it is a boy or a girl, I shall give to you.' My aunt had no children, and this was all that Mother could do to comfort her. My mother kept her promise and, as I was her next baby, it followed that I grew up under my aunt's roof. It might even be said that my brothers and sisters too were brought up by her. We had no great love for our own home. We children, our mother, and grandmother had all to endure such persecution that we were only too glad to escape to our aunt. Father had become 'holy', a word which you will understand better as you read this story, and in his 'holiness' all our troubles had their roots. The cause of his becoming 'holy' was as follows

1857. The days of the Mutiny! Mother's father was a keeper of the treasury of the god in the Hindu temple of Trimbak. He also acted as village banker for the local people and hill-tribes of the district. He was trusted by all the poor, and generally beloved by the village This however did not prevent his prosperity giving rise to jealousy, and his enemies, taking advantage of the confusion during the rebellion, poisoned the minds of the Government officials against him. Grandfather was arrested in Trimbak and hanged upon the spot.

Father was in Nasik when he heard this news. He loved Grandfather as dearly as if he had been his own father, and as soon as he heard the manner of his death, he rose and went out into a lonely place in the jungle of Tapowan.

Leaving him there, let us see what was happening at my home in Jalalpur, four or five miles away, where Mother and Grannie

were living. At that time my eldest sister was fifteen months old and my eldest brother one and a half months. I was not yet born.

Grannie heard the news that Grandfather had been hanged, but concealed it from Mother. The village was rude and ignorant, on all sides the confusion and tumult of revolt. Only the old lady herself could know the state of her own mind at such a time. Stones came flying over the house and her baby granddaughter would say, 'Let's go out and see the fun' Yet Grannie kept her grandchildren as a cat keeps her kittens. She heard the news of the execution while Mother knew nothing of it. Driven by her awful secret she began goading Mother to go to her sister in Nasik for the Diwali Festival of Lights.

'Your husband is not at home, and we are only two women here What can we do in the midst of this trouble? An out-of-the-way village! Two small children! No one to fall back upon!'

Mother never listened to a word. Her only reply was, 'How can I leave you alone?'

At last the old lady succeeded in getting her ready. Neither horse nor cart could be found to carry her. She was mounted on a bullock. Her baby was tied to her back, and the little girl given to a man-servant to carry. The procession set off for Nasik.

In Nasik itself my aunt was sitting waiting for my father who was nowhere to be found. It was the day in the Hindu calendar when sisters have to provide their brothers with a ceremonial bath, and she had everything prepared for the ritual.

It was morning when Father had left the house. He did not return till evening, when the lamps were being lit. He had already bathed and washed his clothes; they were still wet on his body, it being the Hindu custom for religious ceremonies to put on freshly washed clothes before they can be contaminated by contact with anything considered unclean.

'Where have you been?' everyone asked.

'I went to Tapowan. A low-caste Mahar was rinsing his mouth; a drop of his water splashed on to me, and I am defiled. Pour water over me, but do not touch me. I must bathe again.'

From that day in the year 1857 till his death, twenty-five or twenty-six years later, Father clung tenaciously to his rites of purification. These purifications brought, not only his own

house, but the whole village to the verge of despair. He held himself contaminated even by the touch of another Brahman, a man of his own caste. What then of Marathas or even lower castes? When the women of the house went out to a *haldi-kunku* ceremony, on their return he insisted that they should bathe, and even wash their hair before coming in.

The news of Grandfather's execution had been too great a shock for Father's mind. From henceforth all things in contact with the outside world were considered unclean until they had been specially washed.

Some twelve or thirteen years after Father became 'holy' I was born.

In front of the entrance gate of our house was a low earthen platform, immediately inside was the byre, in the centre an open courtyard, and beyond that a veranda. The household shrine was at the left of the veranda, and behind it lay the kitchen The shrine had a great big window like a door. To anyone sitting there every last stick and stone outside was visible. This was where Father always sat

He used to go out every morning at eight o'clock, and return in the evening at six As we had no watches in those days, the sun falling on the coping meant eight o'clock, and the cattle coming home in the evening meant six o'clock. Our clock was a guess-work one. Father returned with the returning cattle; his routine never varied. As soon as he came in, he bathed, then said his prayers, fingered his rosary and made his offerings to the dogs His stern eye watched even the kitchen. Among Hindus, cooking is considered almost a religious rite, so whoever was doing it—and this was invariably my mother—had first to bathe and wash her sari, and put it on again still wet. Everything had to be done with the right hand, the left, which is 'unclean', hanging on one side as if broken. It took at least two hours for Father to finish his evening prayers and all his acts of worship. By that time dinner would be ready, and at ten or eleven at night he would dine

We were a family of five brothers and sisters. There had been several others, but only five of us survived. My oldest sister was Bhiku, who married Pendse, and of whom much is to be told. After her came Keshav, then Bhagirathi, Vishnu and lastly myself. There were fifteen or sixteen years between

Bhiku and me. Not one of us ever sat near Father, or dined with him. Even on high days and holidays it was the same. This by no means implies that he paid no attention to his children. From the window of the shrine his severe eyes followed everyone and everything.

All our neighbours were high-caste Brahmans like ourselves, if even one of them came to call, Mother had to sprinkle water over their footprints when they left, to purify the ground made 'unclean' by their touch Nevertheless, when Father was out of the house in the morning, there was no lack of fun for all. As soon as his back was turned the women nearby gathered in our house, and we children collected our friends to play. Mother always hungered for companionship She would bathe other people's babies, comfort the young daughter-in-law, dispense medicine to one, speak kindly to another. She even went into a Maratha woman's house once, and baked big flat cakes with brown sugar stuffing, though the Marathas are of a lower caste than ours, and no Brahman can touch them. But all this she did secretly. Father's rule was another story To him everything brought in from outside was 'unclean' and had to be washed, down to the very salt and pepper. Once he ordered the children to wash the salt. They determined to reform him, and tying up the salt in a piece of cloth, they soaked it well, and hung it on a peg. In no time the salt had dissolved, and drained out. When Father came to look into the bag, behold, there was nothing. From that day on, salt, sugar, both brown and white, oil and clarified butter, were permitted to go unwashed.

The washing of all things fell for the most part to Mother and Grannie. According to orders they washed everything, or at least made a pretence of washing; and so long as they did it themselves the salt and sugar never dissolved Many and many a time they practised deception, and taught us to dissemble too, but not without reason, for when the grain was brought in from the fields, father demanded that it should be washed before it was stored. How could Mother and Grannie wash twenty bushels of corn at a time? They washed a little of it, and spread that over the rest of the heap. When Father came home in the evening, he would question all the children. They had been well-coached beforehand, and for the most part told the same story; but if one took fright and made a slip, that is, spoke the truth inadvertently, then the whole household would be

thrown into confusion. At that late hour of night everything that had been polluted must be washed under Father's eye, the children must be well whipped for telling lies, and lastly Father himself, being contaminated by them, must bathe again. We endured this inquisition every evening.

Having answered the call of nature in the morning, Father needed four lumps of earth, each as big as a coconut, with which to rub his hands and feet clean. For twenty-five years, without a break, he brought this earth from the jungle two or three miles away, from a certain place where no one was ever likely to go and contaminate it. They say a great pit is to be found there even now Taking this earth he would sit hour after hour 'purifying' his hands and feet.

Once three baskets of guavas were left under the eaves. They lay there till evening. They should by rights have been sent to Nasik to be sold, but, for lack of a man to take them, they remained where they were. They were 'unclean'; they were not washed. Everyone wanted to eat the fruit, but no one had the courage We spent the whole day wondering whether to eat it or not. In the end it was decided that we should take turns, one watching by the door while another ate a guava At last my turn came, but no one would stand on guard for me. All by myself I went to the door and, seeing no one coming, picked up a guava and began to eat it. Like a gift dropped from heaven, Father appeared standing before me. The guava still in my hand, I fled for my life, and hid behind a big wooden beam in the corner of the veranda. Out of the back door went Father, and cut a stout rod from the custard-apple tree. He came back, crying, 'Where is that brat?' dragged me out from behind the beam, and thrashed me there and then. Granmie was grieved out of measure when she saw me, and everyone else in the house was petrified with fright 'If this child tells any tales,' they said one to another, 'everyone will be beaten, and beyond that the whole house will have to be spring-cleaned from top to bottom'

One day I was lying near a heap of wheat. My doll was beside me. I had dressed her in a sari and then, in the midst of my play, fallen asleep. The doll's sari made a link between me and the wheat Father came in and his eye lighted upon it. Seeing the wheat polluted his anger knew no bounds. He

seized me, and began beating me. One of my sisters and my brother also were polluted by something, so having been well beaten, I was sent down to the Godavari with them to bathe.

On our way there we decided that one of us should be drowned. By such a death of one of his children Father's eyes would be opened, and he would never trouble anyone again

No sooner said than done. Together we went down into the river. We were all of one mind, to give Father the fright of his life. It was I who had been beaten, therefore it was I who determined to carry out the plan, and teach Father his lesson I grew faint, water flowed into my nose and mouth. My face was towards the west, and my eyes began to grow dim in the rays of the setting sun At that moment a neighbour was sitting saying his evening prayers in front of us He happened to see me, and jumping at once into the water pulled me out. Having revived me, he took me home Father learned no lesson. It was I who learned the lesson

One cannot but laugh at it all now. That childlike hiding behind the beam, reforming Father, these and other things are as fresh before my eyes as the day they happened

Once between one and two hundred rupees rent came in. The money was put down in the courtyard, and covered with a heap of cow-dung, while Father departed on his usual business We children had to mount guard on the dung-hill all day long When Father came back in the evening, he took the money down to the river to wash There he forgot all about it, and only remembered after he had reached home But what was the use? What is gone is gone.

In short even Father's pennies and pounds were washed away in the flood of his purifications.

2 THE BRIDE OF ELEVEN

Uncle Govindrao is introduced, and also some neighbours Their relations arrange an engagement between Lakshmi aged eleven and Tilak aged seventeen The difficulties that nearly wrecked the wedding, and how they were overcome.

GOVINDRAO Khambete was my aunt's husband. As I said before they had no family In spite of this, their house was always swarming with children They had a house in Nasik where I stayed with them. Nearby Uncle Govindrao's sister owned a house which was let, and in this house lived a girl called Sakhu Sakhu was married and her proper place was with her mother-in-law, but she had returned to her own people for a holiday She was only twelve or thirteen years old, and was the only woman in her house. The men-folk consisted of two elder brothers, both still at school

As far as was possible, Sakhu spent her time playing, and I used to play with her Our games made Sakhu late with her cooking, and her sorely tried brothers went hungry and cross to bed. Her elder brother preferred to play with her himself rather than allow outside girls to come and encourage her to neglect the house He played everything, even *songtya* and *chuckies* When they played *chuckies*, if he dropped one stone, no matter how well he was doing, he would fling the game to the gods and begin again from the beginning. This gave rise to perpetual quarrelling between them, because once the stones were in his hand, his sister had no more hope of seeing them again

He, therefore, having determined not to let everyone starve while Sakhu sat and played with her friends, began to play with her himself, fully prepared to drive off the ragtag and bobtail of the neighbourhood when they turned up As usual I went round to play. There were two staircases to the house The moment he saw me Sakhu's brother seized a stick, and stood guard on one of the stairs.

'Mind you don't come into our house. I'll break your leg if you do.'

Sakhu was calling down to me, so I tried the other stair. It was no use. Again came the word, 'Look out, or you will go home lamed!'

Then and there I vowed never to come back, and never to look on the face of Sakhu's brother again. Later, though Sakhu rented a house quite close to us, I never set a foot inside it. It began to look as if I should keep my vow for ever, because Uncle Govindrao built a house at Jalalpur and went to live there. I too went with him, so Sakhu and her brothers were left behind, and there was no more temptation to visit them.

Uncle Govindrao was very fond of company. The village of Jalalpur was small, and his house was open to everybody. It was not long before he was a great favourite. He acquired some fields, and also began to do some banking. Jalalpur was my aunt's native place, and she and the rest of the Gokhales owned considerable property there. Uncle Govindrao began to supervise the expenditure of the whole Gokhale family, eventually becoming responsible for everything, including fields, borrowing, lending, weddings and thread ceremonies. I was given to them by my mother, and was brought up by them as their own daughter, and I was spoilt by both him and my aunt.

According to the Hindu standards of those days, I was now quite a big girl, for I was fully ten years old. In those days children were married to each other at the age of five and six or younger, and to have a girl of eleven years unmarried was an unheard-of thing.

My Aunt and Uncle Govindrao were nearly out of their minds with anxiety about my marriage, but he was not prepared to look for a husband for me. He used to say to my parents, 'You make the choice, I won't. I cannot risk anyone saying that I married the child to the first boy that turned up, just to save the expense of keeping her.'

I was nearly eleven years old, well fed and cared for, and with no troubles. I looked older than my years. Uncle Govindrao was quite prepared to bear the expense of my wedding, but he would not accept the responsibility of choosing a husband. Father being fully occupied with his purifications had no time; even if he had had time he would never have found a son-in-law 'holy' enough to please him. Mother too was worried, but she was only a woman. What could she do? In the end the burden

fell on Bhiku's husband Pendse, Wamanrao Ranade, Raghunathrao Mahabal and others.

About this time a student called Narayan Waman Tilak was becoming famous in Nasik as a poet and eloquent speaker. Pendse gave Uncle Govindrao the necessary information. Uncle Govindrao began corresponding with Wamanrao Tilak, the boy's father, and invited him to come and see me.

Wamanrao replied, 'I will not sell my son for a dowry. If you will pay what you can for the wedding I shall do likewise. The only thing that I insist on is that the girl's horoscope must be auspicious, otherwise I cannot give my consent to the match. Also, there are no women in my house. You must look after the girl until she is old enough to live with her husband. I do not need to see her. I shall be pleased if everyone on the spot is pleased'

We were all greatly delighted with this letter. My horoscope, astrological calculations and records had been prepared beforehand All we had needed was Wamanrao's assent and that he had unexpectedly given Uncle Govindrao desired nothing better than to let me stay with him until I grew up Only one thing now remained, and that was to send me to Nasik for the approval of the bridegroom I was sent to my sister Bhiku and her husband Pendse

Tilak came to Pendse's house with his friends to see me. I was downstairs sitting on a large swing with Bhiku's daughter Gharu.

'Is Pendse Sahib in?' the visitors asked.

'Yes, he is in the sitting room upstairs,' I replied.

The visitors could not find the way up. They appeared completely bewildered, and I was doubled up with mirth watching them. In the end I had to show them the staircase. After they had met Pendse, I was sent for Decking me out in my best Bhiku took me upstairs

I could have died on the spot.

For one thing I had just newly made a mock of the visitors; for another, who should have come to look at me but Sakhu's brother, who had driven me out of his house with a stick.

Alas for my resolve never to set foot in that house again!

I was trapped indeed by the thing I dreaded most; and he, who had threatened to break my leg if I dared to cross his threshold, without so much as looking at me, made a sign to his friends that I would do, and turned and went out.

I had only to face my grandmother-in-law now, and in this examination too I passed. Gangabai, pinching the lobé of my left ear sharply, announced, 'I approve of the girl.' When my ear was pinched, I neither exclaimed nor drew in my breath, so she must have decided that I could be taken anywhere by anyone who liked to lead me by the ear.

I marvel that Tilak should have been pleased with me In appearance and colour I was very ordinary For the rest, though my eyes and nose were not beautiful, they were at least there, and in the right place

Now follows an account of my wedding

Uncle Govindrao had made up his mind to spend no less than one thousand rupees. It was quite evident what my father would do! My mother would have done anything and everything, but it was not in her hands, poor thing. The kind of life she led at home has already been described Her only comfort there was to dispense kindness to others as far as was possible, and to toil for others as long as she had strength God must have created people like my aunt and Uncle Govindrao, to help to look after her children, as a reward for her virtue Mother could neither read nor write, but as a recreation, she used to compose songs and teach them to the neighbours' daughters and young brides. This was the comforting oil she used on the labouring wheels of household care Now what could she do more than look at my uncle with eyes filled with tears of gratitude?

Uncle Govindrao regarded this wedding as if it had been that of a child of his own Indeed, he did more for me than he would have done for his own daughter. He wrote to Wamanrao saying, 'I have a good standing in the village and the wedding must be in keeping. Also, this is the first event of its kind in my house. Jalalpur is quite a small place, and I should like you to give a dinner to the whole village' Wamanrao agreed

Imagine the excitement of my aunt and Uncle Govindrao. Wamanrao brought with him no less than twelve bullock-carts laden with guests. Our house was bursting with them, and a pavilion was erected in front of our door. Only four days remained till the wedding. Wamanrao saw his daughter-in-law.

So far all had gone well. Now appeared a Himalayan obstacle. The lineage of the Gokhales and Tilaks is from Kashyap and

Shandilya respectively, and those two lines cannot mix! How could there be any marriage?

Uncle Govindrao decided to have me formally adopted into his family. At Trimbak I had in fact been given to the Khambetes before I was even born, and from then till the hour of my wedding they had done everything for me, only the proper adoption ceremony had been omitted. It was therefore decided now that I, who was a Gokhale, should become a Khambete by Hindu law. Father, however, at the time of the adoption ceremony could not be found! Following his inflexible rule, he had gone off into the jungle to fetch his ball of earth. There was no hope of his returning before nightfall. Would that man give a thought to his daughter's adoption ceremony, who could send a message to his mother on her death bed, 'Wait! Do not die till I finish my evening prayers'?

Uncle Govindrao was furious. He was never known to lose his temper, but this time he was properly indignant. He burst out, 'The girl is his, he can arrange the wedding! If he doesn't care why should we? The girl is his, let him do what he likes with her.'

My aunt was in a passion too, and her wrath poured from her lips in a steady stream.

My mother was as one dead.

It seemed as if the marriage would be broken off for a mere trifle. The spirits of the wedding-party were completely damped. There was dismay and confusion everywhere. Then, in the nick of time, one of our relations, Dinkar Shastri Khambete, came to Mother's rescue. He produced a text from the Scriptures proving that a mother has authority to give away her daughter. The text was like a few drops of cold water to milk about to boil over. Peace reigned again. Her eyes wet with tears, Mother gave me to Uncle Govindrao.

In two or three days the wedding ceremony was completed. Uncle Govindrao gave me away.

The next day was the Hindu fast *Ekadashi*, when only a certain type of food may be eaten. All the bridegroom's relations rose up in a body to demand its due observance. There were a dozen cart loads of guests from a dozen different houses. There was no saying what each one would want. Plenty of light dishes had been prepared, but they were all set aside, and every man served with his heart's desire. The bridegroom's friends

stole from the bride's and when they were found out, laughed and said it was all a joke.

A dozen cart-loads of guests from a dozen different houses! There was plenty of fun at our wedding.

On these occasions the bridegroom is encouraged to have a fit of the sulks. So too at our wedding. Tilak was carefully instructed what to do. He had never sulked in his life. He would fly into a temper, but of sulking he knew nothing. Nevertheless his friends said to him, 'When you are called for dinner, do not get up and go. Say you want a ring, two tolas in weight, and sit tight' Having told him what to do, his friends returned to their places. At one o'clock in the afternoon, when my brother Keshav went to call Tilak for dinner, Tilak answered, 'I am sulking, I shall come when my people come.' The people on our side of the house were hungry; they had already eaten a little on the sly, before sitting down to wait for the bridegroom The bridegroom himself was hungry. Quietly he called Keshav aside, and whispered, 'Brother, I am hungry.' Full of joy Keshav began to serve the dinner, and a message was sent to my father-in law and his party 'Dinner is served. The rice is getting cold. Tilak has sat down to dine.' Enough! They all came running to sit down too, and no one so much as mentioned any ring

Tilak liked none of the usual games, such as the bride and bridegroom trying their strength over a *supari* nut hidden in the hand, exchanging glasses of water, or feeding each other; but in spite of him they all had to be carried through There was none of the usual quarrelling and ill-feeling from beginning to end.

A dinner for the whole village had been prepared according to the instructions of Tilak's father, Wamanrao; but Tilak had a friend called Khadilkar who conceived the following scheme which he actually put into operation. He bought *bhang*, an intoxicant made from hemp, and put it into the flour to be used for *bhajis* The *bhajis* were pressed on the people and eaten with relish. Except for Wamanrao all the bridegroom's party knew what had been done. Tilak himself knew. He gently removed the *bhajis* from my plate, and of course ate none of them himself.

It was evening. A cool wind began to blow. Everyone got up and went out for a stroll. Everyone began to act drunkenly.

Never did I laugh so much. A Maratha man had harnessed the bullock cart. Both yoke and bullocks were entangled in a tree, and the bullocks were very nearly hanged. Some children who had gone for fruit were rolling on the ground. Pendse, Bhiku's husband, went to say his evening prayers by the river-side. Thinking his ring had fallen into the water he began to search for it with the hand it still decorated. As soon as Bhiku came into the kitchen, between the light from the lamp and the heat from the stove the *bhang* took effect; the pasties were lying ready to be fried Having mixed them all together, she sat pounding them into a solid mass. In the end, making one enormous ball of dough, she presented it to my aunt. Tilak's father was very grieved at such an exhibition. He felt as if all his plans had been turned topsy-turvy

After the feast the bridal party returned to Nasik with the bride and bridegroom. Leaving us with Bhiku and Pendse each went to his own house. That night saw the bridal procession, and the state entrance of the bride into her new home. My feet had crossed irrevocably the threshold I had vowed they should never pass

My husband was eighteen years old at the time of his marriage and I was eleven

Here I shall give the names of my husband's relations:

My husband—Narayan Waman Tilak.

His father—Wamanrao Sakharam Tilak.

His mother—Jankibai (died before my marriage)

His sisters—Mathura and Sakhu.

His brothers—Sakharam and Mahadev.

3 EVIL STARS

Lakshmi goes to stay with Wamanrao, her father-in-law. Tilak's childhood, and some stories about his mother.

ONCE we got home, the visitors from the Konkan all went away Only my grandmother-in-law, Sakhu and a handful of other people were left. Tilak's father went too. He used to come and go, intermittently.

Three months after our wedding fell the month of Chaitra. Grandmother made me have a *haldi-kunku* ceremony. Sakhu was there. The three or four of us in the house set out the goddess Parvati in great state and splendour. It was a Friday. The day Tilak's father arrived for the ceremony he received a letter from his daughter's husband in the Konkan saying she had died of typhoid. It was ten days since the letter had been written, so we were all set free from the customary, irksome, religious observances by one ceremonial bath. She had been at my wedding.

Wamanrao was possessed by a goddess every Friday He demanded that everyone in the house should be present at the time. If anyone was missing he was very angry. It was the first time in my life that I had seen anything of the kind. I was terrified. The goddess would be asked a great many questions, and her answers were reeled off glibly All the household squabbles of the week were settled before her. That Friday the goddess said, 'The girl who has come as a daughter-in-law is a bringer of great ill-luck. Neither peace nor happiness will stay in the house now, and others will suffer continual loss. The death of this man's daughter is due to her evil influence.' When he heard all this rigmarole Tilak was greatly upset.

It was the custom to worship the goddess with *haldi-kunku* and flowers as soon as she made her presence felt Everyone else made their offering as usual that day, but Tilak never lifted a finger He sat before Wamanrao in dead silence The spirit having departed Wamanrao inquired what had happened. He was told, and learned, among other things, that Tilak had not worshipped the goddess. He was naturally incensed, and began, 'You did not worship her, therefore the goddess is angry with you.'

Tilak replied, 'The goddess is gone now, so how do you know she is angry with me? She is not here to tell you'

This perverse answer roused not the goddess but Wamanrao to fury

The next day Wamanrao stripped me of all my jewellery. He left only the red *kunku* for my forehead and my black wedding beads. Even my clothes went The only thing saved to give the lie to this was my sari with the deep gold border. Tilak gave no heed to his father's behaviour in this matter.

Three evil stars had apparently been born into Wamanrao's

house, the first myself, the second Tilak, and the third Mahadev. From the beginning he was suspicious of both Tilak and Mahadev, because the lines on their hands did not conform to his ideas. His favourites were Sakharam and Sakhu His estimation of a person depended on goblins, sorcery, demon-possession, luck, planets, horoscopes, and the length and shape of fingers and toes. The spirit that took possession of him was his most beloved goddess She always had something to say about the three of us During the week one of us was almost certain to have done something to offend Wamanrao, so that on Friday the goddess could accuse us, and start a hue and cry.

Wamanrao lost his work when Tilak was born; this was Tilak's fault Wamanrao lost his eldest daughter immediately after my wedding, that was my fault; Wamanrao lost his wife sometime after Malhadev's birth; that was Mahadev's fault Altogether the three of us were condemned as the curses of the family Wamanrao found work when Sakharam was born; it followed that he was counted lucky From then on he was treated as a true son of the house, and Tilak and Mahadev as step-sons. If there was tea in the house, Wamanrao called Sakharam and Sakhu to sit beside him and share it Tilak and Mahadev were not even supposed to ask if there was any.

I never saw my mother-in-law, but this seems the best place to tell a little of her story and some tales out of Tilak's early life, as I have heard them Her fate was not unlike that of my mother Tilak and Mahadev were their father's black sheep and their mother stood in my shoes before my arrival. There were two or three reasons why she was in disfavour. In the first place she used to compose poetry, which poems Wamanrao used to burn From the flames of the stove and the devouring furnace of his wrath only two lines survived. They are as follows:

> See this small doll of rags, what dignity her share!
> Our girls from her in childhood learn a Mother's care.

It is no exaggeration to say that from her hands, Tilak quaffed his first dose of poetry. His mother composed and wrote poetry, and his father was angry with her for doing it. His father was also perpetually angry with Tilak himself, therefore he, in return, held both his mother and poetry in the deepest affection for all time. Though there were four children after him Tilak

always wanted to lie beside his mother. This gave rise to daily quarrels at bedtime. He had no end of tricks and devices. Once when he thought she was not paying him sufficient attention he won her over by pretending to have fever. He remembered this incident to the very end, and introduced it into a song in 1918 as if it had happened the previous day:

How I remember, pretending fever,
All of a shiver, under a cover.
Mother a-trembling, closely embracing
Tears her eyes filling, my heart o'erflowing
Remorseful I cried, 'No more could I hide
Love's swift rising tide. Sit thou by my side
No fever have I, it is all a lie,
Thy love did I try Forgive, never cry.'
Love brimming over, grief too and anger,
Saving 'Deceiver,' my ear seized Mother.
Still tingles my ear, through many a year
Love's madness is here, since pain is held dear
Saith Tilak,
Thy servant.

This song shows how dearly Tilak loved his mother, but Wamanrao could not endure to see such love between them, and his opposition only made Tilak cling to her more and more This was the second reason for Wamanrao's hatred of his wife.

The third was that some missionary women used to come and visit her, and taught her sewing, embroidery, and other things. It was they who gave my mother-in-law the Book of Proverbs out of the Bible She was for ever reading it Wamanrao got hold of it one day, and burnt it. Tilak was so angry with his father about this that he vowed vengeance at the first opportunity Wamanrao was addicted to tobacco. It was his habit to chew it mixed with lime. One day when Wamanrao was not looking Tilak stole the little box of lime out of his pouch and flung it down the well.

A childish thing, no doubt! All the books of Proverbs in the world did not become ashes because Wamanrao consigned one to the flames; nor would all the lime boxes jump into the well one after another because Tilak threw his father's down. The only result was that Wamanrao's anger blazed up and broke all bounds. While he was leading everyone else a dance, Tilak lay low, quietly enjoying the fun. Wamanrao, calling everyone before him, questioned them minutely. No one would confess. At last he turned on Tilak in a fury, and thrashed him with a heavy stick.



LAKSHMIBAI TILAK

Three days later Tilak ran away. He was not heard of again for six months. The day after he was beaten Tilak behaved so perfectly that even his father must have praised him in his heart. It was all for the sake of his mother whom he wanted to make completely happy the day before he went away. When she realized he had gone his mother was in a most pitiable state. She ran about telling one person and imploring another, she made her vows to one god and then to another, and finally sent a message to her brother in the Konkan about it.

He—Govindrao Bedekar—came from the Konkan to see her, and that very day another man arrived in Kalyan from Poona saying, 'Aunty, I saw your son yesterday in a theatre in Poona.' Once she was certain he had really seen him, she was overjoyed. She got her brother to tell Wamanrao, and to induce Tilak by any means to return home. Wamanrao began to treat Tilak very badly as soon as he returned. His mother's heart bled for him What if Tilak should run away again?

Tilak and Sakharam used to go to school together. Sakharam stopped telling tales on Tilak as much as previously, thinking it was his fault that Tilak had run away Shortly after this both boys got guinea-worm in their legs. Their mother treated them equally, but Wamanrao would say to Tilak, 'A good thing too! If you do become lame it will give me great pleasure. That will be the end of your wicked pranks.'

Sakharam would be lying nearby. To him Wamanrao would say, 'Keep quiet my boy, you will be better soon.'

The barber was called in to draw out the worm for both of them; and while he was at work Wamanrao took Sakharam on his knee, petted him, and soothed him. For Tilak there was no such good fortune. On the contrary, while Sakharam was taken into the house and given sweets after the operation, the weeping Tilak was threatened with a beating. These are not invented stories. Tilak has told me them in front of Sakharam himself

Wamanrao and his wife had both a rooted aversion to debt. They never borrowed from anyone, and my mother-in-law by her sewing used to 'add her salt to his flour' She was most anxious that their children should study, and eventually add their bit also to the household income. She had moreover set her heart on having a grandson to call her grandmother. Without telling Wamanrao she had hidden a hundred rupees away

for use in an emergency. This money eventually procured her heart's desire, the only difference being that it was according to God's will rather than hers.

Now the children were well again, and began going to school as before.

When Tilak was lost, his mother made a vow to Maruti, the monkey god, saying 'O Maruti, only let my child be found, and I shall give you a garland of spiced cakes.'

She also promised some other things, which things she gave when Tilak was found, and only the garland was left to be presented. Accordingly she prepared a garland of spiced cakes, and told her two boys to go and offer it to Maruti. Tilak replied, 'Mother, why not give it to us?'

She said, 'There is one left over for each of you.' The two boys set off, but went to the lake where Tilak ate all the cakes off the garland by himself, drank water, hiccoughed and returned home. Although Sakharam knew this he told no one. When they arrived home their mother offered each of them a cake

Tilak said, 'No, thanks.'

She said, 'But didn't you want one?'

He replied, 'I have eaten them.'

'Which?'

'The ones you gave me.'

'What! You have eaten the cakes meant for the god?'

'Yes.'

His mother was truly grieved this time. Tilak said, 'But do you not say God is not far away, that He is in our hearts?'

'Dear, dear, but you should not have done that!' She was as amused as angry. 'I had no idea you would turn my words round to that meaning. "God is in our hearts" means He sees all the evil things we do.' Next day she garlanded Maruti with cakes herself.

Wamanrao rented another house, and went to live there. Tilak always helped his mother, even in the house. Wamanrao expected others to bring him his very drinking water. Seeing Tilak carrying water for his mother, Wamanrao would say, 'Bah, go on drawing water. In your fate there is little else written but drawing water. Look at Sakharam, younger than you, but see how he studies.'

When she heard these words, Tilak's mother would see before her eyes the picture of her son as a water-carrier, and she would be full of sorrow.

During the hour for arithmetic Tilak would sit and write poetry. He never let anyone see what he wrote, but always tore it up on the spot. This thing came to Wamanrao's ear, and so to his wife's. Wamanrao's anger and her anxiety flourished on Tilak's poetry.

She used to say, 'Child, what will become of you? I am at a loss to know what to do.'

Tilak's eyes would fill with tears and he would reply, 'Now truly I will do everything you tell me.'

Later Wamanrao was transferred to Mokhada. There were no educational facilities there, so he decided to go alone leaving his wife and children at Kalyan, and there he began his work. With Wamanrao absent the new inmates were at peace, ease, contentment and happiness. Tilak's mischief became less, at least perhaps it was not noticed so much by his mother as by Wamanrao He could now speak to his mother to his heart's content; when Wamanrao was in the house there was always too much work to do, and he could not bear to hear the intimate conversation of mother and son. Now all was changed. Only a mother and her children—what need to say more?

My mother-in-law was the perfect mirror of motherhood. She took the greatest care of her children. They received plain food, but always hot. She supervised their studies, and watched over their conduct. Not for a moment did Tilak leave the house without asking her permission In the house he was most obedient. He never tormented his younger brother. Sakharam understood perfectly that in the absence of his father he must obey his mother and elder brother Sometimes she would take the boys to see Wamanrao's aunt who had married a Mr Subhedar.

She had only one anxiety left, and that was Wamanrao's food and drink Tilak used to say, 'Mother, isn't it nice to be without Father? If he could always stay away, wouldn't it be lovely? We should have no trouble at all then'

'Then who would feed us?'

'Shall I tell you the truth, Mother? I am so frightened of him, sometimes I think if he did not exist at all it would be a good thing.'

'You should not talk such nonsense!'

'What have I done that I should always be in his black books? Do I not always do as you say? I don't know what gets into me when Father is about.'

'When you are big you will understand everything!'

In this childlike manner mother and son would converse, and Tilak would say further, 'Mother, I shall never, never leave you. You have put up with such a lot for me, haven't you?'

'Well, never mind, so long as you are good, that is enough.'

The plans and thoughts of men, future actions and events are all dependent on God's will. A poisonous snake now dropped its venom into this cup of nectar. A letter came one day from Mokhada with Wamanrao's signature, but in another's handwriting. It read as follows:

'Wamanrao is exceedingly ill. He must see you for the last time. Make no delay'

A lone woman, no money in the house, and now this letter from her husband! She was compassed about with children and the road ahead was as bad as any could be. These black thoughts beclouded her mind and Tilak's mother did not know which way to turn Her heart was overwhelmed Poor thing, what could she do? She could see no way out. Nevertheless, taking her courage in both hands, she said to the boys, 'Children, you stay here. I shall go alone.'

Tilak said, 'Mother, I know what we can do. We two shall go, and Sakharam can stay with Subhedar. My coming will be a great help to you. What would you do alone? Father is ill, all the housework is to be done, and water to be brought from a distance. Take me with you We shall both go and I shall do anything you tell me.'

A drowning man grasps at a straw. My mother-in-law agreed to the suggestion. The real truth was that Tilak did not want to be separated from his mother. Sakharam was sent to Subhedars', and they prepared to depart. They took the money that had been hidden away for some emergency. Anyone who may have known the Mokhada road of fifty years ago will remember it. My mother-in-law had a baby on her back, Tilak, a little bundle; they left in stately procession

It is the hot weather. The ground is burning under foot, above the fierce sun beating down; a heart full of care, pangs of hunger to be endured, and no water by the way! Their feet, unprotected, are pierced with thorns and stones; thick trees all around, and the terrifying thought of wild beasts; a mountain to descend and another to climb; on one side a deep pass, and by the way little hamlets of gypsies; the possibility of huge snakes coming out

of ant-hills, and the rustling of dry leaves. Along this dreadful road went my mother-in-law, treading the path towards the threshold of death.

'Mother, shall I take the baby now? You must be tired.'

'No, child, I am bigger than you, and therefore stronger.'

Lightening each other's burden with kindly words, they trudged on and on till somehow they reached Mokhada. This village is on a little hill. My mother-in-law kept saying, 'If I can only see him happy once, that is reward enough'

'He is all right. Don't worry. Nothing has happened to him.'

'Ah, that it may be so, son! That is what I pray. God grant it. Beyond that I have nothing to ask.'

Life is a road in which we must all help each other and be helped. Wherever our path may lead, the way is hard like this one

The little party climbed the hill. The village was small, the address found with no loss of time. Arrived, they found Wamanrao sitting by the door gossiping When his wife saw him, her joy knew no bounds All her fatigue vanished in an instant Soon she was at work She swept out the house, then began to descend the hill again with the children. She wanted to bathe at the well

'Well, mother! What did I say? There was nothing wrong with him!'

'May sugar sweeten your mouth! Your words were true. Now behave as you promised, and all will be well.'

My mother-in-law had a large brass water-pot on her head. Tilak was carrying Mahadev on his hip when they left the well.

'I shall take the pot'

'No, no, it is too heavy for you.'

'Are you not tired, Mother?'

'Not very.'

The pot was on her head, the washing on her shoulder, and as she returned she was thinking, 'now I must go and do the cooking' Wamanrao was still sitting by the door.

'Would you lift down the water pot from my head?'

As the words fell on his ears, like a tiger gnashing his teeth, he assailed her.

'I am not your servant,' he cried.

He seized her by the throat and kicked her from behind. With an invocation to Ram she fell to the ground. Both

children were in a frenzy of terror at the sight, and began to weep. Tilak putting down his brother went close to her and asked, 'Are you hurt?'

With her hand she said, 'No,' but her lips repeated, 'Ram, Ram!' Tilak brought her dry clothes. She put them on somehow and went to bed.

Again Tilak thought of taking revenge on his father, but back into his mind came the promise he had made his mother, and he held his peace. The neighbours could not understand what had happened. Wamanrao remained sitting quietly outside the house. From time to time he would go in and come out.

For eight days my mother-in-law never spoke a word, except 'Ram,' nor ate nor drank anything except water. On the eighth day, leaving her husband a widower and her children to the care of the world, she passed away, breathing, 'Ram, Ram!'

4 SECOND FLIGHT

How Tilak came to be a neighbour of Uncle Govindrao.

IN the heat of the sun even the biggest trees wilt and the rocks crack. Wamanrao was but a man. Under the consuming grief of separation his heart began to break, and he was scorched with remorse when he saw what his own thoughtlessness had brought upon him He became buried in thought. The loss of his wife had brought down a terrible catastrophe on his head.

Tilak was overwhelmed, there was no limit to his grief. From the very first he had worshipped his mother Now he said openly that it would have been a good thing if his father had gone instead of her. His mother's last cry had been to 'Ram!' She had not even mentioned Tilak's name, therefore 'Ram' had taken her away, and he would have liked to go with her! He would follow her; but who would look after Mahadev? These and many other wild thoughts did battle in his mind.

Wamanrao ceased to torment Tilak, and Tilak, for his part,

abandoned his aggravating ways. He was completely absorbed in a new idea, to slip away from his father's house and live his own life. But he never told a soul.

Wamanrao conceived a desire to scatter his wife's ashes on the waters of the Godavari, according to the Hindu custom. It was decided to go to Trimbak to perform the funeral rites. Trimbak is the nearest sacred place to Mokhada. Mahadev was to be left with a neighbour and Tilak to go with his father. Mahadev's clothes were still in the bundle his mother had brought with them Wamanrao opened it out Among the clothes he came across a small, heavy parcel. In it he found the one hundred rupees she had saved for an emergency. He was filled with remorse at the sight.

'Alas, alas! She put by this money for her own funeral,' and he burst into uncontrolled weeping.

Tilak and Wamanrao arrived at Trimbak. Wamanrao planned to complete all the rites, then leave the children with his brother-in-law, and so be free for his ordinary work. To this end he had called Bedekar, his wife's brother, to Mokhada. Tilak said to himself, 'When my uncle comes he is certain to arrange for Sakharam and Mahadev, so I need have no more anxiety about them If I go back with my uncle to his house I shall for ever be reminded of Mother, and shall not be able to keep from crying. Better to arrange something elsewhere now!'

Tilak was only eleven or twelve years old then. At night when everyone was sound asleep he got up quietly and departed. Wamanrao, waking in the morning, looked for him and found his place empty It was a repetition of the Kalyan disappearance. Wamanrao was in great consternation, and as a result left Trimbak much later than he had intended

The night he ran away Tilak slept in a free shelter for pilgrims and the poor. At dawn he took to the road, following wherever it led. It was the Nasik road He had nothing but the clothing which he was wearing, not a farthing, not a piece of bread. He did not even know where he was going. He had only one idea, to keep straight on and be independent.

Wamanrao returned to Mokhada There his wife's brother was waiting to take over the children Wamanrao was most unhappy when they left, and still grieving about Tilak. The picture of his mother never vanished from before Tilak's eyes; her voice still sounded in his ears, saying, 'Ram Ram.' He

arrived in Nasik about ten o'clock. That he had arrived there was true, but he himself did not even know the name of the town he had entered. He had never been there before. Not till he had made inquiry did he learn where he was.

As soon as he knew he was in Nasik he sought out the road to the river and then enthroned himself on the wide, stone steps leading down to the water. God forgets no one, nor did He forget Tilak. A boy of Tilak's own age came down the steps near by him to bathe He went up to Tilak and began questioning him.

'Who are you?'

'I am a Brahman.'

'Where have you come from?'

'From the Konkan'

'Where are you going?'

'I do not know!'

'What relatives have you?'

'Everyone, except my mother.'

'Whom have you here?'

'No one at all.'

'Will you come home with me? My house is big, and I have no one except my mother. She will give you something to eat.'

After this conversation and introduction the boy hung up his wet dhoti to dry, and as soon it was dry, gave it to Tilak to put on. When they both finished bathing they went home, and the boy introduced Tilak to his mother. She was even kinder than her son. She asked Tilak all about himself and was very sympathetic when she heard his pitiful story

She said, 'Child, I am not rich, but whatever I can I shall do for you, and help you at least a little. Do not go straying away by yourself. Stay with us The house is big and only two of us live here.'

Tilak had found a refuge, and there he stayed. Yesubai arranged for his dinner for each day. Four days he was to dine out and three days with her. This woman's nature was very lovable, but she was poor. Her own son was not well educated but with great care and thoughtfulness she began to help Tilak as she saw he needed it. She had some internal trouble and Tilak worked for her in the house. He knew how poor she was, and was touched that she should undertake to feed him three days herself.

In a short time he had many friends in the town and two more days were arranged for outside, leaving only one day's dinner to be provided by Yesubai. Vishwanath Balkrishna Mayale was the name of Tilak's new friend, and Yesubai the name of his mother. These two lavished affection on Tilak. They never enjoyed a mouthful if Tilak was not there. Tilak and Vishwanath loved each other more as brothers than friends. Because the burden of his expenses fell on Yesubai, Tilak undertook to go to the market for vegetables for every house where he was known, and in this way he earned two or three rupees a month, and brought the money to her.

Tilak had a great desire to learn Sanskrit, so he went to Ganesh Shastri Lele, a man greatly learned in the Vedic Scriptures or Shastras, and told him what he wanted, and began his studies At that time, the Shastri's son Lakshman Shastri was young Now and again Tilak would go to the *Bhatji Math* at Nasik in order to receive instruction in the Shastras. Tilak was greatly beloved by all his teachers. His master at that time was Rahalkar This master, recognizing his remarkable intelligence, used to give him some pecuniary help as well Tilak began now to forget both his father's severity and his mother's love He never forgot the goddess of Poetry, Nature and Oratory.

After eight or nine months Wamanrao learned that his son was at Nasik and he was well content He wrote at once to Govindrao Bedekar saying, 'Tilak is in Nasik, and is being well educated; also his expenses are very little, so you should tell Shridhar, Tilak's cousin, Sakharam, and your brother's wife to go there and rent a house I shall give ten rupees a month. You should give something too every month.'

Govindrao Bedekar had a widowed sister-in-law. When this letter was read to her Gangabai's eyes filled with tears. She had just lost her daughter and had a great affection for her grandchildren. Obeying Wamanrao's suggestion this company composed of Sakharam, Shridhar and Tilak's aunt and uncle arrived forthwith in Nasik. When they had hunted for and found Tilak they all set up house together.

Slowly with the passage of time, Tilak became the head of this household, and the whole burden of housekeeping and spending the money fell upon him. Here came Sakhu for her holidays; here I played with her; and from here was I driven

'When you are big you will understand everything!'

In this childlike manner mother and son would converse, and Tilak would say further, 'Mother, I shall never, never leave you. You have put up with such a lot for me, haven't you?'

'Well, never mind, so long as you are good, that is enough.'

The plans and thoughts of men, future actions and events are all dependent on God's will. A poisonous snake now dropped its venom into this cup of nectar. A letter came one day from Mokhada with Wamanrao's signature, but in another's handwriting. It read as follows:

'Wamanrao is exceedingly ill. He must see you for the last time. Make no delay.'

A lone woman, no money in the house, and now this letter from her husband! She was compassed about with children and the road ahead was as bad as any could be. These black thoughts beclouded her mind and Tilak's mother did not know which way to turn Her heart was overwhelmed. Poor thing, what could she do? She could see no way out. Nevertheless, taking her courage in both hands, she said to the boys, 'Children, you stay here. I shall go alone.'

Tilak said, 'Mother, I know what we can do We two shall go, and Sakharam can stay with Subhedar My coming will be a great help to you. What would you do alone? Father is ill, all the housework is to be done, and water to be brought from a distance Take me with you. We shall both go and I shall do anything you tell me.'

A drowning man grasps at a straw My mother-in-law agreed to the suggestion. The real truth was that Tilak did not want to be separated from his mother. Sakharam was sent to Subhedars', and they prepared to depart. They took the money that had been hidden away for some emergency. Anyone who may have known the Mokhada road of fifty years ago will remember it. My mother-in-law had a baby on her back, Tilak, a little bundle; they left in stately procession.

It is the hot weather. The ground is burning under foot, above the fierce sun beating down; a heart full of care, pangs of hunger to be endured, and no water by the way! Their feet, unprotected, are pierced with thorns and stones; thick trees all around, and the terrifying thought of wild beasts; a mountain to descend and another to climb; on one side a deep pass, and by the way little hamlets of gypsies; the possibility of huge snakes coming out

of ant-hills, and the rustling of dry leaves. Along this dreadful road went my mother-in-law, treading the path towards the threshold of death.

'Mother, shall I take the baby now? You must be tired.'

'No, child, I am bigger than you, and therefore stronger.'

Lightening each other's burden with kindly words, they trudged on and on till somehow they reached Mokhada. This village is on a little hill. My mother-in-law kept saying, 'If I can only see him happy once, that is reward enough'

'He is all right Don't worry. Nothing has happened to him.'

'Ah, that it may be so, son! That is what I pray. God grant it. Beyond that I have nothing to ask.'

Life is a road in which we must all help each other and be helped Wherever our path may lead, the way is hard like this one

The little party climbed the hill. The village was small, the address found with no loss of time. Arrived, they found Wamanrao sitting by the door gossiping When his wife saw him, her joy knew no bounds All her fatigue vanished in an instant. Soon she was at work She swept out the house, then began to descend the hill again with the children She wanted to bathe at the well

'Well, mother! What did I say? There was nothing wrong with him!'

'May sugar sweeten your mouth! Your words were true. Now behave as you promised, and all will be well.'

My mother-in-law had a large brass water-pot on her head. Tilak was carrying Mahadev on his hip when they left the well.

'I shall take the pot'

'No, no, it is too heavy for you.'

'Are you not tired, Mother?'

'Not very.'

The pot was on her head, the washing on her shoulder, and as she returned she was thinking, 'now I must go and do the cooking' Wamanrao was still sitting by the door

'Would you lift down the water pot from my head?'

As the words fell on his ears, like a tiger gnashing his teeth, he assailed her.

'I am not your servant,' he cried.

He seized her by the throat and kicked her from behind. With an invocation to Ram she fell to the ground. Both

children were in a frenzy of terror at the sight, and began to weep. Tilak putting down his brother went close to her and asked, 'Are you hurt?'

With her hand she said, 'No,' but her lips repeated, 'Ram, Ram!' Tilak brought her dry clothes. She put them on somehow and went to bed.

Again Tilak thought of taking revenge on his father, but back into his mind came the promise he had made his mother, and he held his peace The neighbours could not understand what had happened. Wamanrao remained sitting quietly outside the house. From time to time he would go in and come out

For eight days my mother-in-law never spoke a word, except 'Ram,' nor ate nor drank anything except water. On the eighth day, leaving her husband a widower and her children to the care of the world, she passed away, breathing, 'Ram, Ram!'

4 SECOND FLIGHT

How Tilak came to be a neighbour of Uncle Govindrao

IN the heat of the sun even the biggest trees wilt and the rocks crack. Wamanrao was but a man. Under the consuming grief of separation his heart began to break, and he was scorched with remorse when he saw what his own thoughtlessness had brought upon him. He became buried in thought. The loss of his wife had brought down a terrible catastrophe on his head.

Tilak was overwhelmed, there was no limit to his grief. From the very first he had worshipped his mother. Now he said openly that it would have been a good thing if his father had gone instead of her. His mother's last cry had been to 'Ram!' She had not even mentioned Tilak's name, therefore 'Ram' had taken her away, and he would have liked to go with her! He would follow her; but who would look after Mahadev? These and many other wild thoughts did battle in his mind

Wamanrao ceased to torment Tilak, and Tilak, for his part,

abandoned his aggravating ways. He was completely absorbed in a new idea, to slip away from his father's house and live his own life. But he never told a soul.

Wamanrao conceived a desire to scatter his wife's ashes on the waters of the Godavari, according to the Hindu custom. It was decided to go to Trimbak to perform the funeral rites. Trimbak is the nearest sacred place to Mokhada. Mahadev was to be left with a neighbour and Tilak to go with his father. Mahadev's clothes were still in the bundle his mother had brought with them Wamanrao opened it out. Among the clothes he came across a small, heavy parcel. In it he found the one hundred rupees she had saved for an emergency. He was filled with remorse at the sight.

'Alas, alas!' She put by this money for her own funeral,' and he burst into uncontrolled weeping.

Tilak and Wamanrao arrived at Trimbak. Wamanrao planned to complete all the rites, then leave the children with his brother-in-law, and so be free for his ordinary work. To this end he had called Bedekar, his wife's brother, to Mokhada. Tilak said to himself, 'When my uncle comes he is certain to arrange for Sakharam and Mahadev, so I need have no more anxiety about them. If I go back with my uncle to his house I shall for ever be reminded of Mother, and shall not be able to keep from crying Better to arrange something elsewhere now!'

Tilak was only eleven or twelve years old then. At night when everyone was sound asleep he got up quietly and departed. Wamanrao, waking in the morning, looked for him and found his place empty. It was a repetition of the Kalyan disappearance. Wamanrao was in great consternation, and as a result left Trimbak much later than he had intended

The night he ran away Tilak slept in a free shelter for pilgrims and the poor. At dawn he took to the road, following wherever it led. It was the Nasik road He had nothing but the clothing which he was wearing, not a farthing, not a piece of bread. He did not even know where he was going. He had only one idea, to keep straight on and be independent.

Wamanrao returned to Mokhada There his wife's brohter was waiting to take over the children. Wamanrao was most unhappy when they left, and still grieving about Tilak. The picture of his mother never vanished from before Tilak's eyes; her voice still sounded in his ears, saying, 'Ram Ram.' He

arrived in Nasik about ten o'clock. That he had arrived there was true, but he himself did not even know the name of the town he had entered. He had never been there before. Not till he had made inquiry did he learn where he was.

As soon as he knew he was in Nasik he sought out the road to the river and then enthroned himself on the wide, stone steps leading down to the water God forgets no one, nor did He forget Tilak. A boy of Tilak's own age came down the steps near by him to bathe. He went up to Tilak and began questioning him.

'Who are you?'

'I am a Brahman.'

'Where have you come from?'

'From the Konkan'

'Where are you going?'

'I do not know!'

'What relatives have you?'

'Everyone, except my mother.'

'Whom have you here?'

'No one at all'

'Will you come home with me? My house is big, and I have no one except my mother. She will give you something to eat.'

After this conversation and introduction the boy hung up his wet dhoti to dry, and as soon it was dry, gave it to Tilak to put on. When they both finished bathing they went home, and the boy introduced Tilak to his mother. She was even kinder than her son. She asked Tilak all about himself and was very sympathetic when she heard his pitiful story

She said, 'Child, I am not rich, but whatever I can I shall do for you, and help you at least a little. Do not go straying away by yourself. Stay with us The house is big and only two of us live here.'

Tilak had found a refuge, and there he stayed. Yesubai arranged for his dinner for each day. Four days he was to dine out and three days with her. This woman's nature was very lovable, but she was poor. Her own son was not well educated but with great care and thoughtfulness she began to help Tilak as she saw he needed it. She had some internal trouble and Tilak worked for her in the house. He knew how poor she was, and was touched that she should undertake to feed him three days herself.

In a short time he had many friends in the town and two more days were arranged for outside, leaving only one day's dinner to be provided by Yesubai. Vishwanath Balkrishna Mayale was the name of Tilak's new friend, and Yesubai the name of his mother. These two lavished affection on Tilak. They never enjoyed a mouthful if Tilak was not there. Tilak and Vishwanath loved each other more as brothers than friends. Because the burden of his expenses fell on Yesubai, Tilak undertook to go to the market for vegetables for every house where he was known, and in this way he earned two or three rupees a month, and brought the money to her

Tilak had a great desire to learn Sanskrit, so he went to Ganesh Shastri Lele, a man greatly learned in the Vedic Scriptures or Shastras, and told him what he wanted, and began his studies At that time, the Shastri's son Lakshman Shastri was young Now and again Tilak would go to the *Bhatji Math* at Nasik in order to receive instruction in the Shastras. Tilak was greatly beloved by all his teachers His master at that time was Rahalkar This master, recognizing his remarkable intelligence, used to give him some pecuniary help as well. Tilak began now to forget both his father's severity and his mother's love He never forgot the goddess of Poetry, Nature and Oratory

After eight or nine months Wamanrao learned that his son was at Nasik and he was well content He wrote at once to Govindrao Bedekar saying, 'Tilak is in Nasik, and is being well educated; also his expenses are very little, so you should tell Shridhar, Tilak's cousin, Sakharam, and your brother's wife to go there and rent a house I shall give ten rupees a month. You should give something too every month.'

Govindrao Bedekar had a widowed sister-in-law When this letter was read to her Gangabai's eyes filled with tears She had just lost her daughter and had a great affection for her grandchildren. Obeying Wamanrao's suggestion this company composed of Sakharam, Shridhar and Tilak's aunt and uncle arrived forthwith in Nasik. When they had hunted for and found Tilak they all set up house together

Slowly with the passage of time, Tilak became the head of this household, and the whole burden of housekeeping and spending the money fell upon him. Here came Sakhu for her holidays; here I played with her; and from here was I driven

out. Wamanrao and Govindrao Bedekar each sent Tilak ten rupees every month and Tilak himself used to earn a little to pursue his study of Sanskrit and English. Later, soon after we were married, Sakharam completed his studies and went to Poona. Shridhar returned to the Konkan. Only we two were left. The twenty rupees that used to be sent were naturally stopped. Tilak could not be expected to stand entirely by himself at once, without the help of his father-in-law, Uncle Govindrao. We decided to go to Jalalpur.

5 WEDDING PROCESSION

Tilak and Lakshmi's aunt quarrel Tilak and Lakshmi set up house themselves

UNCLE Govindrao was as fond of Tilak as if he himself had been his father He always said, 'Lakshmi is my only child. Later whatsoever I leave, it will be hers and Tilak's.' . My aunt saw things from a different angle If the son-in-law were spoilt by keeping him idle at home, what would happen later? There were everlasting squabbles between husband and wife over this difference of opinion.

My aunt would say, 'Tilak has no sense of responsibility at all. If he has been fed twice in the day, then off he goes with some rapscallions.'

To this Uncle Govindrao would answer, 'Let him alone. While he is young he will behave like that. Later his sense of responsibility will develop.'

Gangapur is very near Jalalpur, only the river Godavari lies between them. Gangapur is the bigger, wealthier, more pleasure-loving place. The drama of the ten incarnations of Vishnu was performed there. In this town Tilak found plenty of friends and an appreciative audience for his poetry. Partly on account of their pressure, and partly to gratify his own desire, he began to take part in the plays, but as stealthily as a thief. The whole group exercised the utmost vigilance to keep the least whisper of it from Uncle Govindrao's ears.

Yet, in spite of all their care the secret leaked out, and willy-nilly was overheard by him. Periodically someone would say, 'Well, well, Uncle, your son-in-law gave a wonderful performance yesterday. He played the part of Dashrath—Ram's father, so well that people were weeping their eyes out.'

Uncle Govindrao would reply, 'It is impossible. He was in the house last night.'

After we had gone to bed Uncle Govindrao used to come quietly and lock the door from the outside, and on the strength of this padlock endeavoured to put a padlock on the mouths of men.

When everything was hushed and quiet, the noise of the play in progress in Gangapur could be heard in Jalalpur

'Now Ganpati has come There falls the beat of the drums See! The Dance of Sharada How clearly you can hear the song!' So as he lay in the dark, Tilak's impatient words rang out, and below our window a whispering would begin His friends gathering beneath would help him to get out through the window quietly

The house being a farmer's, bullock's reins and ropes were lying everywhere: these were of course made use of. One time when Tilak had run away like this to Gangapur in the middle of the night, he returned at dawn and climbed through the window by a rope

Uncle Govindrao felt for his keys They were still in their place. He thought that people were trying to provoke a quarrel between them, by spreadng false rumours, saying his son-in-law was acting in plays. Again hearing as usual that last night's play was so good, he said at once, 'I don't believe it This very night I shall come myself to see the play. Nothing else will stop your mouths.' Uncle Govindrao actually went to see the play in secret. Tilak never dreamed that his father-in-law was sitting in the crowd. The curtain rose on Ram leaving to wander in the forest and Dashrath's lament. Tilak, composing his own songs, began to sing The audience began to weep. It was not the custom for poets to sing their own songs then, but on this occasion Tilak did it. The rising tears in Uncle Govindrao's eyes put out the fires of anger. His wrath was damped but the thunderstorm my aunt was piling up broke with a crash.

She complained to the whole village that Tilak would not

come and say his prayers; when everything was laid out in readiness he emptied the water into the plate, and ate the ashes. Tilak on the other hand, spread the tale that his mother-in-law was a holy terror. 'My father-in-law is all right, but what he gives to cover me she makes my wife pull off!'

This continued bickering in the end made Tilak decide to leave Jalalpur. Taking me with him, he went to Nasik. We stayed there four days, and in four days had enough of it. We wanted to return to Jalalpur, but, without being invited, had not the face to rise and go. In the end, however, we agreed to try. The next question was how I could travel eight miles on foot. We hired a horse for me to ride while Tilak walked. I was afraid to ride Tilak said, 'Let us both ride.' But we were ashamed to let people see us, husband and wife riding together!

Tilak tried to encourage me, 'The market is over. We shall meet no one on the road: and if we do, we can say we are neighbours!' I was persuaded We both mounted and set off. We had not seen a soul till near Jalalpur, but outside Alandi we met the village barber. He roared with laughter when he saw us.

'Hullo! Young bridegroom! This is a fine wedding procession!' he said, still laughing

Covered with confusion we both dismounted. Eight or twelve annas were slipped into the barber's hand He promised to tell no one. We also presented him with the blanket thrown over the horse, because we did not know how to carry it into Jalalpur. Friend barber travelled most happily back to Nasik on horseback, and we came on foot and stood shamefacedly at Uncle Govindrao's door.

We were received in dead silence. For three or four days there was a vow of silence in the house. Then gradually the flames from my aunt's tongue began to flicker, and at last what was to come came. Now Uncle Govindrao too began to take my aunt's part. Both of them said, 'Tilak has no sense of responsibility.' In the end Tilak took the huff, and went off leaving me behind.

He walked at a great pace till he reached Gangapur. From thereon his speed slackened, and then he met Gopalrao the priest of the village on the road. Having listened to his persuasions, Tilak forgot his anger and returned to Jalalpur. This time he was welcomed by my eldest brother Keshav.

'What, you have come back like a boomerang?'

'Ugh! I wasn't coming back. It was Gopal Bhat the priest who brought me.'

'As if the cowherd should say "the cows brought me home"!'

Tilak laughed and his brother-in-law laughed too. Nevertheless, it was not possible for us to stay long in Jalalpur after this. Tilak heard, through other people, that my aunt had said, 'He doesn't look after his household affairs. This son-in-law is more than we bargained for.' To stay longer was impossible.

Again it was decided to leave Jalalpur for Nasik It never took Tilak long to translate an idea into action. He took the Nasik road at once, and went to stay with Wamanrao Ranade in Panchavati After some days, on Ranade's advice he started a private English school He had studied English only up to the sixth standard, but through constant application his English was excellent. The school was held in Krishna's temple in Panchavati. His friend Krishnarao Bhonde lived there too Fifteen or sixteen children used to come, and they were charged a fee of eight annas each a month.

Tilak now moved into the house next door to Wamanrao Ranade. An aunt of mine was related to Ranade and stayed with him, so I felt no stranger in our new house. The responsible work Tilak had undertaken he carried out with the greatest devotion. He cared for it as his own life. His whole time was spent with the children

One day he was late in getting home It was long after ten at night. I was sitting alone in the house watching for his return with the evening meal ready. I fell asleep where I was, sitting on the mat waiting Tilak arrived home He tired himself out battering on both doors Lots of people told him that this was my first sleep and it would not be possible to waken me

They invited him to their houses for supper, but no matter what they said he would not listen. My aunt was very annoyed with me too In the end someone erected a ladder and poked me with a long stick through the window. I awoke with a great start. Tilak was exceedingly angry and threatened to have the whole tale written up and printed in Ranade's paper. That day I decided never to let it happen again. On the first signs of sleep I used to bathe my eyes with water, and while away the time standing on one foot and then the other.

6 POONA BANGLES

Tilak's brother Sakharam is engaged. Tilak vanishes and Lakshmi is left in the care of her father-in-law.

ONE day while our household affairs were running thus smoothly, Wamanrao arrived in Nasik with Sakharam. He seemed pleased to see our housekeeping. He had to fulfil a vow to perform a ceremony in honour of *satyanarayana*, and he had instructed me to make everything ready. I was only a child, but now my aunt, Mrs Ranade, proved a friend in need. Coming to our house she prepared everything. Wamanrao, when he saw the arrangements, was completely satisfied. He began saying to everyone, 'Our Lakshmi is truly a treasure, not merely "Treasure" in name. Young in years, but how intelligent and what a good housekeeper!'

When I heard these words fall from his lips I grew an inch taller. Having completed the *satyanarayana* ceremony, Wamanrao and Sakharam returned home. Immediately after this, a letter came, saying Sakharam's wedding had been arranged, and we must go at once to Poona. Obeying his father's orders, Tilak and I left for Poona Tilak was very sorry to leave the school he had established. Before leaving he put his little institution into the hands of Krishnarao Bhonde.

One of Tilak's chief characteristics was—and this will be realized by those who read further—that he became absorbed in whatever was before his eyes for the moment Once a thing or a piece of work was out of sight, many a time he would not so much as remember its existence. What then could be left of care and concern? His own poem, *O bird wilt thou return*? might well be quoted against him. Many and many a time, when he went out, was it our turn to say, 'Wilt thou fly away and be diffused, like a breath of the wind?' Whenever Tilak used to disappear I would sit and cry, the old people in the house would be filled with anxiety, and the young men would form a search party.

All the guests for the wedding were gathered, but for the mere sneeze of a fly, Sakharam's engagement was broken off, and everyone was scattered to the four winds.

I have already explained how I possessed only my gold-bordered sari, and my black wedding beads. Tilak knew this. Inventing some excuse he asked for and obtained my good sari. I had no idea what happened to it. I only knew Tilak vanished leaving me in Poona.

One day Wamanrao began questioning me. I was only thirteen or fourteen at that time.

'Lakshmibai, where is your gold-bordered sari?'

'I do not know. I had it folded up in that recess in the wall.'

'That has nothing to do with it. Bring the sari here or you will have to answer for it to me.'

Wamanrao in speaking to me when he was angry, generally affixed the honorific *bai* to my name as if he were speaking to an outsider. The truth was that Wamanrao and Sakharam had brought back the sari, which had been in pawn. It would not be untrue to say that I never saw it again.

Father and son must have fallen out over something, and Tilak had left. I found myself alone in my father-in-law's house, that is, in his clutches.

'Father, I need some bangles.'

'Well, why do you ask me? Bring the lost sari and you will get your bangles.'

'All my everyday saris are torn.'

'Well, what can I do? Bring the lost sari and we shall get you new ones.'

'I swear by your life, I never lost my gold-bordered sari.'

'What is it to me whether you did it or someone else? Grind to some profit, and buy your own bangles; buy yourself new saris.'

After such a conversation I used to sit snivelling and crying. Not even soap or oil for my hair would he give. If I began to ask, I only received a reply on the above model.

One day Sakharam drew me aside and told me the sari was found. Tilak had pawned it. It was now redeemed, but he could not give it to me because Wamanrao would be angry.

I said, 'Never mind if I do not see it again. Enough that it has turned up.'

One of the Ranades was living in Poona. He was a distant cousin, so Wamanrao called him and told him to make arrangements to keep me.

Mr Ranade replied, 'You are her father-in-law, aren't you? Our family has looked after her all these years, now it is your duty. If none of you had been here we should certainly have had to do everything, and would have done it too.'

As he left he took me aside and said, 'Lakshmi, don't be afraid. We have not cast you off. We shall do everything.' I had that much comfort.

I began, 'I *do* want some Poona bangles. Tilak's father says "Grind, and buy your Poona bangles".'

In the afternoon, when Wamanrao returned, he began to speak very kindly to me.

'Lakshmi, you want saris, don't you?'

I was full of joy 'Yes, all my saris are torn.'

'Do you want one or two?'

'Two.'

'If you want one, I shall get one at Rs 4, and if two I shall get them at Rs 2 each.'

Enough! What use to reply? I was bitterly disappointed. I retired to a corner, wiped my eyes and began my work again. These were my first saris from my father-in-law since my wedding. Remembering all the love I had received at home from Uncle Govindrao I could not keep from sobbing A little later I received two saris at Rs 2 each.

Mr Ranade came back in the evening. Wamanrao said to him, 'I have made all arrangements for sending her away. You will have no trouble now. Good-bye.'

In the morning I was handed a ticket for the seven o'clock train to Nasik. I still had to buy my Poona bangles. Two women were with me. Sakharam came to the station to see me off. Just as the train was leaving he pressed a rupee into my hand.

'Lakshmi, how often you asked for bangles, but I could do nothing for fear of Father. Take this rupee and buy yourself some.'

'But it was *Poona* ones I wanted!' The train was away, and the Poona bangles remained in Poona.

We arrived at Nasik in the evening. The women with me took me to their home in Panchavati. In spite of all the relatives I had in the town, I spent the night with strangers. They took me upstairs to sit, while they both went inside. A drum, a lute and other musical instruments, such as are not found in

a respectable house, were lying about. Seeing them I was first interested, and then frightened. I had never seen such musical instruments before. I had not only been brought up in a little village, but was Narayanrao Gokhale's child, a girl who used to think a railway compartment was like the compartment of a box into which people were piled before the lid was shut down.

I was so afraid when I saw the instruments that I left the room and came downstairs, calling for these 'good' women and groping through the house in the dark. There was a stone court downstairs where I fell heavily, with my head on a block of stone. Poona bangles were left behind, but the Nasik bangles on my hands were now shattered into a thousand pieces. For all the force of my fall, my head was not split. When they heard the noise, both women came running, and lifting me took me upstairs again.

They bound their own necklaces round my wrists for bangles, in case the lack of them should foreshadow my widowhood, and then they pressed me to eat something. I refused to eat anything cooked by them, but in spite of this the poor things stayed with me all night, and helped me in any way they could. Next day they presented me with one-anna bangles and I set off for Nasik. I was going straight to Jalalpur, but before leaving Nasik I chanced to see Uncle Govindrao passing in Ravivar Street. He was very pleased to see me though exceedingly astonished; he was shocked when he heard the description of my journey. We turned on our heels and went to Jalalpur.

7 MY FATHER-IN-LAW

Where Tilak went, what he did, and how he returned. He takes Lakshmi to the house of his father Wamanrao, who teaches her to cook

TILAK'S impetuous rush out of Poona landed him straight into Dhamak in Berar, where he found work as a teacher in a Government school at twenty-five rupees a month.

In every house a father,
In every house a mother,
In every house a sister,
In every house a brother,
Doth not my love pervade
Each home that man hath made?

This, his own song, fits his own life. He had no relatives in Dhamak, but he always regarded any neighbour as part of his own family, and so he established himself here. Tilak found a poor Brahman boy, with a sweet voice, for whom he composed four *kirtans*, which are religious stories sung and interspersed with spoken commentaries enlarging the theme. These four stories with songs written by Tilak did much to help the boy later on.

Tilak also met a holy ascetic there, and became his disciple. This man administered some vows to him. Tilak used to sit in the river, repeating them over and over. Gathering the bitter leaves from the *neem* tree, he pounded them on a stone, rolled them into balls and ate them. More and more people began to gather round Tilak. He, however, retired to the woods to meditate, and as a result of this abandoned his school. Nevertheless he was forced to give up this new life. One day his teacher asked him with whom he lived at home, and whether he had left them with their permission. The only answer to this question was 'No', and at once the holy man ordered Tilak to go back to Jalalpur, comforting him with a promise to see him often.

My people had been searching for Tilak, but all their efforts were fruitless. One day Tilak appeared, standing on Uncle Govindrao's door-step. He had a rosary of sacred berries as big as lime fruit round his neck, a long robe to cover him, his beard and matted hair had grown to an astonishing length. At the sight of this apparition Uncle Govindrao was greatly perturbed, but he made up his mind to say nothing. From Tilak's appearance no one could say when, or how soon, he would become an ascetic.

Uncle Govindrao warned my aunt emphatically not to speak. She held her tongue well in check, but a leopard cannot change its spots, and one day, sitting in the centre room of the house this conversation was begun. Uncle Govindrao, my aunt and I were talking.

'To have chosen a crow that has hardly alighted on a perch before it is off again!'

'I did not give her to him. Your own people did the chosing.'

'But, Aunt, if everyone sits in the palanquin, then who will take the poles?'

'Here is someone big enough to support him! So you will shoulder the palanquin poles, will you? He will continue composing songs, and you can sing them. Beg, both of you!'

At this a thunderclap was heard outside. Tilak was sitting on the veranda in front. He rose at once and packed his things up into a bundle. Uncle Govindrao tried to pacify him. He would not listen. In the end, Uncle Govindrao said, 'Your wife is old enough now; you must take her with you. I cannot undertake to look after her.'

Wamanrao had been transferred to Murbad Tilak decided to take me there My father-in-law was an exceedingly tidy and methodical man. He never married again, after his wife died, nor entered into any kind of liaison. His whole behaviour was without blemish. Other women he regarded as his mothers. After his wife was gone he looked after the whole house himself. He did his own cooking and that so economically that, after dinner, not a grain of rice was left over. He kept everything in the house that was needed; any casual observer would have thought that there must be a woman in the home. Here in Murbad he lived in the temple of Ram. There was a restaurant next door.

When we arrived he had finished his dinner and was seated on the veranda. We of course found nothing in the house to eat, so Wamanrao sent us out to the restaurant. Our repast consisted of a small ball of rice only, sufficient to offer to the gods, a drop of boiled lentils the size of the *kunku* mark on my forehead, burnt, bitter pulse and buttermilk like water. Tilak was not in the least upset. Only I, reared in a family for four generations outside the Konkan, considered it worse than a fast.

We dined and came home, then Wamanrao showed me his house.

'Lakshmi, if you are untidy in any way, slovenly or careless, I will not put up with it. Here are the utensils, here the firewood, outside the well. Now prepare the evening meal.'

It was the first time I had ever made bread from rice. Never in my whole life had I so much as seen it. As the ground is

cracked and split after the first rain, so were my cakes cracked all over.

'Lakshmi, this will not do. The people in your home may have been animals. I am not. From tomorrow the cooking must be properly done.'

When I sat down to cook, Wamanrao used to sit in the front room, from which he could see what was happening in the kitchen. Often at one and the same moment, he would be worshipping his gods and teaching me to cook. I was a good cook, but only for my own locality.

Once he told me to 'live fry' the boiled lentils

'How do I "live fry"?'

'By heating the ladle.'

I heated the ladle and began to pour the lentils in as usual. Wamanrao grew angry.

'If you were a stone, you might have been used as a step into a latrine!'

'Who knows? A step into the latrine perhaps—or an image of a god!' But this I said to myself.

Wamanrao explained, 'When the oil begins to flame, pour it in.'

In order to set fire to the oil, I lifted a piece of burning wood into the ladle. Naturally there was a beautiful blaze, and with it the thunder of Wamanrao's wrath. For one thing the Konkan dishes are different from the Deccan dishes; for another, they have extraordinary names, and thirdly Wamanrao had an elliptic, sarcastic manner of speaking; these combined to bewilder me utterly. In the end I found a teacher. Near the well lived a tenant, a kindly woman called Gangabai Joshi. Whenever Wamanrao told me to do anything I used to take a brass vessel, and run to get water. As I drew the water I would ask Gangabai quietly through the window, and she would explain everything.

'What is *pezbudya* rice. Aunty?'

'Well, boil your rice in plenty of water and you have *pezbudya* rice.' I went home laughing, and cooking the rice just as Wamanrao wanted it, served it up. Then Wamanrao would order some unheard-of dish, and I according to Gangabai's instructions would prepare it forthwith, as if I had known it from my babyhood.

He now began to suspect something, and searched for my triumphant magic key till he found it. He and the Joshis got on well together but I proved a source of disruption. He could

not endure that Gangabai should teach me, so one day he said to Mr Joshi, 'Do not let Lakshmi keep coming to you.'

'We cannot help it. If you like, tie a string to her foot,' said Joshi.

The conversation naturally ceased there, because it did not seem right to Wamanrao to tie me up, but he broke off his friendship with the Joshis.

Tilak opened a school here too. He had become most accomplished in his profession. The teaching of English was his forte. In his schools his pupils were always his friends and brothers. It was never a case of the school being run for a set salary as in the present-day schools. He loved his scholars as his children and they honoured him as their father. He always got good fees. The syllabus was of his own devising, and his main desire was to create true gentlemen. Even if they learned nothing else, they could learn good manners from their association with him. As usual the school was a great success.

As soon as the midday meal was over, Tilak went to his school and Wamanrao began prowling up and down. The school was held in the temple. The house and the temple were side by side. Wamanrao's range was from the temple to the kitchen and back again. All his attention was on my behaviour. Apparently I had been born only to eat. I never could remember all of Wamanrao's various, minute instructions When the men's dinner was over, I gathered up the bits and refuse, and leaving them by a pot would wash my hands. Then I used to sit down to my own meal Till I had swallowed one or two mouthfuls he would say nothing. Then he would come out with 'Lakshmi, the rubbish is left beside the pot here. Take it and throw it away.'

I had to put my dinner aside, take out the rubbish and return. He was forever telling me not to leave the rubbish by the pot, and I was forever forgetting. As soon as I had sat down again, he would say quietly,

'Lakshmi, have you watered the sacred *Tulshi* plant?'

Again I would rise. Every day I forgot, and every day I had to leave my dinner to do it.

'How do you ever remember your dinner? Would you die if you did not eat? And if you did, would the whole world be desolate?'

This was the daily order of things, and the nightly order

of things too. Wamanrao used to say, 'Lakshmi, before you sit down to eat, lay out my bed. Put some water in the tin pot. Do not forget.'

The evening meal was always very late and I was always very hungry. I did not like to spread the bed out before dinner, because there were always visitors in the house. If I did it after his dinner, I had the trouble of changing into my ordinary sari, spreading out the bedding and changing into my clean sari again to sit down for my own meal. If I should think of making his bed after I dined, it came back on my own head, because as soon as two mouthfuls had passed my lips, Wamanrao would come out with—'Lakshmi, lay out my bed.'

'Lakshmi' would have to rise, change into her working clothes, spread the bed, and put on her clean sari again before she sat down to finish her dinner.

8 TRIALS OF A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

More stories of Wamanrao.

ONCE, while I was sitting doing my cooking, some of Tilak's pupils came to me saying, 'Hallo, Sister, Sister, your father is celebrating the twelfth and thirteenth day of either your funeral or Tilak's over there.'

I rose at once and went to see what was happening in the temple. Wamanrao was busy flinging the sacred vessels one after another straight down into the courtyard of Ram's temple. With each vessel came the imprecation, 'My daughter-in-law is dead. This is the twelfth day. My son is dead. I cast him off.'

What had happened? The vessels were stained! They were all brass vessels, the water was well water, the ash used for cleaning them was wood-ash, and it was during the rains. No matter how well I polished them, the stains would reappear. I went upstairs. In a corner of the school Wamanrao had arranged his gods. I gathered all the vessels together. He came up behind me.

'Did you polish these pots?'

'Yes.'

'Swear by me.'

'I swear by yourself, I polished them.'

'If I die, how many tears will you shed? Take your wedding beads in your hand and swear.'

Taking hold of my beads I swore, because the innocent have nothing to fear.

'Wait, I shall call a women's meeting and, placing the vessels before them, ask their opinion. You will be nicely ridiculed'

I was convinced that no other woman would ridicule me.

'Hold my feet and swear. Take care. You will be burnt to an ash if you touch my foot with your hand.'

As I put forward my hands to touch his feet he backed away from me.

'Beware, you will be burnt up.'

'Never mind. It is no evil thing to die at your feet.'

I fell forward on my face, and seized both his feet. I did not burst into flames and die. I was terribly disappointed. I was reduced to thinking it would be a good thing to die. Either Wamanrao had not practised austerities sufficient to guarantee him the authority, or else I had truly polished the vessels for worship. At any rate I was not consumed that day.

One day Wamanrao called Tilak to him and said,

'Son, you should take another wife. I could bring you any number of girls from the Konkan'

Tilak replied, 'I have enough ado to feed one. What should I do with another?'

'Send her back to her people.'

'I shall never do that. I have not even set up house for myself yet. On no account shall I do such a thing'

This conversation and the following incident indicate how much Tilak loved me

The water in the well in front of the house dried up. The other well was beyond the village. We had to go there for water. During the day there was a never-ending queue. Wamanrao ordered the water to be brought at night. I was afraid of the dark. He thought nothing of that. He used to say, 'If anyone comes to gobble you up, tell him your father-in-law is in the temple. He can go and eat him first, and then come back for you.'

Tilak told me not to be afraid. He would bring the water. Sure enough at nightfall he went out for a stroll by the front door, and I went out by the back to fetch the water. After that I would linger round the house, then just carry in the water he had brought, and fill up the vessels. Wamanrao no doubt said to himself, 'How faithfully that daughter-in-law of mine brings the water.'

One day I was washing out his spittoon. My stomach turned and I spat. This did not escape his ever-watchful eye. Speaking very sweetly in the evening he said,

'Lakshmi, I am very fond of your tumbler. Put it beside my pillow.'

I made it a point to put it by his pillow every evening. One day the woman who cleaned our vessels told me that Wamanrao used my tumbler as a spittoon. I could not believe it. The next day she proved it to me, and immediately a flash of light penetrated my mind. I began after that to lay it out for his worship. He always removed it to a distance.

In all these ways that I have related, he continued to persecute me, but I can praise him for two things. He never used an unseemly word to me, and he never laid a finger on me. Now and again he would extol me to others

Once he invited someone to dinner. He did all the cooking himself. I was astonished at him. In a little while the visitor arrived. I served the dinner for the two of them. Wamanrao asked his guest what he thought of the cooking.

'Excellent, excellent, why ask about the cooking?'

'Yes, but I asked on purpose, because my daughter-in-law did it.'

The guest was pleased with his good dinner, and I was astounded at my father-in-law's behaviour. This was only once in a way. For the rest, he was always furious if he was asked for anything. I never got either oil or soap for my hair. Whenever I began to make my request he would reply,

'Grind, earn, and buy your oil and soap.'

I used to wash my hair with earth. Sometimes, when I had sat down to bathe he would lift the hot water from under my very nose, and go and bathe himself. I had to finish my bathing in cold water.

He had one reply to our usual wrangles over soap, etc.

'Once the wood was finished. My wife was pregnant. All

the same I made her chop it. What irks you then? My wife never retorted. When anything in the house was nearly finished, she brought what was left and placed it before me in silence. Then I knew that it was finished. Girls nowadays are most forward. You will never learn how to behave before your elders.'

Every month I had to fast for three or four days. Wamanrao cooked enough for himself and ate it, then it would dawn on Tilak that I was 'unclean' and he would do the cooking, and serve me. During those days I had to sit in the dark. I was terrified of the dark, but what was the use? By degrees, I feared it no more.

Tilak's poems were becoming famous. You could hear his name throughout Bombay and Poona. I had trouble enough in the house but these were good days for him He now received an invitation to give a lecture somewhere in Bombay, and saying he would return in eight days, he left. He enjoyed himself too well there. Eight days went by, ten days, fifteen days, still neither sign nor word from him. I began to be most anxious. My tears never ceased On top of all Tilak had given his father 'Hotel Sardar Griha' as his address, and this was used as a stick for my back.

'There is a letter from your husband today.'

'Oh!'

'He has got work. He is washing dhoties in the Sardar Griha.'

'Then I shall hang them up to dry.'

'He serves the meals there.'

'I shall clear away the refuse after him. Take me to Bombay.'

'I have no money. If you want to go to Bombay, make your own arrangements; but remember, Bombay is not Murbad. You will be lost there like a pebble on the beach'

One day I was crying so sorely that even Wamanrao was sorry for me. He came and sat on a low wooden stool near by.

'Lakshmi, I have not a lot of daughters, only one. One is dead. You are my second daughter. You are as Sakhu to me. Don't cry. Even if he has gone, let him go. Tomorrow is the festival of Parvati. Invite two women in the evening to celebrate the day. Make *ladus*. I will give you all that is necessary.'

So saying he went to the market and brought back everything I needed. I prepared everything. The *ladus* were ready. As soon as they were made he took out three, laid them down,

then lifting the sweet box with the remainder popped it into his trunk and turned the key. The visitors were feasted on three *ladus*.

Wamanrao began to complain about me to the two women who had come.

'Lakshmi steals the food.'

Gangabai flashed out, 'What does she steal? All your things are under lock and key. What can she steal and eat? Wood? And drinks the oil too I suppose!' This was our feast! He had been about to explain why he had put away the sweets, but the moment he broached the subject, the scales were turned against him.

I remember one other event that happened in connexion with my persecution as a daughter-in-law. While Tilak was away Wamanrao used to collect the neighbouring boys and tell them a story in the evening.

Once he was out somewhere. The boys gathered and upset his inkpot. I had gone next door, and they came running to tell me his ink was spilt. I rose in a fright, rubbed the ink into the mud floor with my feet and returned. My footprints were left on the ground. As soon as Wamanrao returned and saw the spilt ink, he was beside himself with rage. None of the boys would confess. He took them in turn and tried their feet on the tracks I had left, and finally came growling into the kitchen.

'Come upstairs.' I went obediently

'Who spilt the ink?'

'I do not know.'

'Whose are these footprints? Put your feet on them. Now say if you spilt the ink or not'

'I did not spill it.'

'You did spill it. This is Government ink. You will have to pay for it.'

'How can I pay for it?'

'Grind, and grind to some profit.'

This refrain was so familiar that I was not disturbed by it, and by God's mercy, I never came under such a necessity.

Wamanrao wrote two letters, one to Tilak in Bombay and the other to Uncle Govindrao in Jalalpur. To Tilak he wrote, 'Your wife goes out at night only returning at dawn. Come and take her away. I will not be responsible for her. Otherwise renounce her at once, as if she were already dead.'

In Uncle Govindrao's letter he said, 'Your son-in-law is most dissolute. He is a slave to every bad habit. He has abandoned his wife. He drinks liquor made from hemp-stalks and dried heads of flowers. He smokes *chandole.* If you want your girl come and take her away within three days, otherwise I shall turn her adrift.'

Tilak had complete confidence in me, and he knew his father's temperament well. That letter had no effect upon him whatsoever. But Uncle and Aunt were filled with consternation. My aunt said,

'If he drinks hemp-liquor I can understand, but how can he smoke a *chandole*? How does he catch it? It is a lark that flies high up in the sky.'

Uncle Govindrao explained that *chandole* meant opium. She was more than ever perturbed. Father was so ill at this time that there was no hope for him. My aunt and uncle were torn between leaving Father and coming for me, or remaining with Father and letting me be.

9 COMFORT FROM HOME

Tilak and Lakshmi go to live in Bombay. Lakshmi's father dies.

AT last Uncle Govindrao asked Father quietly if he should go and fetch me. Father said 'Yes' and taking him at his word Uncle Govindrao left for Murbad immediately. From there yet another letter had been dashed off to Tilak by Wamanrao. It had been written by someone else, and the gist of it was, 'Your father is very ill Treat this letter as a telegram and come at once'. Tilak did not believe it at all, because only two days earlier the former letter had arrived in Wamanrao's own handwriting, and in it there was no mention of illness. However, Tilak thought it quite possible that overwrought by his father's nagging I might have taken my life, and this was what the letter portended. So he too left for Murbad in a hurry.

Now on the one hand Wamanrao was absorbed in the happy

thought that, if not her husband at least her father would come and remove this ill-starred, illiterate Deccani daughter, who would not cook Konkani food for him; while on the other hand, those two were converging from opposite directions, alarmed and anxious.

Since Murbad is nearer Bombay, Tilak's train journey took no time. From the station to Murbad it is ten to fifteen miles. In those days the distance was covered in a bullock cart, but Tilak thought he would accomplish the journey more quickly by himself, and set off on foot. It was the month of July and the rainy season, but he began to walk briskly. A big river crosses the way. There was no bridge over it, and it was in flood. Tilak dived in and swam to the other side The rest of the road was very bad, and his journey cost him much pain and labour.

At home Wamanrao was sitting gossiping loudly with his friends. Tilak's first question when he arrived was, 'How are you, Father?'

'What is wrong with me? Take your wife away. I do not want her near me. She will tell tales in plenty. But do not listen to her. She never speaks to me'

He was going to say more, but Tilak did not wait to hear. He came straight into the kitchen where I was sitting crying. He comforted me, saying he had found work in Bombay, and we would leave the following morning My joy had no bounds. Wamanrao too was overjoyed, and the next day we set out for Bombay.

We left Murbad in the morning, and in the evening of the same day Uncle Govindrao arrived. He was much shocked to find I was not at Murbad. Wamanrao would not speak plainly to him. 'Your girl has gone with her husband to Bombay' This was all that could be got out of him. When he was asked our address he answered, 'I don't know.'

On our heels Uncle Govindrao left for Bombay. He arrived, but where should he look for me? Like a madman he wandered profitlessly up and down the streets for three days, scanning the tenements. I, on the other hand, was having the greatest fun! I was utterly bewildered by the six- and seven-storied buildings, the trams and the streets. From the time I arrived at the station I was stupefied, and did not know where I was going. I was continually looking all around me Before we reached home Tilak had to warn me three or four times to

watch my step. Home! We had not even a house yet. We spent the night at a hotel, and next day arranged to rent a room somewhere in Girgaon near the Prarthana Samaj. In this room Tilak and I set up house. He brought in the things, and I undertook to arrange them, but I was so enchanted by the astonishing sights of Bombay that on merely hearing strange street-cries I kept running out to look.

In this way, popping my head out and staring down the street, whom should I see suddenly but Uncle Govindrao, walking along with his neck craned upwards and his mouth gaping. I cried out to him.

'Uncle!'

'Lakshmi,' he rejoined from below, in utter astonishment. How can one describe our mutual delight! He was even happier than I. He had been convinced that he had lost me, and now, all of a sudden I, Lakshmi, was found. In a little while he and Tilak met. Tilak was extremely pleased to see him. Uncle Govindrao told Tilak that my father—Nana Gokhale—was dying, and asked permission to take me to Jalalpur. Tilak could not say no.

The next day I was at the station again. Uncle Govindrao put me into a women's compartment, and came to ask after me at every station I kept telling him everything was all right, but the opposite was the truth. It was the last month of the twelve-yearly festival of Sinhatha. The carriage was filled with rich Gujrathi women of the Bhatiya caste. (Bhatiya also means she-cats.) They all had arms as thick as beams. No one would give me room to sit down. Amongst all these she-cats I was like a little mouse. Yet in the midst of them I would squeak like a mouse, 'I'll tell the station-master when we come to the next station' Would even the slightest justice be obtained by such a feeble voice? They kept up a continuous digging with their elbows, relieved now and then with pinches.

After Kalyan I quietly took a woman's child, and began playing with it. I was given a little room in which to sit, but gradually I was swamped by all the children in the carriage. However, entertaining the children or not, it was no small thing to reach Nasik in safety sitting on a seat.

When we got out of the train, the tonga-driver asked for Rs 5 per passenger to take us into the city. Uncle Govindrao did not have so much with him. So he said to me, 'You go in the tonga.' I replied, 'You go, I shall follow on foot.'

In the end we both decided to walk. Amongst our people no one pays any heed to the effect of their speech on others. Both Uncle Govindrao and I were tired out with our troubles. We arrived in Nasik hot and thirsty, having walked six or seven miles from the station. Now we were to rest in Nasik a little, eat, drink and send for our own cart to take us the remaining six miles to Jalalpur; but we were no sooner in the city than we met the family priest, who dealt us this blow.

'Hallo Govindrao, where are you going?'

'I am bringing Lakshmi home.'

'How long has it taken?'

'Four days.'

'Then when Nana Gokhale died, I suppose you were not here.'

We were both very grieved to hear this news. There could be no more thought of food or drink or rest. We left forthwith for Jalalpur on foot. Though Father had never shown me any affection, I was overcome with sorrow at his death. I was filled with the memory of how my mother had left me, when I was just twelve years old. Mother died at Jawhar, I was with her. We had alighted at Mokhada on our way. She had found out the house in which my mother-in-law had died, by asking the neighbours, and visited it before we went on. From there Jawhar is fourteen miles Only twelve days after she had seen the spot where her daughter's late mother-in-law died, she herself died of enteric. Both these sorrowful souls were fortunate enough to leave this world with their husbands still alive. I wept when I remembered them.

10 SONG AND POETRY

Lakshmi sees her niece Gharu's wedding. Some stories about Tilak.

BEFORE I returned to Bombay Wamanrao had come and gone. As he was leaving he took forty rupees from Tilak. Tilak at this time was working in Moropant Walvekar's printing press, and Walvekar was very fond of him. When Wamanrao

took these forty rupees from us, it left us poverty-stricken, and, Walvekar seeing this, took us into his own house as guests. There Tilak wrote his play *Anandrao* which was later published. My sister's husband was Nanasaheb Pendse. My sister was Bhiku, and between us was a difference of fifteen years. Her affection for me was like a mother's. As she loved me so did Pendse love Tilak. At this time he was Mamaledar at Karmala. They had an only child, a girl called Gharu. I looked on her as a real sister, and we were very much attached to each other.

While we were still in Bombay, Gharu's marriage was arranged. This was both the first and the last great event in Pendse's house, and as they always made the most of any occasion and had plenty of money, it was decided to carry it through with great pomp and style.

Balasaheb, Pendse's nephew, lived in Bombay. Tilak received a most pressing invitation to the wedding He came to me and said, 'Get ready. Balasaheb will come in the evening and you are to go with him to Gharu's wedding.' Having said this, he went out.

What preparations could I make? It was the first wedding in my sister's house. The bride was my favourite niece. How could I go empty-handed? I was a 'Parvati from Ceylon'—an image of poverty, and Tilak, a penniless 'Shankar'. Remembering such a situation had occurred in the lives of Shankar and Parvati, I wept and laughed at the same time. At that very moment a man arrived with samples of cloth. Tilak had sent him. I sat choosing which material I should buy, but how could I clinch the bargain? Tilak did not return until evening, and by that time the cloth merchant, being tired out with waiting, had left. Tilak had brought Balasaheb with him and he was in a hurry to get away. I could not mention money in front of Balasaheb. Yet money at least I must have, it did not matter so much that I had missed buying the cloth.

In the end, in such a way that only Tilak would hear, I began, 'I want some . . .'

'Now, now, do not worry about anything. I have told Bala everything. If you want anything, just ask him for it.'

He had answered my whispered request out aloud, so Balasaheb added, 'Do not delay now and miss the train. We can inquire later what you have and have not, get ready quickly.'

The bridal guests had been gathering for fifteen days. Service

and luncheon had been arranged for at the station. As soon as the train was in, a servant asked, 'Has Lakshmibai come?'

Pendse's sister Godu was sitting beside the lunch. She answered, 'Come? Lakshmi-Bakshmi and everyone has come.'

Godu was thinking 'No one ever inquired for me and why should they make a fuss over Bhiku's sister?' The truth was that the servant was meeting Godu's own cousin, also called Lakshmi, who was arriving from a distance. It was twelve years since Pendse had seen this cousin. To avoid any ill-luck they had arranged that, instead of meeting face to face at once, they should go straight to Maruti's temple, stand on either side of a curtain, and behold each other's faces mirrored in oil in a brass vessel, after which they would go home. This is why the servant was looking for her, but it was I who was hurt by Godu's speech. I thought everyone was ready to insult me because I was poor. When at length I arrived at Karmala I found everyone absorbed in their own work and thoughts, at least, so it seemed to me. At the station I had overheard Godu's 'Lakshmi-Bakshmi', and now no one so much as asked after me, though I had come from so far. I dined with the rest, then lay down with the bride's guests, hugging Gharu close to me. Till eleven or twelve o'clock I lay on my bed, sobbing quietly, and thinking to myself, 'I am insulted because I am poor. Even my sister is not willing to speak to me, because she is the wife of a rich man; she is the Mamaledar's wife; why should she speak to me? Were I wearing gold bangles and anklets, everyone would notice me.'

About the middle of the night, Bhiku came past the guests with a lamp, looking at each one's face till she came to me. She laid a hand on me, and so sat for a little while. I was awake, but thinking I was asleep she began to call me softly. I threw off her hand sharply, and said, 'I am not your sister. What have you come for? I have hardly any jewellery or rings.'

Bhiku overcome with grief, replied: 'Lakshmi, are you mad? Are you not dearer to me than ornaments and rings? This is the first time I have seen you since Father and Mother died two or three years ago. How could I speak to you? How would it have looked if I had left my work, and sat weeping in front of the visitors? What would they have said?'

I was a little comforted by this speech. Next day she took off all her ornaments, gave them to me to wear, and dressed

me in a fine sari. The happy event was celebrated with great magnificence for four days, and I enjoyed it all. Now Bhiku wanted to send me with the bride to keep her company in her new and strange home. She suggested to Pendse that I should stay with her at least two months, but Pendse wanted to send me home that very day. 'Some one else can go with Gharu. Lakshmi will have some one to accompany her today. Let her go.'

'It is three years since I have seen my sister. I have had no time to speak to her. How can I let her go?'

In the end Pendse told the truth 'In these four days four telegrams have come from Tilak. On the day of the wedding itself two telegrams arrived. I put them aside on purpose, but now it is quite impossible to keep her.'

Bhiku was effectively silenced, and I was dispatched that very day to Bombay. I arrived to find that Tilak had only a cold. I was very angry with him. I was not allowed to stay a few days in peace with my sister! Tilak did his best to quieten me, and finally said he would take me to Jalalpur. Still in two minds I got ready to go and my trip home was begun.

After I left, Tilak took a room in Mugbhat tenement. The rent was seven rupees a month. Balasaheb Pendse had come to live in the same block. Having arranged a new and independent lodging Tilak came to bring me back from Jalalpur. There are many stories that can be told of Tilak's incurable habit of talking, and from time to time they will be told; but what happened on this occasion at Nasik Road station has not yet been erased from my mind.

We, Lakshmi and Narayan, left Jalalpur together. At last, and in truth, we were to enter our new and beautiful home in independence and great style. From my own home I had tried to gather as many utensils for my new house as possible, but Tilak's scorn of luggage on a journey had to be reckoned with. Nevertheless I took as many vegetables and as much fruit with me as possible.

Leaving Jalalpur we arrived in Nasik where lived Tilak's wealth of friends. Revelling in this wealth, he missed the train twice. Firmly resolved that we would not miss it a third time, we left the town the next day, and arrived at Nasik Road station. We even reached the platform and I began to breathe again. Tilak put the luggage in charge of a porter, sent me to the opposite platform, and was lost in the crowd round the ticket office.

Having collected and arranged the luggage, I stood ready to enter the train as soon as it arrived. The train came. The porter put in the things. I climbed in and sat down. The train whistle blew. I bundled all the luggage out again and jumped down, because Tilak was nowhere to be seen. Before my very eyes the train steamed out, and there, on the opposite platform, I saw Tilak deep in a discussion with another man. The train was gone, and Tilak had not so much as asked for a ticket. There was I left, gaping and dazed. Just then Tilak met on the platform a friend of his childhood, Bhikajipant Gorhey. He was staying nearby and pressed Tilak to go home with him. Only then did Tilak remember me. Bhikajipant called a porter and took our luggage home, and we went with him.

I began to be worried about the fruit and vegetables and lunch I had taken with us, but Tilak was never at a loss in disposing of such troubles, and he dispersed them at once. He set about giving the vegetables away. I only managed to save a handful. It was decided to leave the next day.

Everything was tied up again neatly, but not until we left, not until we had our feet in the train, had I any confidence He never ceased talking. We had to finish our meal in such a hurry, that I was reminded of our repast in the hotel at Murbad.

At last we were off. We had not passed two stations before Tilak's eyes lit upon the basket of fruit He distributed the fruit all round the carriage, and flung the vegetagles straight out of the window one after another, saying all the while, 'What a craving for luggage you have!' Women love a stick from their own home more than a storied mansion. I had taken some lentils, rice and other things from the sacks at home, and only they ever saw the station at Bori Bunder.

We came to our new home. As soon as we arrived we found Tilak's brother, Sakharam, waiting for us, according to Tilak's instructions. I was vexed by the loss of things, but having lentils, flour and rice in the house I prepared our first feast from them. As soon as it was ready to be served, Tilak called to Sakharam, 'Put on your clean silk things for dinner, I shall be back in a moment.'

He was gone. Dressed in his ceremonial pure garments, Sakharam sat waiting for him. I returned the dished rice to the pot. Eight struck, then half-past eight. There was no sign of Tilak. Sakharam began to look for him everywhere.

In the end, putting on his ordinary clothes, he went the round of all Tilak's acquaintances in the city, and returned to sit and wait for him hopeless and hungry. We were sitting in bleak silence, when from the room beside the stair, in the flat below, we heard someone like Tilak singing his poems.

Sakharam went down to see, and found a recitation of original poems in full swing.

'What a fool you are Sakharam! Did you think I had run away? Why be so upset? You have left your dinner needlessly to search for me. There is a most beautiful part in progress now, so since you have come sit down and listen for a moment.'

The part was resumed with no more ado, and Sakharam sat with a long face listening to Tilak complete his interrupted recitation At twelve o'clock at night the company rose from a dinner served at seven in the evening.

11 PEARLS FOR A NOSE-ORNAMENT

How Tilak trusted a thief, and how Lakshmi came face to face with death.

TILAK would trust any man. Were an arrant thief to come and say to Tilak, 'I am an honest man', then at once would Tilak be convinced that he was so. Nor would he fail to defend him against the whole world. He used to say, 'Man is not by nature evil, but circumstances make him so.' The brakes of the Deccan Queen must be stronger than the brakes of other trains, because its speed is greater. The brake of my suspicion was created in opposition to this quality of Tilak's and as a result of living with him. Did he trust a man, immediately I would distrust him. We were always squabbling over it. In their proper place many such stories will be told, but I will relate one here about a Bombay goldsmith.

The ornament for my nose was broken. Tilak called a goldsmith at once, and counting out the pearls told him to re-wire them. I said he should tell him to bring a gold wire to the house,

and do it before me. We had a sharp altercation over it, and without listening to me he gave the goldsmith sixteen pearls and sent him away. When he was gone I was given a dose of the sermon described above. A whole tumblerful of the medicine was administered, but it had no effect. For two or three days my nose-ornament and that dishonest goldsmith danced before my eyes. On the third day he returned with the ornament. Instead of sixteen pearls, I counted eighteen in it. Tilak said, 'Now you see how you should trust people. This man has added two of his own pearls and brought it to you.'

Many many days later he had to confess that all the pearls were false, but in the meantime he was absolutely convinced that the goldsmith had put two of his own pearls into his wife's nose-ornament.

Tilak was at once the quietest and the most easily roused of men. How it could be I cannot tell, but so much is true. The least thing would cause his anger to boil up or cool down. His circle of friends remember well his bursts of temper during our games of *songtya*, a kind of *parchesi*.

One day he said to me, 'Come, let's play *songtya*.'

I was always afflicted with a veritable disease when I played *songtya*, laughter. As soon as the game began to go against Tilak I was invariably overcome with mirth. When I began to laugh he began to see red. That day as we played I was winning. Laughter overcame me and Tilak's rage began to mount. I was convulsed with merriment. Without a doubt that day my infirmity brought me face to face with death, I was saved by so small a margin. Men, board, and dice were all a-tremble. Some of them sought safety in the gutter below, the spread-out bedding fled helter-skelter round the house. All the things rose up in riot. If anything was left in its place, it was wife and lamp.

Such a battle raged that in the end the lamp said, 'Ram,' and went out. Even the match-box had taken shelter in the sheet, and was sitting hiding its face in the heap of bedding, and yet I was only amused. I laughed and laughed and laughed again.

Now comes the epilogue to this battle. There was no door to the stair. Tilak pushed me in the dark. I somersaulted down the stairs to the tune of 'Falling down before Thee shall I praise Thy feet,' and tumbled on to the landing. The sun of Tilak's

anger was set, and my laughter fled. Tilak began hunting for the matches in a great fright. They could not be found. In the end he came groping down in the dark and lifting me, carried me upstairs. I was in my seventh month with child.

Tilak wrote a farce about his own temper. It was left half finished.

12 OUR FIRST SON

Wamanrao comes and goes Lakshmi's son is born. Tilak's growing fame and his generosity.

A LETTER came from Wamanrao one day saying he was coming to Bombay and we were to meet him at Bori Bunder station, as he would not be able to find our new house. Tilak did not read me the letter, so naturally I had no idea he was coming. Tilak himself put the letter in his pocket, and instead of going to meet his father, went off somewhere else. Wamanrao arrived at the station, and was exceedingly annoyed when he found no son there to receive him

But what could be done? He was now in the same plight as he himself had once thrown Uncle Govindrao into. He had a faint recollection of Balasaheb Pendse's house and got there somehow. Having arrived he picked a quarrel at once with Balasaheb Pendse.

'You have seduced my son'

'How?'

'Either you or your aunt have prevented him from coming to the station.'

'Well sir, how did you come here?'

'I knew this place. I do not know his house, and told him to come to the station for that reason.'

'Come then, I will show you his house.'

Balasaheb brought Wamanrao to our lodging. Balasaheb in front and Wamanrao behind him, they climbed the stairs. I could hear Wamanrao's swearing from above and realized who

had come. I was sitting waiting for Tilak, with enough food cooked for the two of us only. I served Wamanrao with dinner as soon as he sat down, then Tilak came in. I leave the reader to imagine the pandemonium let loose on his appearance, and the flow of language.

Next day a local banker from Gangapur came to see Tilak. He was an old friend. Tilak was asleep inside, but Wamanrao was awake. When the banker called, Wamanrao asked who was there, and received the reply, 'A friend from Gangapur.' That was enough The conversation ended here. Wamanrao gave no more encouragement. The poor visitor stood outside till he lost patience and left. Later Tilak received a letter from Gangapur describing what had happened.

When Wamanrao departed, I had exactly three rupees in hand. Tilak squandered our money, so I always commandeered and kept all he brought in, considering he had no head for business. This practice was kept up to the end, so all my life I had to navigate the shoals of our finance.

Well, on that occasion our daily rations were finished I gave all the money I had to Tilak and asked him to do the shopping. He returned from the market full of glee. He had bought a three-rupee watch! My temper rose to fever heat He never said a word. Laying the watch down in front of him, he sat down and wrote a small poem entitled, *What does the clock say?* The next day he sold it to someone, and brought me the money. I do not quite remember, but I think it must have been about twenty rupees. About this time he wrote in verse, a translation of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, which was later published.

Realizing he was about to become a father, Tilak now took me to Uncle Govindrao in Jalalpur and left. Both my aunt and uncle set about spoiling me completely. My every whim and fancy was indulged. Nevertheless I was consumed with anxiety for Tilak I do not believe that one moment passed without my worrying about him I sat and wept. Uncle Govindrao would say:

'Lakshmi, why are you crying? No matter where your husband has gone, I shall find him and bring him back. There is no need to worry at all.'

For six months he was neither seen nor heard of, nor did any letter come. Where he hid himself all that time no one knows.

In the midst of these anxious days, my aunt and uncle experienced a great joy. They were given a grandson. Uncle Govindrao's mother's name was Sakhubai and he wanted to give her name to the boy, so he was called Sakharam. Later as it was counted unseemly for him to have the same name as Tilak's brother, Sakharam, while he was still alive, it was changed to Vidyanand, which was Tilak's choice.

About this time a letter came from Tilak saying he was in the Konkan, and then he himself turned up. Vidyanand was not well so we took him to Nanasaheb Pendse's house in Nasik. He fully recovered with the good air and medical attention there. Uncle Govindrao went with us too.

In Nasik, Nagpur, Bombay and other places competitions in oratory were being held The best orators received many prizes. Tilak had a passion for giving lectures, and taking part on these occasions, he nearly always won a prize.

There was one such competition in Nagpur. Tilak told Uncle Govindrao that he wanted to go to it. He was given permission because Uncle Govindrao hoped that he would earn some money. I was afraid he would be enmeshed there and never return. He returned at once He had squandered all the prize money, and brought back only one big, brass plate.

Uncle Govindrao was very angry that Tilak should have returned empty-handed. 'We shall no longer look after your wife and son,' he said. 'Leave her if you want under an evil Banyan tree, or if you want under a sacred Fig tree. I have no more use for her.'

'Very well,' Tilak replied, 'I shall arrange everything. You need have no more anxiety.'

Uncle Govindrao departed for Jalalpur, and Tilak was left to look after me. Whenever we changed our lodging it meant that only we ourselves moved. All our belongings were passed on as an offering to the people on the spot.

In Nasik we had not so much as a broken pot of our own. Pendse's house was a big one, but in the midst of all the confusion, his transfer to Sangamner was ordered, and all his household began to pack up. Bhiku was very anxious about me. In the end she and her mother-in-law decided to take me with them. Pendse gave Tilak a most pressing invitation too, so now it was settled that Pendse should move to Sangamner with all his household, and all his retinue of dependants. He went on ahead and we followed in bullock carts.

Before we left, my sister prepared for me all the many necessary articles to be given to a young mother. Out of them, she sent two boxes full of sweets to my aunt. My aunt was extremely angry with us all. She was never anything else with Tilak, but here is the reason for being angry with my sister.

My aunt and Uncle Govindrao had done everything for me; it was they who had arranged my marriage, they who had looked after me in my confinement and they who had sent me to Bhiku —and now this Bhiki comes forward to reap the benefit of all this. Why had she not made this show of love before? There was a very special reason for her to be angry with Tilak. Tilak had returned from Nagpur where he had earned many distinctions in elocution But all the money he got there as prizes he had given away on the spot.

Uncle and Aunt had not really deserted me at all. She only wanted a little coaxing. If Bhiku and Tilak had done this matters would have been easy. But both Bhiku and Tilak thought Uncle Govindrao and my aunt were really angry So they decided to remove us bag and baggage to Sangamner.

The two boxes of sweets went to my aunt, but she would not touch them Nor would she let Uncle Govindrao touch them. She said to him, 'If you eat anything sent by that Bhiki it will be as bad as eating beef. It was you who said to Tilak that you would not take care of Lakshmi and the child. That was excuse enough for Bhiku to carry off her sister. I have laboured for Lakshmi, I brought her up, I spent for her, and now comes Bhiki to reap the benefit.' My aunt vented her wrath on the sweets and in the end they, poor things, ended their existence on the rubbish heap.

13 SIXTEEN YEARS OLD AND STILL . .

Lakshmi's sister Bhiku provides a refuge for the young couple. The goblin Lakshmi saw. Tilak composes kirtans, which are religious stories told in song, interspersed with prose commentaries. How Lakshmi employed her time.

PENDSE went before us to Sangamner. The day after Pendse left, while we were sitting at dinner Tilak said, so that Bhiku should hear, 'Give me only a few pots and two rooms in this house. I shall stay on here.' Bhiku was in a predicament. 'Catch it and it will bite; leave it and it will escape.' Tilak! As if he would take care of me! 'He can easily get another wife! But where can I get another sister?' thought Bhiku. She and her mother-in-law sat a long time pondering over it, and in the end sent a detailed letter to Pendse at Sangamner. The answer came at once: 'Bring everyone, including Tilak, here.' So we all sat in the bullock cart and went. There were seven of us including some relations of my sister. We left at five o'clock in the morning, and arrived at our destination in the evening of the next day.

On the way at Dubera we ate our lunch. Whenever we passed a bitter *neem* tree, Tilak tore off some leaves and ate them, whereupon Pendse's mother said to Bhiku 'Listen Bhiku! Your brother-in-law is an ascetic. Say what you like about it, he has the power of a saint.'

Such was the reputation of the house to which we were going that even in Nasik we had heard that it was haunted. As soon as we arrived Bhiku bathed Vidyanand in warm water, and gave me boiling hot water too. Then we all dined. The boy was one and half months old, so I was given a bed and a charcoal fire below the bed. The two of us lay down. On the floor beside us in a row lay Gharu, Bhiku's mother-in-law, and Uncle Waman. Pendse, Bhiku and Tilak were sleeping upstairs. About my bed a rug had been hung as a curtain. The house was built round a courtyard. I think its door was to the east. Entering from outside in the left-hand court a stable had been made by the erection of a wall. Stone-steps led both upstairs and on to the veranda from the courtyard. The courtyard was visible from my bed.

No matter what I did I could not sleep. All sorts of ideas danced about in my mind. They say an empty head is the abode of Satan, and they do not say amiss. I did not know the stable was next to my room. A low lamp was burning at my head. I heard continual soft thuds near my pillow.

Everyone else was in a deep sleep. Lying as I was, not daring to move my head, I rolled my eyes round and round in an effort to see all about me. No matter what else happened that night, I was determined to see what a she-goblin looked like. My heart began to beat faster. I could hear the clinking sound of the ornaments we wear on our toes Someone was coming down stairs. My heart turned to water. My tongue was dry. Nevertheless I plucked up courage to fix my eyes on the curtain. Again tap-tap, tap-tap On the stairs something began to show itself. My eyes had begun to close again of themselves, when I saw descending before me a tall woman, dressed in a red sari, her hair loosened and a big *kunku* drawn across her forehead. Swinging from a chain in her hand she carried a brass lamp with many wicks. She answered to the last detail the description of the goblin I had heard haunted the house. I received a terrible shock The woman came right up to me and stopped. I thrust my baby under me and lay on top of him, drawing the sheet over myself The hairs of my head rose quivering on end, and perspiration burst from every pore. Now she is touching the bed Now she has laid a hand on the child. She is beginning to draw him out. I was to have said to the goblin, 'I know who you are,' but the words would not form on my lips I could only emit, 'Who-Who-Who' The company sleeping on the ground with one accord pitched their voices with mine, 'Who-Who-Who'. In perfect time and tune, the five or six of us began a concert, 'Who-Who-Who'. The woman also keeping us company with, 'What-What-What?'

From upstairs Pendse came running to add his 'Who-Who-Who' to ours. Tilak appeared, and could only laugh at us. He was never afraid of anything, and he was now highly diverted by the scene we presented.

The woman was my sister. I was young. Afraid that I might overlie my baby and crush him, she had come down in the middle of the night, and finding that I actually was lying on top of him, was trying gently to draw him out. From the thud of the horses' hooves, the sound of her ornaments on the

steps and the appearance of my sister, my mind had conjured up a she-goblin. Add to all that the lamp in her hand and her grotesque, wavering shadow which it cast on the wall, then what more was required?

A very famous singer of *kirtans* came to Sangamner. A great many people used to go to hear him. It had just newly become the fashion to accompany the singer on a hand organ. This singer's voice was excellent, his songs beautiful and the prologue to his story magnificent. Naturally immense crowds began to gather.

One day just as the Prologue was finishing and the main Theme beginning Tilak and Pendse came and sat down. They were given a place in the very front, near the singer. He, taking the garland that had been brought for himself, hung it round Tilak's neck, and placed his head on Tilak's feet, after which the Theme was begun Pendse was thunderstruck at this incident, but could say nothing at the time. At the end of the performance the singer asked after Tilak's health and took his leave.

Pendse was all agog to know what this should mean. As soon as they got home he asked Tilak, and was told that while Tilak was at Dhamak, he had written out three or four *kirtans* for this man, got him to sing them, and these were what he was now using Pendse was delighted and began to encourage Tilak to conduct a performance himself. With only two or three days preparation he composed a lovely *kirtan* on *The Flight of Subhadra*. The recital was continued for three consecutive days.

The refrain running through it was:

> Courageous in battle thy servant advanceth to fight
> Behold now my chariot, a body of beauty and strength!
> Thy feet be my banner emblazoned with kindness of heart,
> I yoke me my horses Control and Restraint of the Mind
> Awake I to war. I awake!

Invitations to the performance were sent to the whole village and Pendse became increasingly nervous Upto the very moment the singing began he kept saying: 'Tilak, be careful. Think again. It will not be a fiasco, will it? If you like I shall tell the people you are ill and that will be an end of it.' Only after

one story had lasted three days did Pendse's fears abate. Now his joy could not be contained in the heavens. From the beginning he had had the greatest affection for Tilak, but this performance increased his love a hundredfold. His mother and Bhiku were delighted too.

I had a passion for three or four things, and still have more or less to this day. I loved to play with dolls, to sing, to tell stories and listen to stories being told, and to make patterns on the floor with white powder. I used to be well scolded for my excessive zeal by my aunt and Bhiku. They would say when I began, that women had been known to desert house and home for just such stories; did I think housekeeping was made of songs? And when I began to play with dolls, they used to say everything in the house was upset. Their preaching had no effect on me whatsoever. 'The faults of the living can only be extinguished in death.'

As soon as Pendse had gone to the office, his mother and Bhiku would take Vidyanand to a shaded room upstairs and lie down Tilak would be sitting reading or writing upstairs too, or else playing *chuckies* with Gharu.

I was left alone. I had no work. I could not read or write a single letter then, and to this day only enough to serve my need. Whenever I see certain words I become confused, and have to separate the letters with my fingers before I can read them. If I could not do these things then how was I to pass my time?

Once girls begin to read and write, their stoves, pots and even dolls are left behind, but I was the most ignorant of the ignorant. When Bhiku and her mother-in-law lay down, then I woke up. All the servants looked on me as their mistress's right hand and stood awaiting my orders. From twelve or one o'clock till four everything was in my power. Now was my opportunity to play with my dolls:

Of livestock we had, two horses, a buffalo, and a cow, bought for Vidyanand's milk. The servant made money in purchasing their fodder, so I was asked to do that work. I would bargain for it at the door, taking as much as I could for one rupee or one rupee four annas The rest of the money I never returned to Bhiku. Only Gharu knew how much money I had hoarded for myself. Thus I had always some ready money in hand, and I used it to run my dolls household in great style.

I got brass ornaments made by the goldsmith for them, and planned to have a decorated pavilion of bamboos erected.

Gharu said, 'Oh, Aunty, don't do it. Mother will be angry.' I replied, 'Why will she be angry? Go and tell her I did it.'

One day all were asleep as usual. I said to the servant, 'My sister, your mistress, says you are to bring six banana palm stems with leaves.' They were brought. They were bound to the two door-posts and the four pillars of the veranda. A band was hired for four days. The women nearby were sent invitations for a *haldi-kunku* ceremony All this lavish display was carried out in my sister's name. The silver dishes were brought into use. *Pan-supari* and sweets were made ready. I had forgotten that I was only playing at dolls The women began to gather and inquire where my sister was. Bhiku was asleep upstairs. Hearing the stir in the house she awoke. She was never able to open her eyes suddenly and now sat bathing them in a frantic effort to get them open and see what was going on. I handed round the mixture of coconut and sugar. At that moment the drums began to play at the door. Pendse's mother woke with a start Leaning with both hands on the door-posts she stood gaping at what she saw. Vidyanand was left crying in the room. My sister having come downstairs was greeting the women with a smiling face, but inwardly she was fuming with rage.

As soon as he heard the noise of the pipes, Tilak came down. He could understand no more than the others what was happening. He took Gharu to one side and asked her. She confessed her aunt had done it in spite of her protestations. He sent Gharu to me with a message· 'From this child at least learn something.'

When Pendse came back in the evening he was not in the least angry. Once the beating of the drums stopped the beating of my heart began, and my sister served me with a magnificent feast. Not a thing was left out. My cheeks were pinched into scones and slapped into pan-cakes. My ears were twisted into dinner-rolls, there were buffets for doughnuts, buns by the fistful. On the top of everything else a silver dish was missing which Bhiku had put down somewhere when she was handing round the coconut and sugar. Thinking it was lost in the general confusion the heavens cracked in thunder. This was the glorious first day of my doll's wedding.

As we were sitting down to dine the next day, behold, the band began to play again. On its very heels came various dishes served on trays, first one, then another, then another.

My sister was quite crimson. 'Brat! Your folly will ruin my reputation. The people will say we have asked for all these presents because we are being transferred.'

For four days we continued to receive things from the houses round about, all to the accompaniment of music. In every tray there were three different kinds of foodstuffs, those suitable for a fast, sweets prepared with milk, and a dinner. The things prepared for a fast went to Pendse's mother. The sweet milk preparations to the grown-ups, and the ordinary dishes fell to our lot. Even I was abashed by the quantities sent from the house of Jinsiwale. There was enough to feed ten or twenty people on the richest of delicacies One half of the middle room of the house was filled with them On the one side the presents continued to pour in, and on the other my sister continued to pour out her wrath.

I replied, 'If you are really angry why do you accept the presents and store them in the tins? You have given us none of the sweets.'

She answered in a temper, 'Are your daily scoldings not enough for you '

In addition to all the cooked dishes, we were showered with coconuts and pieces of cloth for blouses.

And so dawned the fourth day. I was as excited over my doll as if I had been in fact its mother or mother-in-law. Gharu ran all the errands but behind the curtain I was the stage manager. If Vidyanand cried, Bhiku and her mother-in-law could look after him. They always did it any way.

I needed a palanquin for the last day. Whom could I get to give one. My doll must be carried in a procession. The house of Jinsiwale had the right to own a palanquin Did not his aunt visit Pendse's mother? I went and asked her on the sly. She sent me a toy palanquin from their house. My joy reached up to the skies when I saw it. I felt that I myself was entitled to a palanquin that day I took it and hid it under the bed.

In the morning the procession was to set forth. Where could I get cooked rice and curds so early, to wave over the head of my doll to scare away the evil spirits? Her grandmother used to give Gharu some rice every morning. So Gharu was instructed to set aside one mouthful for the doll. She did it.

All were absorbed in their own work. Tilak was reading

out to Pendse what he had written the night before. Again the pipes began to play. No one paid any attention to what had become an everyday event. Bhiku had taken Vidyanand upstairs. Gharu and I dressed ourselves up in shawls and slipped out for the procession. We were afraid of being thrashed so had decided to go only a little way and come back.

As soon as I reached the back door I came in because the rice had to be mixed and the minute the procession reached the front door, waved over the doll. Tilak was standing inside. I was hurrying over my duties. I wanted the curds quickly. The Brahman cook was making something in the kitchen near the stove.

I opened the larder where the milk was kept and put my head in to get the curds. At that very moment without my knowing it Tilak came up behind me, and as one catches a cat by the scruff of the neck in the act of stealing and lifts it up, so he caught me and dragged me out. I had the curds in my hand and would not let it go.

In the front room Bhiku's mother-in-law was sitting telling her rosary. Her glance fell on us for a moment which loosened Tilak's grip, and I escaped. He was able to do no more to me then. Still trembling I went and waved the rice and curds over my doll and threw it out.

The girls were standing waiting for me. My baby was crying and Bhiku was sitting with him near the bed. When she saw me she turned red and flared up saying, 'Others have to take care of your baby while you play with dolls.'

Her mother-in law came and stood before me, hands on hips. 'Child, when will you learn any sense? Look at you two! Gharu at ten eating only porridge, you at sixteen still playing dolls!'

Bhiku however had to pay for our 'make-believe'. Two lengths of cloth were bought, a reception was provided, and Bhiku gave everyone a piece of cloth and a coconut.

In these days Tilak wrote the poem entitled, *My Wife*, and naturally showed it to his most willing listener, Pendse. His comment was, 'Our Lakshmi deserves the praise you have given to her.' In answer Tilak quoted from that same poem, 'The poem is written, but it has no personal application.'

14 TILAK IN TRADE

Lakshmi is sent back to her aunt, and Tilak seeks work. Lakshmi's son dies. She learns to read.

AT Sangamner had I not my sister who loved me better than life, and my niece? Had not Pendse an unbounded affection for Tilak? Did he not consider him in everything? Yet Tilak had no sense of freedom there. He could think of nothing night and day but obtaining employment. He wrote to Uncle Govindrao to say that he should look after me for a time, while he, Tilak, searched for work. My aunt and Uncle Govindrao desired nothing else. All signs of being offended vanished and once more we were united in Jalalpur

There was a hamlet called 'Abhaly's Wadi' near Jalalpur. A couple lived there. The husband was blind. His wife spent her whole time looking after him and humouring him. Later this unfortunate man died, leaving his bereaved wife to drag out her days in widowhood.

In their community she would have been permitted to marry again, and as she was eligible both in point of looks and age any one would have been willing to marry her, but that was not to be.

She made a stone image of her husband and began to spend her days in worshipping it and singing hymns of praise to it. This story had a great effect on Tilak's mind.

Taking it as his theme he wrote the poem *Ganga*. It seems this poem was never printed because, about that time, Tilak published a story in prose called *Ganga*. This tale of some 23 pages he dedicated to his own mother. The foreword is reproduced below because it shows to whose influence he attributed his love of poetry.

> I dedicate this smallest of flowers, with that great reverence and love which becomes a son, to her who, composing and singing songs, created in me a love of poetry, and taught me true appreciation of beauty; to her who was wholly worthy of the famous quotation from Kalidas praising the perfect wife. To
>
> JANKIBAI TILAK
>
> my respected and bereaved Mother, her most humble son Narayan Waman Tilak of Chikhalgaon.

After this comes an 'Intimation to the people of Maharashtra', in which Tilak says, 'My friends, from now on I shall write nothing which you will not like. It is true that I like writing poetry, but I like not my own liking more than yours. However, to please you I shall never write a book capable of spreading evil, etc.' From this it will be seen that he realized the poem *Ganga* would not meet with approval, and therefore printed the same story in prose

Later Tilak left me at Jalalpur and went to Nagpur to look for work. It was about the time of the Diwali festival. He bought stock that was certain of a market, and set up shop with crackers and fireworks. Tilak was the poet of flowers and children, and likewise the closest friend of both. What children will remain away if they find a friend in charge of a shop full of fireworks? A large company of boon companions gathered round him The children and children's friend together enjoyed themselves letting off every squib in the place.

Tilak had a friend there called Ganpatrao Khare. He said to him, 'You will never make anything of business Come to Rajnandgaon There I shall hunt out some suitable work for you' Tilak took his friend's advice and went to Rajnandgaon. He was given work at once in the Balram Press

Having worked there for three or four months, he came to Jalalpur to fetch me Vidyanand had fallen very ill. He died only two days after Tilak arrived Uncle Govindrao was so overcome with grief that he took to his bed. Tilak too was filled with sorrow. In those days he wrote his first poem entitled *Lament for a Son* It was printed, but copies are not to be had. Twenty years later at Nagar he wrote another one with the same title in memory of the son of our late friend Vinayakrao Sathe

When we had somewhat recovered from our grief, we left for Rajnandgaon. There I learned the alphabet. That was the beginning and the end of my studies. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it comprised the whole of my education.

Mr Khare's wife Lakshmibai could read and write, Mr Tilak's wife Lakshmi must also learn how to read and write, and Tilak decided to educate her. No doubt Tilak was an excellent teacher for little children. It was quite otherwise with me. For one thing, I was not young and for another I was no stranger, and

for yet another, I used to have uncontrollable fits of laughter. It was the laughter that played havoc with my education.

Having resolved to teach me Tilak expended all the money he could or could not find, and came in one day armed with books from the first standard to the sixth. Tilak sat on one side. I sat facing him. A pile of books was between us and thus the first lesson began. It was grammar.

'What is a "word"?' asked Tilak.

I could not contain myself. What a funny question! A word means a word.

'A word is a word,' said I.

'But what is a word?'

'A word is a word.'

'But what IS a word?'

Again came my 'A word is a word!'

That was enough. Tilak flared up and I began to laugh, adding fuel to fire Fanned by my mirth the flames of his anger leapt into a great blaze that engulfed even the books. One after another he ripped them all to shreds and put a match to the heap of rubbish This was our first day of study.

Tilak wanted his wife to be equal with him in a week's time How could it be, when I was the dullest of the dull? Slowly he came to understand his mistake, and then made me trace the letters from 'A' to 'Dnya'. That done I had to learn a dozen vowel combinations with 'K' Tilak found no enjoyment whatsoever in teaching me this way, and here my instruction came to an abrupt end From now on I began to read a great deal, and as I read, the vowel combinations of all the other letters and the joint letters came of themselves Yet, as I said before, 'Ksh', 'Dnya', 'Kai', 'Khai' and their friends have still the power to overthrow me.

15 A HAPPY SURPRISE

Uncle Govindrao dies. Tilak and his brother go to Nagpur. Lakshmi joins them. Debts begin to accumulate

A LETTER came one day from Jalalpur that Uncle Govindrao had been called to God. We were quite stricken when we heard the news. We left Rajnandgaon at once and Tilak having settled me at Jalalpur went back. He stayed as best he could for two or three months at Rajnandgaon, then went to Nagpur where Mahadev was at school Mahadev was an exceedingly intelligent scholar He was so affectionate that he looked on the whole world as his own. If he met a poor man clothed in rags, as he went to school, he would give him all he had on and continue his way shirtless and hatless. At Nagpur he had a most devoted friend in Wasoodevrao Patwardhan A strong friendship sprang up between Tilak and Wasoodevrao too Wasoodevrao was both a poet and connoisseur. It was only natural that Tilak should come and join a friend of such taste and talent Would the work at Rajnandgaon want for lack of a poet?

Rajnandgaon was abandoned and Tilak became a resident of Nagpur He found plenty of teaching to do, and with it prosperity. He took a great part in the agitation for the protection of cows He also wrote a play on the same subject, and had it staged. It was printed as a book. He likewise collected a great deal of money for the movement He had the picture of a cow made, showing the moon and the sun, and below was written a verse in Sanskrit Every separate organ of the cow's body, from its horns and eyes to its tail, was decorated with a different God. The picture was printed.

In those days he made a great impression on Nagpur, was much honoured and had an abundance of friends.

Some three or four months later a wire from Tilak arrived in Jalalpur. 'I am very ill come at once' My aunt became very agitated, when she read it. She was already seared with grief, there was no money in the house, and there was no man on whom to lean. Nagpur seemed very far away.

She had buried fifty rupees in the wall for the land tax. There

was no remedy but to use it for the journey. The clerk had been sitting in the house from early morning to collect the tax, and it was he who had brought and read out the wire. There was no other money available.

In the end, my aunt instructed me to take out the money from the wall quietly, and put it to one side while she talked to the clerk. I was flustered, and it followed that the coins to be excavated so silently advertised themselves openly. The lid of the box came off and all the rupees fell down with a crash. The clerk saw everything and heard everything, but sat still as if nothing at all had happened.

The river Godavari was rising daily, but that same clerk conveyed both us and our money safely over to Gangapur, and from there we took a bullock cart to the station

In my young days in Jalalpur all the castes, young and old alike, regarded themselves as one great family. The laws of untouchability were kept strictly, but no one looked on even an untouchable as a stranger. In the same way it never entered into our heads to think of the clerk as a Pathan collecting taxes for the Government. Everyone took thought for another's need. No family kept back its secrets. The needs of each were before all and each man ran to help his neighbour

From the time we left Nasik I was filled with anxiety as to how to find Tilak's lodging, and who would take us to his house, and in this state of anxiety we remained till we reached Murtizapur. Here Bhikajipant Gorhey, a friend of Tilak's, lived. When the name of Murtizapur fell on my ears I remembered him at once, and sent a porter to him with a message saying, 'Send a wire to Nagpur that Tilak's family are on the way.' That he received the message and sent the wire was evident as soon as we reached Nagpur, because two or three friends of Tilak were on the platform to meet us. They took us home. There was no sign of Tilak, we were overjoyed to hear that he was well, delivering lectures and taking part in the agitations. Above all we were relieved to hear he had no fever nor had had any. We were angry too, but only a little

It was that Monday in the year when Brahman men renew the sacred thread worn over their left shoulder. Tilak's friends met him, and told him that an old woman needed a Brahman to act as priest that day, and asked him if he would go. Tilak agreed. His friends brought him to us as the lamps were being

lit. Tilak saw the old woman and started. It was his mother-in-law!

'You have come! Whose house is this?'

My aunt pointed to Tilak's friends with her finger. They all began laughing, 'Ho, ho, ho!'

'Thank you,' said Tilak in English. His friends for fun had taken a house, furnished it, put in stores and sent for us, then dumbfounded him with the deed accomplished.

Within three or four days Wamanrao turned up. Our housekeeping was the real thing now. Wamanrao was of one type and my aunt of another. My aunt was an excellent cook and she could not endure to have anyone criticizing her art. Wamanrao was also very proud of his cooking, and in particular was always comparing the Konkan food with that of our part of the country. I had to do the serving. I came out of the kitchen, served and returned. Immediately Wamanrao dropped criticisms for me and my aunt to hear. Back in the kitchen my aunt would scold me because my father-in-law slighted her cooking. I was turned into a drum to be beaten on one side by Wamanrao, and on the other by my aunt. Ah well! After some days they both left for their own villages.

Tilak's generosity was beyond measure. In their proper places I shall relate some memories of it, but the chief thing about his character was his complete carelessness about the worth of money.

When he had no money he was just as happy as when he had. I, on the other hand, used to say to him, 'No sooner, have you money in your pockets than you are troubled as to how to get rid of it.' I was the opposite I was always anxious about how to keep it To throw money away is easy, so in this battle of ours he always won. As people were always ready to lend him, it was impossible for me to keep money by me. It was ever he who made the debts, and I who paid them.

Now for a story of Nagpur. One day there was nothing in the house. I had only one rupee.

'Will you go to the market?'

'Yes, I shall go. The money is yours. You are the mistress, I am a servant.'

A little more affectionate wrangling and I sent him off to buy some rice. While he was out, I sat down to wait for him. He was not late as usual; he returned at once. He was smiling, but with no bag of rice to be seen in his hand. I lost my temper.

It was always the same. When I scolded he would call himself Saint Tukaram and me Jijai, his wife. He drew out of his pocket a pretty little glass ink-pot and laid it before me.

'See, what a pretty ink-pot it is!'

'And how can I put in an ink-pot to stew? What am I to do?'

Tilak lifted the ink-pot, went straight upstairs and flung it out of the top window into the street below saying, 'You do not understand Psychology.'

Truly I did not understand Psychology. Nor do I yet understand it. I believe Jijai did not understand it either, nor yet the wife of Socrates. Had they but written their lives, the world would have understood the difficulties they faced in running their homes. Of others' minds they may have known nothing, but well did they know the tumult of their own.

Tilak used to wonder why I gave so much attention to the house. I used to think there was all the more need for me to do it since he would not. Had we both been of the same mind we should both have starved. We were always short of fruit and vegetables. The Brahman women of these days never went to market, so I always kept *wade*, *papad*, pickles etc., in store.

Once I got in some berries to make a preserve and laid them out on the balcony to dry.

'What is this you are doing?'

'Drying the fruit for preserves.'

Tilak quite lost his patience with me for being so entangled in worldly cares, and began to fling all the berries over the balcony one after another. Down below the children gathered and ate them with joy. I was ready to laugh and cry at the same moment.

About that time I fell ill, and Tilak nursed me like a mother. I was fed on oranges and nothing else for a month. One day he said to me.

'I shall make you some porridge.'

'You cannot make porridge. I do not want it.'

'Why can't I make it?' scolded Tilak, 'Am I not a man? Have I no brains?'

'I do not say you have no brains,' I replied, 'you have plenty of brains, but you cannot make porridge.'

In sheer obstinacy he set about it. He lit the stove and began. The porridge would not cook. He put in sugar, reduced the

flame. It was all of no avail. In the end coming gently to me, he said:

'What shall I do, dear? The porridge will not cook.'

We both laughed and I said, 'Every man to his own trade.'

We were staying in Lakshmibai Booti's apartment. A *kirtan* —that is a recital of a religious story—was held there and everyone put an anna in the plate. Very little money was collected. Tilak brought the singer home as his guest. Bit by bit he began to explain to Tilak the difficulties into which he had fallen. Tilak was much moved In the end everything he could lay hands on, a matter of twenty rupees—he put into the singer's pocket, and above that supplied him with clothes on credit, and let him go The next day we started housekeeping on borrowed money. Such behaviour caused bickerings between us to the end His reply always was 'Look here, this will go on as long as I am alive, but remember I shall not die leaving you in debt.' This was strictly true Only in our last year did we not owe a penny. Up till then he continued his subtraction and I my addition.

16 THE RICH MAN'S SON

Tilak's patron Appasaheb is introduced with his son Gopal. A haldi-kunku *ceremony is described.*

TILAK was entirely free from all desire for favour. He was engaged as a teacher for Gopalrao Bapusaheb Booti, younger son of Shrimant Mukund Krishna, otherwise known as Appasaheb Booti. The salary was good, and he was also given, by Appasaheb, rooms in a bungalow in the garden in which to live.

One day Appasaheb said to Tilak, 'Tilak, I think Gopal should live with you.' Tilak at once agreed to the suggestion, and only refused the proffered money for board and lodging. He argued that residence with a teacher was not residence in a hotel.

Gopal was an extremely quiet, obedient and merry boy. For his mere pocket money he used to be given a hundred rupees

a month. He had two servants to wait upon him, but he came to our house like any poor scholar. Never once did he let us feel the difference between his station and ours. In the house I always called him 'thee' and 'thou', and he would help in the housework laughing, with never a murmur. In his own house how many clerks were employed to do the accounts of the expenditure alone! Yet we never thought of his position, nor did he. Our expenditure was always great. It was only the income that was small. We were the lords in our house and also the servants; the masters we, and the clerks. Gopal called Tilak 'Guruji' and me 'Bai'. This is why my son Dattu also called me Bai right up to the time I became a Christian.

Mahadev was also living with us He and Gopal were inseparable friends. Gathering dried twigs from the garden, the two of them would heat their own bath water and also leave Tilak's ready. They would eat the previous night's rice warmed up, with some buttermilk, and go off in the morning. If anyone happened to ask Gopal about their breakfast he would reel off a list of delicacies He had no one in his house to love him except his father and brother. His own wife was seven years old, and his brother nine years old. He regarded our home as his own. He used to say. 'There are plenty of people to call me Saheb, but no one to call me "thou".' We both had a great affection for him. I did the cooking, he arranged the plates, and put away everything afterwards

One day when Tilak was out, a friend came to see Gopal and Mahadev. The three of them dined; Gopal finished all his work as usual, spread out his bed, then said to me, 'Bai, come out when you are done, and we can gossip in the courtyard.' I dined and went out. All three of them had fallen asleep. With a good shaking I roused them. Two of them woke up, but Gopal never moved. I took fright, and so did the others. Gopal's body began to feel cold. It was nearly midnight when this scene was enacted.

I began to cry. The two boys looked queer I said to them, 'You go up to the house and tell Appasaheb.'

They replied, 'We are afraid.'

Terrifying ideas began to flash through my mind. There was a burial-ground nearby. Was this not the work of ghosts? I felt Gopal again and again. He was cold, stone cold.

'Very well. I go. One of you sit here, and one of you come with me.'

'The gate is locked. How can you go?'

'I am going. Can we let him lie like that?'

'When you are gone, how can we endure to wait here?'

'Endure it or not. I am off'

I had given my orders and was away. The garden gate was a considerable distance from the bungalow. The moonlight was brilliant. Tucking up my sari, I began to climb the gate, my mind seething with fear and doubt How could I get an entrance into Appasaheb's house? Would I not be caught and hailed before him as a thief? There was a guard at the gate with fixed bayonets. If they did not recognize me, in what a plight should I be?

Just as I was getting over the gate, someone caught my leg from the garden side I looked down and saw something—the image of Gopal, Gopal's ghost then! A great perspiration broke out all over my body I stammered and cried out loud, 'Who are you?'

The two boys propped me up against a tree, and one ran for water. I was conscious but still stammering Gopal was at my feet, clasping them.

'Bai, do not tell my Guruji. It was all my fault. We were only teasing you. We shall never do it again.'

I was furious

'Smile, Bai, please smile, or I shall never unclasp my hands from your feet.'

I began to cry and laugh hysterically.

Mahadev said solemnly, 'It is my opinion that you should tell Tilak nothing of this.'

'Then will you do it again?'

'Never, never. We shall never tease you like this again.'

So the fun ended. The three of them had planned everything from the beginning. Mahadev was against it, but had had to give in to the others That the joke would go so far none of them had ever dreamt.

Mahadev said one day, 'Tilak got a big prize today, and has given it away to someone Do not tell him I told you' That night when Tilak came home I was lying on my bed. Mahadev was studying. I pretended to be asleep on purpose, then began to talk as if in my sleep

'What does it matter if the money is given away? It comes

with this hand and goes with that! A spring shower! Gone and no trace.'

Mahadev and Gopal were seated near. They ducked their heads and began to laugh. I pretended to wake up.

'Were you dreaming?'

'That you got some money and gave it away at once!'

'A most astonishing dream, my dear This very day I did give away the money I got.'

One day Gopal said, 'Bai, I want some sweets today.'

Tilak was sitting near I gave him four annas, and he went to the market and brought back two melons Seeing the melons I said, 'Truly we must have a *haldi-kunku* ceremony some day soon.'

Tilak replied 'What a fool you are! *Kaldi-kunku* is merely an exhibition. How can you show off before anybody? Do you possess any ability at all?'

'If I have not, what does it matter? Is it only the fair that paint their eyes?'

Gopal broke in with, 'Bai, I have to go home for dinner today.'

We said no more about our *haldi kunku*, and Gopal having gone home stayed there all day He came back to sleep.

The next day everyone set about his work as usual. Tilak was sitting writing at one side. I held my kitchen stove in great reverence and was completely taken up in its service. At that very moment three or four carts drew up before the door. I thought someone must be coming to stay in the bungalow. My kitchen was filled with great big pots from the carts Stores and wood were heaped up in the shed. I was dumbfounded. Cooks and water-carriers ran about their work. There came a noise of hammering in the house. Tilak, Mahadev and Gopal were all engrossed in their own work.

From the kitchen to the room and from the room back to the kitchen I wandered; I began to think our coming to this bungalow had been in vain. We gave no rent. Appasaheb was the owner. He could do as he liked. What would it matter what we thought? Was this a picnic or what? How could my cooking be done in the midst of this upheaval? When the household came for their meal, how were they to be served? While I was fretting over the dinner in one spot, the cooking was all finished in another. A servant laid out the leaf plates. The dinner was ready.

I was astonished out of measure. The guests began to arrive. I was invited to dine. I replied, 'I am not coming. My own people have not had their's yet. How can I sit down?' I always looked on it as a sin to refuse any food, but I was in an unbelievable situation. I told them they had turned my kitchen upside down.

'Has Gopal gone home today or not?'

They answered, 'Baisaheb, Gopal himself has given you this invitation.'

I was angry indeed now, and furious with Tilak. I flashed out

'Tell him I am not coming to dinner.'

Then Gopal came himself and took my hand. I shook him off.

'Bai, only hear me now and scold as much as you like afterwards!'

So saying he led me into the bungalow. What should I behold but the goddess Gawri arranged in the greatest splendour. Seeing the beauty of it all, I was speechless, and my eyes filled with tears. I could not say a word to Gopal, all my anger melted away.

Tilak came to dinner. He thought some guests of Appasaheb were having a picnic No one had realized in the least what was being done. After dinner when he went into the drawing room of the bungalow, and was greeted by the glory of Gawri he began to scold me.

'All this display is your doing You are most thoughtless. What do we want with the responsibility for such a treasure? Look at the gold, the silver, the diamonds, and rubies! Who is to pay for it if any are lost?'

'Who but the persons that brought them.'

'See here, dear, I do not approve of this at all,' and so saying Tilak was gone.

The setting out of the goddess was so beautiful that in all my life I have never seen its equal, before or since I think.

About two o'clock in the afternoon Gopal's sister-in-law and wife descended from a conveyance with a maid servant. Small screens of fragrant grass had been arranged all round the room with a contrivance to keep them watered. Before Gawri were silver lamps and in front of them big, silver trays. They were filled with sweets. At one side was everything ready for *haldi-kunku*. Attar of roses and rose water, *pan-supari* and sweets

were all there without a word. These girls came prepared to hand round the sweets and *haldi-kunku*. They dispensed the *haldi-kunku*. I passed round the sweets; both of them behaved as if they were my daughters-in-law.

The ceremony being over, I returned into the house to find that again leaf plates had been laid out. One by one Tilak's friends began to gather. Appasaheb turned up. The dinner was a most extravagant one, chutnies, salads, four vegetables, *shrikhand* and *puri*. Appasaheb thanked Tilak, 'Tilak, we are happy to have been partakers of dinner in your house.' Tilak only smiled.

Gopal had come to regard our house as his own home. If a friend arrived when he and Mahadev were at their meal inside, they would call me to serve, naming loudly certain rich dishes: *shrikhand* meant *besan*, *basundi* meant *ambat-waran*, *puri* meant *poli* and so forth. This became a secret code among us. When someone was there he would tell me to serve one vegetable in four places I was instructed to press the guests to stay for a meal, and he for his part would say his father was waiting for them and would be angry. This was his way of inviting guests and keeping up our good name for hospitality. Appasaheb discovered this for the first time on the day of the *haldi-kunku* celebration. He knew from the first about Tilak's generosity He wanted to see Tilak everyday, so he invented a ruse whereby Tilak's salary might remain in his safe keeping, Tilak would have money in hand, and yet be obliged to come and see Appasaheb daily. 'Tilak,' he said, 'Come to me everyday for two rupees. I shall give it to no one else, you must come yourself.' Tilak refused the offer and continued his old ways.

17 'MAD, MY FRIENDS, TRULY MAD'

Tilak is presented with a daughter, and he composes some poetry.

AS my confinement came near again I was taken back to my old home. Only my aunt was there now. After my uncle's death all his property had been divided up, and the local money-lender and banker had taken the house. Both of us therefore went to stay with my brothers Keshav and Vishnu.

Pendse had been transferred to Kalwan. As soon as she heard I was in Jalalpur, Bhiku too came to help. So far as I remember, she never before had left her house to stay anywhere. She had never even come to our old home. Nevertheless for my confinement she stayed two or three months in Jalalpur. A girl was born and we called her Narmada, but her pet name was Mai. She was a very sweet child

Whenever I left Tilak he invariably threw up his work, distributed the household goods in charity, and came after me That happened this time too As a rule after such a distribution of alms not even a broken pot would be left. He remembered his Guru in Dhamak and once more subsisted on the leaves of the *neem* tree.

Our daughter was three months old when Tilak came in one evening He had a bag with him. There was a parcel in it that looked as if it might hold saris The children began to do accounts. There must be one for my sister, two for my brothers' wives and one for me.

Tilak was sitting with the bag in front of him The children gathered round him; he opend the bag. Instead of saris, out tumbled a heap of big, new note-books. Out of one of these blank note books he read the whole story of Savitri, composing it in verse as he went along, as if it were really written there. When he finished and the note book was examined only blank paper was found.

Bhiku left. Immediately after her arrival at her own home an urgent letter came to us from Pendse, inviting us and all our dependants to come and stay with him. Naturally we accepted and left for Kalwan.

While he was in the act of speaking, Tilak would compose

poetry; Bhiku was always afraid he would write a poem about her, so she hardly ever appeared before him. At Kalwan, only Gharu had time to talk to Tilak. Pendse was at work in his office, Bhiku engaged in household duties; there were left Gharu and myself, and I was completely taken up with my baby. The former friendship between Tilak and Gharu was renewed and strengthened. Bhiku bought child's bangles, a necklace and gold fillet or head-band for Mai. One day Gharu came to Tilak pestering him to give her some jewellery too.

'Aunts and uncles always give their nieces some kind of ornament.'

Tilak drew pencil and paper towards him and made a list of all the things she wanted He told her to come back in a little while for them, and sent her out of the room. Every time she passed the door she popped her head into Tilak's room, to see what kind of jewellery was being prepared so quickly. Tilak appeared to be absorbed in writing.

At last all the ornaments were ready and Tilak called her She was filled with joy when she was presented with them There was everything she wanted to the last one—why not with a skilled workman living in the house? Here they all were in a poem! She was so delighted that she picked up her casket of paper, and dashed into the centre room. When Gharu came in, Bhiku and I were sitting gloating over Mai's trinkets.

Gharu burst out, 'Mother, Tilak has given me such a lot of jewellery. Look, I shall read it to you.' So saying she read out the poem. Tilak was standing behind the door to see how his sister-in-law liked it, but Bhiku did not see him When her daughter had finished reading, she gave a great sigh and said, 'What can one do? So clever, and no use! So learned, and not a penny in his pocket! Dragging his wife from door to door like a beggar with a dancing bear. The bells always ringing in his house, "Nothing, nothing, nothing." What can one do? Put woman's bangles on his wrists!' Tilak heard it all, and turned on his heel. He went and rolled himself up in a sheet, and lay down on the veranda.

That day a fortune-teller came to Pendse's house. He did not know much about the household. Bhiku showed him everyone's hands. We had a cook called Ayya who always dressed like a lord. His hand was shown and with a solemn face the fortune-teller announced, 'Here is great knowledge and fame.'

Beyond lay Tilak with his head under the sheet. Pointing to him Bhiku said, 'Look and see what his fortune is.' The man called Tilak forward. He came. 'Show me your hand.' Tilak held out the back of his hand, 'Is that the way to show your hand? Are you going to beat a vulgar yodel with it on your mouth? You'll yodel all right!' he snapped. Tilak silently turned up the palm. The fortune-teller began his prophesy.

'Not a breath of the name of learning! No money. Will never be married'

'Are there any children in his fate?' Bhiku asked gently.

'If there is no wife, why on earth ask about children?'

This over, he went to do his round of the town. Pendse came back in the evening, and Tilak said at once to him, 'Pendse, you are always urging me to give some more *kirtans*. It has occurred to me to give one today Arrange to have one tonight after dinner'

Pendse was delighted As he was the Mamaledar it was not difficult for him to arrange for one within an hour or an hour and a half. The people began to gather after the evening meal. The story was just about to begin when the fortune-teller came and sat down in the front Beyond, among the women, sat Bhiku.

The recital started, and the first song was as follows:

My stars forsake their path.
All earthly bonds are burst.
With honour, joy and grief
No more my mind is curst.

The sun lights up this world
I see it all as vain
Salvation is of Heaven
Which I in prayer attain.

Absorbed am I in Thee.
Thy soul is one with mine.

Here was the sheeted water-carrier risen up against him! The fortune-teller was horrified But Bhiku who saw his discomfiture was delighted. She began to stare at him, and bless her brother-in-law.

The next song was begun:

Mad, mad, mad, my friends!
Who said 'Drive out the beggar?'
Mad, my friends, quite mad!
Learned and penniless
Deck him with bangles.

My friends, mad, quite mad!
Ring, ring, ring, oh bell!
Nothing, nothing, nothing
And still he has no care.
Mad, mad, mad, my friends!

Now indeed was Bhiku's rejoicing all swallowed up. She was reminded of her own words in the afternoon Not without reason had she been afraid that her brother-in-law would make a mock of her in a song. She was in an indescribable state of mind and, rising in a temper, began to leave.

Only Pendse was quite unconscious of the personal application of these songs. Her anger having cooled a little, Bhiku said, 'I have only one sister I must endure for her sake that I am pilloried in this *kirtan* Once the sister is dead, her husband never wants to see one's face again'

Overhearing this exclamation, the blood returned to my heart I had been as one caught between the well and the wall

18 MAHADEV

Sundry stories about Mahadev and Tilak.

THE next day that fortune-teller decamped from Kalwan. Tilak too left forthwith and took me and Mai to Jalalpur. The fortune-teller left one day and we left the next We arrived in Jalalpur. Tilak had decided to leave me there, and go himself to Saptashringi at Wani, but there was the question of money. It was quite impossible to ask his mother-in-law, and how could he have the face to approach my brothers? I had all Mai's trinkets, but they were given by Bhiku. They could not be touched. There remained a new sari. Tilak had given it to me. I took it to him and said, 'Return this to the shopkeeper and get your money back.' Tilak would not agree. With the greatest difficulty I made him take it, and off he went.

The next day a bullock cart driver came back with it, and a message to say it had been left by mistake among the things

in the shop. The truth was that the shopkeeper had lent him the necessary money and returned the sari.

At Surgana lived a most famous physician called Nana Sant. His house was in Wani. Nana Sant was very fond of Tilak. From him Tilak had learned a little medicine, but he never practised for profit. Both pupil and professor having agreed, Tilak now established himself at Wani and started a school. This was the best of all his schools. Forty pupils enrolled. The fee was one rupee a month and the pupils were very pleased to give it. One does not see one hundreth of the honour given to teachers by students now, that was given in those days. Tilak's teaching also was exceptional. How many a ragged urchin in those days was writing verse! English was taught too.

When first he went to Wani, Tilak boarded with his priest Kakaji Mulay. Later we both lived there, and held the school upstairs. Kakaji's mother and wife were both kindly women. I took Mai to Wani after one month. We felt completely at home. Though he was our priest we were never allowed to feel ourselves strangers. Tilak was devoted to Mai.

About this time Dr Anandibai Joshi having gone to America, there was generally something about her in the papers. Tilak used to say Mai would grow up to be as well educated as Anandibai. She was the sweetest of children, and there were as many people as were wanted to spoil her That is, not counting ourselves. There was the whole of Kakaji's household and no less than forty pupils to make a fuss over her.

Bapusaheb Deshmukh was the landlord of the village there. He was a friend of Tilak. Tilak used to take Mai to school. She was very pretty. Seeing her beside me, no one would have said she was my daughter.

Tilak used to go to a place called Devi-Dharmashala, a free shelter for pilgrims and beggars in Wani, and bring back any men he found there, provide them with food and drink, some with clothes, some with medicine, and so dispose of any money he earned. Wani being quite a small village only those things absolutely necessary to man could be bought, so there was no temptation to incur other expenditure.

Tilak's youngest brother was Tilak himself all over again, even more so if it were possible. Mahadev one day went to Jalalpur. He had not a rag on him beyond his dhoti, no cap on his head,

no sandals on his feet when he arrived—looking like some one returning from a Hindu funeral procession. He had given away everything to a passing stranger. At that time he was studying in Nagpur College, but having holidays, was on his way to Wani when he decided to go and see my aunt at Jalalpur.

'Goodness! Mahadev, how have you come half naked and wearing only a dhoti?' she asked him.

'Aunt, while I was asleep in the train my things were stolen,' he replied. Who could believe such a story?

'Mahadev,' said my aunt, 'even if you were asleep, how could anyone take the clothes off your back?'

It was his nature! He gave away all he had and more to anyone he saw in need, then smoothed things over with such excuses if he were questioned When we were in Nagpur he once pestered me to give him a dhoti with a silk border. Two or three days later, it disappeared I searched the whole house, and he began to help me The next day a tramp appeared. He was wearing it. When I accused Mahadev, he confessed he had given away the dhoti, for which we had both been hunting. Well! Well! My aunt clothed him in some of Uncle Govindrao's old things and sent him off to Wani.

Now we had not one but two saints The pair of them set about denuding the house of every article or bit of cloth they could give away to anyone in need.

The day came when one of the brass vessels in the house disappeared I set up a hue and cry after Tilak, 'Where is that brass vessel? Where is the brass vessel?' intending to blame him for giving it away, but he would not give me the least clue. Later I sat down to grind. Mahadev came and held the handle of the mill.

'Lakshmi, will you be angry? Do not scold Tilak. It was I who gave the pot to a poor man'

Having discovered the truth I laughed.

'Mahadev,' I said, 'why did you not say so before?'

'Because you would scold me. I am mortally afraid of you.'

Once Mahadev decided to climb Saptashringi at night. He was to take a friend with him. He came to me with a piteous supplication.

'Lakshmi, please lend me your shawl.'

I refused. 'You will give it away.' He grew more humble than ever, promised not to give it away, and to return it into

my hand. In the end he took the shawl and gave it away too. His weakness in this respect used to make me angry and because of my temper he was afraid of me.

Once in Nagpur when Tilak had gone off somewhere, there was nothing in the house, and only Mahadev and myself at home. I had two rupees I gave them to Mahadev, and instructed him to bring in certain stores. He went to the market and returned with two rupees worth of clarified butter and sugar, and the barber! I was so infuriated, I burst out with, 'Let the barber stand aside. Now shall I shave you myself, and that right well. Shall we exist on butter and sugar? Get out! I shall take my life' Having said this, I went upstairs and sat down Naturally I had no intention of committing suicide. I was of an extremely lively spirit, and possessed of a wiry body.

Mahadev sat downstairs with a sulky face, and I upstairs. He could hear no sound from me went into the garden in consternation, and began to peer about for me from the well. I was watching the fun from above. Failing to see any trace of me, he lifted up his voice and began to cry loudly.

'Oh Lakshmi, Oh Lakshmi How have you killed yourself? What can I tell Tilak? Where have you gone'

I could forbear no more and came down. As soon as he saw me he fell at my feet weeping copiously

'Lakshmi, I shall never do it again'

I was only angry with so saintly a man because I really did not understand him then Now I know his true worth. Enough. Mahadev gave me his promise. He wept. But he was still the same man

At Nagpur we heard of the death of Tilak's father. Brahman priests were called in to celebrate the twelfth and thirteenth days after his death Mahadev was sent to the market. He brought the orders I always took an account from him and Tilak because there was no knowing how much they would spend. He rendered me his account pat, but there were four annas he could not explain away. In the end he confessed, two annas to a beggar and two annas worth of sweets bought and eaten!

'Mahadev, you bought and ate sweets today! Are you not ashamed to say so?'

'Lakshmi, what else could I do? I was hungry.'

'But Mahadev, everything is waiting to be done yet. The

Brahmans are not fed. Your father has died; how could you eat anything sweet?'

'He died far away, Lakshmi.'

Truly I could never understand such behaviour.

Mahadev had plenty of offers for marriage in Nagpur, but he would not accept any. He used to say to me, 'Lakshmi, why do you invite an additional worry?' Hearing such a remark, my heart would turn over.

What was to happen did happen It was as if Mahadev had been forewarned in his dreams. After he returned to Nagpur from his last visit to Wani, a letter came from Wasoodevrao Patwardhan, saying Mahadev had typhoid and was longing to see my aunt, Tilak and myself. We were ready to start the next day, when the wire came saying, 'Mahadev had left us and gone to God.' Now we understood what a great mistake would it have been, had we got Mahadev married.

We had adopted him as our son, after the death of my first son. I remember more than one story of that time. I could not forget my baby and was always crying. Tilak brought me a young parrot. It grew into a big bird Tilak taught it Sanskrit It would repeat as far as 'Bho, Bho, Mahadev'. The last word being prolonged into 'Mahaa-dea-vaa'.

Tilak wrote a poem describing my care of it. The poem was written after the bird was lost. The dear thing just flew away one day, as we were watching it. We were all very sorry. Now and again it would come back, and sitting on a high tree begin, 'Bho, Bho, Mahaa-dea vaa'. We would all be delighted, but after calling Mahadev once or twice it flew away again. We never dreamed our own bird would leave us so too. It was no dream but reality when we received Patwardhan's wire.

The sun of our happiness was set for a long time.

19 BIRṬH OF DATTU

Death of Mai. Uncle Govindrao's reincarnation.

TILAK wanted a daughter. God gave him one. She was pretty, intelligent, chubby and of a delightful disposition. Everyone's head was turned by her childish babbling. Tilak's heart's desire was fulfilled. He had no treasure in the whole world like her. She was laid low with fever. Sweets made of new rice were given the blame That she would leave us so suddenly never entered anyone's mind

Tilak had left for Nasik the day before, on some business pretext. He had not gone very far when he met a Fakir on the way, who sent him back When he got home Mai made him sing songs from Tilak's *Devicha Prasad*. She was very fond of them. Then in the end our baby left us. We were both quite mad with grief There was no limit to the depths of Tilak's sorrow What high hopes he had held for Mai! They were blasted for ever.

One day Tilak was sitting talking in grief-stricken strain with Nana Sant upstairs. I was coming up, and could hear their conversation. Tilak was saying:

'Nanasaheb, do you not think my wife is really a vampire? She has eaten up my son, my daughter, father, brother, sister and how many more.'

'Tell me truly, whom does a vampire marry except another vampire?' said I to Nana Sant as I reached the top of the stair.

'He has not only eaten my son and my daughter, my mother, my father, adopted father and aunt, but father-in-law and brother-in-law, my sister-in law and how many more? He has swallowed up far more of my people than I his!'

Tilak sat silent. In his whole life thereafter Tilak never again uttered an obscene word nor thought an unclean thought such as that.

Nana Sant always came and sat in our house in Wani. He used to say that just as without *pan-supari* after dinner, so without hearing one of our quarrels, he was not satisfied.

'Your wranglings are a great entertainment.'

It was true. We were always quarrelling, and the causes of the quarrels were infinite.

Once there was an epidemic of thefts in Wani. Tilak invented a trap to catch the thief. I did not approve. A dispute began. He planned to have a great pit near the doorstep filled with cactus. It should be covered with big leaves sewn together, and specially prepared for the purpose. When the thief came he would fall in!

'Why should the thief fall in? Why should we not fall in? And while the pit is being dug will not all the village see?'

'Nothing is ever as I say!'

With this the sparks began to fly and Nana Sant sat enjoying the fun. It was always the same, anger, affection, mercy and scatter-brained notions were inextricably mingled in those two brothers' natures.

After many days had passed our grief for Mahadev and Mai abated. Again it came near my time to go home. I refused to go. Uncle Govindrao was dead, my aunt staying with someone else. Tilak pressed me to go, even promised to send money. He was earning a lot at the time.

In the midst of this discussion, a letter came from my brother to say his wife had had a son, and we were both to go for the naming ceremony. Tilak redoubled his persuasions.

'See how bad it will look if you do not go to the naming of your nephew. This is your brother's first son. If you decide to go later, you will not be able to endure the shaking of the bullock cart.'

Still in two minds, I prepared to go. I collected all the things made ready in the house. A cart was filled and we left. The day we arrived was a Saturday, a new moon, and the fifth day after the son was born, an accumulation of all ill omens. My aunt told me not to go into the house. I said I would go. Could my sister-in-law's fifth day be unlucky for me? Then where should she go on my fifth day? I paid no heed to my aunt, went straight to my brother's house and stayed there. Tilak went back.

In a month or a month and a half he returned to Jalalpur. My heart sank. I thought he must have as usual sacrificed everything to the gods and left Wani. Nothing of the sort! For once his pocket was well lined.

It was evening. There was a wealth of mangoes in the house and their sweet smell filled the air. The cattle came

home and on their heels my brother Vishnu. Having supplied the cattle with fodder he came and sat down in front of Tilak.

'Tilak, I have a pain in my stomach today. I have heard you have studied under a great doctor. Feel my pulse, please' Tilak felt his pulse and gave his diagnosis:

'Too much mango juice and too many onions in batter today.'

'Well done! How clever you doctors are! There is a smell of mangoes in the house, and today is 'Onion Day'. A fine inspiration! One examines the house to make the diagnosis. If a pestle is seen lying here, then we announce the patient has eaten a pestle. That is rubbish. Try Lakshmi's pulse and tell us exactly when her baby will be born, then we shall believe you. Come out Lakshmi! We shall set him a test.'

'I shall tell you, but if I am right you must distribute sweets all round If not I shall give them'

On this condition my pulse was to be taken. I came out and sat down. I was not well that day, but I had told no one. Tilak felt my pulse and said,

'Tomorrow at two o'clock in the afternoon a boy will be born.'

The next day at two o'clock a boy was born! On the previous two occasions Tilak was not there This time he was present.

I fell very ill It was the month of July Terrific rain was falling, but through it Tilak went to Nasik, and brought back an expensive doctor Tilak had to pay for the doctor's conveyance. He hired a band for ten days and distributed ten rupees worth of sweets My brother gave a dinner

My first two children had died, so this third I gave to my sister-in-law. As soon as she saw him she was filled with tenderness Her own boy was six months old. She said to my aunt: 'I shall take him now,' meaning she would suckle him.

My aunt said, 'Do not speak like that, it sounds as if his mother had died'

It was just like the story of Krishna. The son was Devki's, but Yashoda cared for him

For three months my sister-in law, and then for three or four months in Wani, two other women looked after him.

On the thirteenth day he was named, and then Tilak returned to Wani.

He was called Dattatraya, at his naming ceremony. He was quite content with my sister-in-law. With me or my aunt he would cry. My aunt was very perplexed that he should behave like this.

Then one day she had a dream. Uncle Govindrao seemed to say to her: 'Tilak has no mind for worldly affairs, so I myself have come to Lakshmi.' My aunt was convinced that Uncle Govindrao had been reborn. Again she hired the band, dispensed the sweets, celebrated the day and changed Dattu's name to Govind. The child was re-named three times after this. At Wani, Kakaji's mother had made vow to the goddess Amba. When it was fulfilled, he was called Ambadas. Later when he was two or two and a half years old we went to Rajnandgaon where Tilak met and made friends with a Bengali doctor. To please him we began to call Dattu, Sharaschandra. But all these names were abandoned when he was baptized Devdatt, 'God-given'. From beginning to end we have always called him by the pet name Dattu.

20 MY ILLNESS

How Tilak's courage saved Lakshmi's life. Talking of ghosts Tilak and Lakshmi return to Appasaheb in Nagpur Tilak is lost—in religious discussions and otherwise

FULLY three months later Tilak sent a cart for me from Wani. With it came long frocks, bonnets and cloth for my brother's son and Dattu. My aunt received a sari and other things. In spite of this the moment she saw the cart my aunt was cross.

'Today is *Kojagiri*, Shankar's full moon. I shall not send Lakshmi today.'

Therewith she sent away the cart with a message, 'Come and fetch the boy when he is five months old'. The cart went. Immediately came back a furious letter from Tilak. 'Leave the moment you see this letter. If you do not I shall never let you see my face again.'

I was in a great state. My brother hired a cart, and I went alone with Dattu. When I arrived at Wani, I found that Tilak had gone away to Sakharam's. He turned up after two weeks.

At the time of Mai's death, Kakaji's mother made a vow that if my next baby were a boy we should hold a ceremony on Saptashringi Hill and name him Ambadas, then weigh him and distribute his weight in brown sugar. On his fifth birthday we should cut his first hair also on the Hill.

My aunt came from Jalalpur for the naming ceremony. About twenty of us climbed the hill, among whom was Nana Sant. That very night I took fever. We were to have had a picnic at the top the next day, but Nana Sant feeling my pulse said we should not embark on the picnic, but take me down at once. The fever was dangerous. It was brought on by the effort of climbing. I had climbed the whole way. The child was named somehow and I was brought down in a carrying chair. Tilak ran beside the chair. All the rest were left behind. Dattu was with my aunt. He never ceased crying. Even after he got home he cried off and on throughout the night. Tilak sat with me. My baby continued roaring to the skies My aunt tried the application of holy relics, but he would not be appeased. The next day Kakaji's daughter was cradling him on her feet, when her hand brushed his bonnet. He screamed out more than ever. Feeling over his bonnet she found a needle. I had begun to embroider it and had left the needle in! His head was badly scratched. My aunt's holy remedies came to an end, and Dattu began to laugh and play again, but my temperature would not come down Dattu's feeding suffered, but Bhagirathibai Mulay and Parvatibai Deshpande, Jagirdar saved him, partly by feeding him themselves, and partly by giving him cow's milk. He was nearly all day at the Jagirdar's house. My aunt took charge of him at night Tilak told her to leave him with the Jagirdar's family, but she was angry with the mere suggestion. 'I let him stay there during the day because I am so busy. I will not let him go. If his mother lives well and good, if not, I shall tie him to my back, and go out and work for him. It does not matter whether you give any support or not.'

Slowly I lost all consciousness. Tilak never moved from my bedside. Nana Sant was for ever coming and going. One day he told Tilak that I would not last till the morning; I would pass away during the night. As the village was small everyone began to gather. Many of Tilak's pupils came to sleep with us.

'Is she certain to die tonight?' Tilak asked Nana Sant. Being told that I would, he asked if he should give me *Ichha Bhedi*,

a certain stimulant. 'No,' said Nana Sant, 'You will hasten her death by two or three hours.'

'She will die anyway. Then what matter if it is two hours sooner.' This he said half to himself and half to Nana Sant and gave me the pill Nana Sant left the house saying, 'Do what you like. I am going I do not want to think I was responsible for Lakshmi's death.'

Tilak was holding my pulse. At dawn I took the turn. In the morning Nana Sant came and granted a certificate that I would live. He marvelled at Tilak's courage.

Very slowly I recovered While I was so ill my aunt made many a vow. She performed them all.

After some time Tilak left me and Dattu at Jagirdar Deshpande's house and departed to Poona Tilak having betaken himself off for a month or a month and a half we were stranded with no address, no means of sending a letter, and no hope of a reply. When my brother heard this he came and took me and Dattu back to Jalalpur.

Dattu was eight or nine months old I was with my own people again. One day my sister-in-law said to me: 'Do you think that ghosts and goblins really exist?' 'Not a bit of it. It is only a silly idea.' 'Then why is there a symbol of Grandad kept after his death among our gods?'

Everyone in the house believed in that symbol Going out coming in, weddings and times of trouble were all celebrated in the name of Grandad. We talked a long time about this symbol, and so fell asleep We always slept in one long row. It was the beginning of the hot weather, so instead of sleeping in the centre room we were all outside on the veranda.

In the early dawn I dreamt that Grandad had appeared. I woke up. Outside the moonlight was as white as meal. The veranda seemed all the darker. Four men-servants were asleep in the courtyard. Vishnu had gone into a room off the veranda, and was sleeping with the door chained from inside. This room was built of wooden planks. Our woman-servant had gone next door to do some grinding, and put up the chain on the big door of the courtyard from outside. The buffalo had newly calved and the four days' old calf was tied up just by my sister-in-law's feet. It began licking one foot and she let out a scream. She rose. Immediately my aunt rose too and took her baby onto her own lap, and began to waken her.

Neither of them could speak properly. They sat babbling 'Ohyo, Ohyo!' The sounds coming from the two pairs of lips were identical.

I was wide awake, but could not form a word either. I joined my voice to theirs. What a good thing there was no potter's house nearby. All his donkeys would have hee-hawed in chorus.

Vishnu began kicking and battering on the boards of his room: 'Open the door and I shall see what you all want,' he was shouting. As soon as the woman-servant heard the hubbub, she came running in a fright, and began beating on the outside door. She had forgotten she had latched it from the outside herself. The men in the courtyard seized their axes and sticks, and began a war dance to the tune of 'The lady Brahmans are all dead; the lady Brahmans are all dead' They thought we were inside the house. In the midst of all this commotion I put my hand round my sister-in-law's neck and accidentally touched my aunt in doing so She shrieked, 'Why stand and stare? Here is the thief!' Our four men-servants rushed at me Leaving Dattu on the mattress, I fled into the courtyard screaming, 'I am Lakshmi, I am Lakshmi'. Once we were all disillusioned, we sat and laughed till dawn, and for many months after we laughed whenever we thought of the joke.

After sometime Tilak came to Jalalpur. We were now well established at Wani Tilak found opportunity here, not only for his well-beloved work, but also for social service and the study of religion Nevertheless our day for leaving Wani was approaching.

Tilak received a letter from Appasaheb, 'I wish to be of service to my people and so have undertaken to translate the Hindu scriptures into everyday speech I need your help in this work. Come at once to Nagpur. You will be given the same house as you had before' That decided it We must go to Nagpur. Dattu was then eight or nine months old.

Bhikajipant Gorhey was also transferred there. In Nagpur we once more lived in the garden Tilak spent part of his time writing, and part of his time teaching Gopal. While we were there Tilak began a long novel. It was never finished. It was printed bit by bit as he wrote it. I do not even remember its name. All I know is, that for many years one of our rooms

was cluttered up with its printed pages. Only for that reason do I remember it so well. In these days *Veerkunya* a short story, the novel, *The Three Widows*, *The Hermit Flower*, and *Kavyakusumanjali*—a monthly devoted to Tilak's own poems, were all published.

A Hindu saint was living with Appasaheb. Tilak began to spend a great deal of his time with him, and wrote some poems about him. Fuel to fire! From the first he had no mind for worldly affairs. Now he was swept away in a flood of study, reading, discussion and a multitude of acquaintances. What wonder he did not even remember his home! There was a great discussion on religion in progress in Appasaheb's domain. There were also innumerable books there The minute a new book was out, Appasaheb would order it. The whole twenty-four hours of Tilak's day began to be spent in reading and meditation.

Tilak was afraid of no man If there were any fear in his heart it was of God; and after God of me.

It was his turn to do the cooking one day, I being defiled and unable to touch the stove; Dattu had only just begun to eat rice. Tilak finished his bathing, put the lentils on to boil and got into his ordinary clothes again

'I am going out till the lentils are ready,' he said, and was gone. I began to say, 'Go out after our meal', but he did not listen. At home the lentils cooked, burned, turned into charcoal, but there was no sign of Tilak.

Dattu was ravenous with hunger The town was a long way away. I had no money at all Twelve o'clock struck. A boy of Teli caste was employed to look after Dattu I made him set three stones for a stove, and cook the rice on them; then he fed Dattu.

I was left fasting. My only comfort was in distilling tears from my eyes. That much I could do. Four o'clock struck, but no Tilak appeared. There was a low-caste woman called Prema living in the garden. When she heard about me she gathered some fruit from the garden, and coaxed me to eat it.

'What more can I do?' she said, 'You people cannot eat anything cooked by us, otherwise I should have prepared a meal for your son.' What kindness! But it was quite true, we could not touch anything cooked or handled by her.

Night fell. The boy again cooked some rice, fed Dattu and put him to sleep. About nine o'clock Bhikajipant arrived with

a peace offering. He was carrying *ladu* and *chiwda*. The lamp was burning very low in the house, and I was lying in one corner and Dattu in the other. As soon as Bhikajipant opened the door I rose in a fury: 'What an hour of night to turn up!'

'Shall I tell the truth? Tilak is with us at Hansapuri. He told me you and Dattu would be hungry, and he has sent me with some food. He will come later, after he has fed with us. He is afraid of you.' Very much later Tilak came.

After some time Tilak and Appasaheb fell out, probably over a religious question or some other matter I think that from now on at least, in the matter of religion, Tilak's mind was disquieted. Gopal went for a change of air to Ramtek. He wanted Tilak to go with him, but Tilak was averse. He did not go Then he disappeared for nearly a month.

I had not a penny. I was left to look after a servant, a monkey, myself and my son. There was not even grain in the house to eat and no neighbours near. Our firewood was gathered from the garden sticks The boy-servant went into the town to work, and fed himself and the monkey. In such a state during these difficult days, I found four pounds of *jowari* lying forgotten in a corner. I was filled with such joy at the sight of it, I believe there are but few people who can have experienced such great happiness. I ground it roughly and ate it with buttermilk. I could always get chillies from the garden as a tasty vegetable We had nearly three pints of milk ordered to come daily. A farthings worth of puffed rice cooked in milk served Dattu. I took a great pride in not going home, no matter how much I had to endure. Accordingly I did not leave Nagpur, nor did I tell my family how I was running my house.

One day Dattu began pestering me for some rice, but how could I give it him? There was not so much as a grain in the house. That same day at the other side of the garden Appasaheb's family had come for a picnic. I thought I might ask them for some rice for Dattu and went over. Cooking was in progress for a hundred people. An old woman was in charge. I went to her and said, 'Granny, please give me a small bowl of rice for Dattu. I am tired of lighting the fire to cook.'

It was evening.

'What time of day is this to come and ask? Our own dinner is not even ready yet.' She scolded.

I turned on my heel, feeling no one in the world cared for us. Why should this unlettered woman speak to me like this? I remembered my own home. How many people ate and were there! In our fields rice was grown. Four or five pounds of it were cooked everyday in my sister's house, and I could not get a small bowlful. Never had I been so downcast as that day. Pacifying Dattu somehow I put him to sleep. I lay down beside him, but I could not sleep myself.

My mind was filled with foreboding thoughts I comforted myself saying, 'If there is nothing now what does it matter? When my son grows up he will feed lots of people.'

At that moment there was a knock at the door. I opened it and in came the old woman; behind her followed a Brahman cook bearing a whole dinner on a tray.

'Madam, I am so sorry, I spoke roughly to you. Do not be angry I have brought something for Dattu'

'But he is now asleep. And how could he eat so much anyway.' Nevertheless I never turned my back on food, and did not let this go either. From the psalm of Vyankatesh I remembered a line, 'Thou makest me to travel, Oh God, to the ten points of the compass in search of food' The woman had brought grain with her

'What is this for? I have rice in the house,' I said, 'but could not be bothered cooking it.'

'I bring this because you are lazy. Now do not be cross Treat me as you would treat Dattu.'

'What are you saying? I have called you Granny.'

'Call me anything you like, but do as I tell you'

So saying she left, and the servant boy and I had enough dinner for two days. The sweets lasted some days longer. That woman had some milk of human kindness in her. Otherwise sometimes we come across people who are a plague to others and yet try to cover their own mistakes by appearing pious.

In the morning the milk woman turned up. When I had taken in the milk she began to ask for her money. I tried to speak but could not. If this woman stopped her milk, what should I give my son tomorrow? A great sob escaped from me. When she asked me what was wrong, I broke down altogether and told her the whole story.

'I am looking for him,' I said.

'If he does not come, I shall go home to my aunt and send you the money.'

'Give me your address, but as long as I am here do not stop the boy's milk.'

'Send your son to me and I shall look after him well.'

'You will look after him well, no doubt, but what about me?'

'Very well do not send him; but as long as you are here, I shall see that he has his milk. And whether I get the money or not I shall continue to bring it. One can get money again, but not a good friend,' and she laid two rupees down in front of me.

'Take this to spend, I got it today.' I blessed the fathomless sport of the gods. What generosity to be found in the heart of a peasant!

She was no sooner gone than Bhikajipant arrived.

'Hallo, Tilak has not been to see us for ages. Has he gone away somewhere?'

'Yes.'

'Where?'

'I do not know.'

'How long has he been away?'

'A month.'

'Then is there anything left in the house? What can I give you?'

'I have everything, thank you, but since you are here will you send him a wire?'

'But where shall I send it? And what shall I say?'

'He may be at Rajnandgaon with Ganpatrao Khare. Say I am very ill and there is no one to look after Dattu.'

In spite of his refusal I pressed one of the milk-woman's rupees into his hand and he sent a wire.

The day after it was sent, Tilak came.

I was busy sweeping the doorsteps

'What a fool you are! If you behave like this who will believe you? You will be like the foolish shepherd boy in the story. What illness have you had? What was wrong with you?'

'I twisted my foot.'

Tilak bathed and sat down to dinner. I set before him buttermilk, coarse ground grain, salt and chillies out of the garden.

'What is this?'

'What I have eaten ever since you left.'

Tilak was very upset. But that was all.

'We must go to Rajnandgaon,' he said.
'Why? What's wrong with this place?'
'Never you mind, do as I say or go to Jalalpur.'
My time to go home was nearly on me again.

21 CRUCIAL YEARS

Extracts from Tilak's diary. Another child is born and dies.

IN Rajnandgaon we arrived. We were there nearly two years. These were the two most crucial years in all Tilak's life. When he left Rajnandgaon he went straight to Bombay, and was baptized. I shall now aid my memory with some of his own writings during the first five or six months after we arrived.

In 1894 when we went to Rajnandgaon he began keeping a diary. He had a diary before, but did not keep it regularly, only writing notes every six months or once a year. The only one worth reading is that written at Rajnandgaon.

The first page contains 'Resolutions for the year'. Above it is the text that 'God is the Perfector', and below the following extract:

'1. Books to be written:
   (*i*) *Saved from the Butcher.*
   (*ii*) *The Life of Yeshwantrao.*
   (*iii*) *The Life of Christ.*
   (*iv*) A play: *Meghadut.*
   (*v*) One hundred stories for little children.
2. Sit for the entrance examination of the University.
3. Take charge of the printing press here.
4. Go to Wani in the Konkan.
5. Save at least Rs 500.
6. First of all get proper medical attention.
7. Get justice from the Raja for the oppressed labourers here.'

The entry under 1 January, is a poem. This filled the first page. From the second page on, the writing is minute. Every

detail is described as it happened every day. 'I rose at 5 a.m.' etc. In some places the writing is so small that a magnifying glass is needed to read it. The entries are made in January and February, and again in July and August, three and a half months later. From them I have been able to arrange in their context many things which I could not place before.

This was our second stay in Rajnandgaon. The first time Tilak's work was in the Balram Press; now he was a teacher.

This note is found about his work on 1 May 1894: 'I have become not only Clerk of the Court and Head Clerk, but also English clerk of the whole office.'

The Testimony of a Student was published in 1898. In it Tilak says: 'In Rajnandgaon, I was teacher and Government clerk, and in the end began the work of Sheriff!' To the end he kept up his connexion with the school as well as carrying on his other duties. Some Inspector having examined the school and written his comments in the visitors' book in English with many mistakes, Tilak showed it to him in protest

The following extract is from 5 February:

'School: 3.45 to 5 p m I was speaking with the Headmaster Ayodhyanath About 5 p m the school janitor Nohar came up. The Headmaster told me his wife had been in labour since the night before. She was completely exhausted, and the child was not born. The janitor received only five rupees a month. Who would pay any attention to him! I forgot the office; went to Milton's house. He was not in. There was a policeman outside. I told him I wished to see Mrs Milton. She had midwifery training I offered to pay her. She offered to come for nothing. Sharangpani lent his horse-tonga. In short by her kindness and pity and the grace of God the baby was born, and I returned home at 7.30 p m.'

From the above description and other references to the school here and there in the diary it is obvious that he kept his eye on the school as well as doing his duty to the Rajasaheb.

When I left Nagpur, Tilak suggested that I should go home, but as the suggestion received no majority vote, it was dropped and I accompanied him to Rajnandgaon My first three children were born at Jalalpur, two in my aunt's house and one in my brother's. This time at least I ought to stay in my husband's house. I never saw my mother-in law. Had she been alive I should never have experienced the sorrows of a daughter-in-law,

but I found another mother-in-law at Rajnandgaon who taught me all that other daughters-in-law have to suffer.

We were living in Sadashivrao Retrekar's house. There were other lodgers there too, one of them an old lady. Tilak called her 'Mother' and gave her due honour. The landlord's brother Govindrao and his wife Anandibai also lived with us. Sadashivrao was never at home. Govindrao and the woman called 'Mother' by Tilak hired a woman to help with the work. She served both of them. That at least was the intention, but in reality her whole time was spent dancing attention on 'Mother'. Only the paying of the salary was shared. Tilak was now persuaded by his 'Mother' to pay this woman Rs 4 a month to look after Dattu; which meant that she, 'Mother', at her leisure could trample on the woman on the strength of three people's pay: she was getting Rs 3 from Govindrao and the old lady, and Rs 4 from us; Rs 7 altogether, all through the grace of 'Mother'. She was bent double under the weight of this kindness.

The relations between 'Mother' and Govindrao's wife were as child and mother-in-law. She began to treat me in the same way, but I was not meek like Anandibai and would not be ordered about by anyone. Promptly she complained to Tilak and began fomenting quarrels between us.

When we came to the house, we were given one room upstairs and one room, no more than a grass hut, in the courtyard; but at the time Tilak was given a verbal promise that later, when it was needed, we should be given a room used by 'Mother', to which she herself agreed. The first understanding was that 'Mother' should take the hut and give us her room for a while. My time was very near, but 'Mother' would not remove herself into the hut. She kept saying, 'There's plenty of time yet.'

It was the month of September, the hut began to be very damp. In the end when everyone was sitting together I said to Govindrao, 'I need the room, please.'

Understanding my purpose Tilak said, 'Go to your home.'

'I am not going home.'

'You are an extremely obstinate wife. Die here if you want.'

'Very well, I shall die here, but I am not going home. Give me the room please.'

Tilak turned to his 'Mother'.

'Let her have the room.'

'But the other room is not spring-cleaned. I must get the floor and walls replastered with cow-dung,' said 'Mother'.

'Put a woman on to do the floor and walls,' I ventured.

'I do not like another woman's plastering.'

Anandibai broke in. 'I will do it for you.'

'But why so soon? I understand everything. Am I not older than all of you?'

'Be you older or younger. I want the room today.'

Tilak gave me a cutting rebuke: 'One should listen at least a little to one's elders and betters.'

'I shall listen to no one,' I retorted 'Anandibai, you go into our hut, and give me your room to stay in. It was your husband who agreed to give us the room.'

Only then did Govindrao in a voice of authority gave the order that 'Mother' must vacate her room that day for Tilak, and go into the hut. Anandibai replastered the length and breadth of it. With the help of the servant woman she removed all the things from one room to the other. I ran backwards and forwards as much as I could. The old lady sat mocking at us. The bandicoot rats had been at work in her room making holes. We had to fill them all up.

Tilak went off on his own business. As soon as he was gone, 'Mother' would not let the servant help us. Anandibai and I did nearly everything ourselves. 'Mother' disapproved of Anandibai even helping me and being upset began to scold continually.

In the evening Govindrao and Tilak returned, and 'Mother' complained at length about us. Tilak had written a play and went out to the school or somewhere to get it rehearsed. Dattu had high fever. He slept the night with Anandibai.

About three or four in the morning Anandibai brought him, all feverish as he was, on her hip to me, and showed him his brother Dattu could only say 'Mama, Mama,' and began to cry. Govindrao took Dattu. The only maternity nurse there was a sweeper. I said, 'I will not have such a woman.' 'Mother' had to do everything, and after that Anandibai came in.

From the beginning I had said, 'I want this, I want that', but 'Mother's' reply was, 'There is plenty of time yet'. Believing her, Tilak paid no attention to me. The result was that there was not even oil for the lamp that night, and only 'Mother' in the house to look after me.

Tilak came back from his rehearsal in the morning. He was

delighted with his second son, and sent a wire to Jalalpur to tell my aunt the news. Round Rajnandgaon they give a mother nothing to eat for the first three days, and prick the child's stomach with a needle in a hundred places! But I utterly rebelled against these practices. I asked Anandibai secretly for two cakes of wheat bread, and ate them. Done! The cakes were enlarged into rice and buttermilk and the tale passed on to Tilak's ears. He lost his temper. I did no less. Sitting up in bed I scolded him roundly, and in a moment he had made up a poem about me! Naturally I did not appreciate it, but from the point of view of poetry it was very good. He must have torn it up. The third day Lakshmibai Khare arrived and did everything possible for me.

Dattu's fever was gone. He was playing and running about again. There was a well in the courtyard having no winch for the bucket We all used the water. One day Tilak was writing upstairs. My so-called mother-in-law was standing by the well. Dattu as he played came nearer and nearer. 'Mother' was staring at him intently, but, still playing, he continued to approach the well. 'Mother' never opened her mouth, nor lifted him to one side. Govindrao rushed forward when he saw Dattu approaching the well and lifted him up. From that day Tilak lost all faith in this 'Mother'. Now he saw how 'Mother', who took four rupees from us every month to pay the woman to look after Dattu, pocketed it, and how the woman did nothing for us.

Very soon my aunt turned up. She and Tilak were always fighting with each other. After she came Tilak never set foot inside the house. For my part, I was caught like a nut between the jaws of the cracker. My aunt grumbled continually in the house saying, why had I stayed, why had I not gone to Jalalpur.

If she told Tilak to bring in something, he would go out, and stay out for his dinner. When he came in, he would say something to tease her. If she replied, he would go upstairs, and write a pretty piece of poetry about her, and then recite it at the top of his voice. They wore each other's patience out. So much so, that one day Tilak left, meaning to become an ascetic. He did not say so to us, but he wrote a letter to my brother and sister at Nasik saying he was going to adopt that life. Everyone was filled with consternation. One and all started praying and undertaking vows, some to *Satyanarayan*

and some to *Sola Somwar*. Some said he would return like the father of Dnyandev and Sopandev, but what was to be done with the children? We had no suspicion, of the commotion aroused at home but when their letters began to arrive we had our eyes opened.

A week later, Tilak returned. I laid before him the letters we had received in his absence.

'Is this true?'

'Yes, it is true. But without your permission no one would administer the vows to me. So I have come back.'

Two days later the baby took a fit. The room was confined, the air not fresh, and the floor damp; the doctor ordered us to move. We went into Gopalrao Joshi's house, but the child died the next day. He died on my lap, but, I put him down immediately a bit away, then called my aunt, 'Baby is behaving very queerly.'

My aunt came running Of course she could do nothing because I only called her after his life had gone. She would otherwise have begun all the ramification of rites for purifying everything and everyone defiled by the dead body, and once more she and Tilak would have been at loggerheads. To save all of us I sat at a distance, and pretended he was alive for a little while. We had called him Mahadev, believing him to be a re-incarnation of Tilak's brother Mahadev. At least he looked like him.

After his death Tilak and my aunt's bickerings began again with renewed vigour.

She said to him, 'Your unstable ways have killed a child as precious as gold.'

He retorted: 'The child has died as a result of your foolish, primitive beliefs.'

My position was most unhappy After one such quarrel, in the heat of her anger my aunt decided to return to Jalalpur. We both went to the station to see her off. She had eaten nothing since the morning.

Once she was seated in the train, Tilak brought her dates and sweets, but as the train moved off, she flung them all out of the window at us. She was in a towering rage, and was very upset at having to leave Dattu.

22 ORATORICAL COMPETITION

Tilak in revolt against oppression, caste and his own private failings.

MY aunt was away, there was peace in the house. Tilak wrote in his diary: 'We have left the company of "Mother" that Queen of thieves, and my mother-in-law is gone, so now there is peace.' (2 June 1894)

Yet there was no peace in Tilak's mind. With Appasaheb, there had been leisure for Sanskrit study, thought and discussion. Here at Rajnandgaon all that was lost. The people were absorbed in local politics and agitations. Tilak too was infected with a desire to serve his country

On 3 January, he wrote in his diary: 'Within five or six years I shall give up my home, and set myself free for my country's service.' He taxed himself to the limit to free the labourers from the oppression under which they worked. There was at that time a fear of offending the state authorities, but he looked neither to right nor left. Men of the business world, who did not disturb themselves with high thinking, said he was mad.

In his diary of 6 January, Tilak wrote about them: 'The doctor says the people here think me crazy. That is true. Wherever mean, low, ruffianly minds are found together there must I appear mad. In all my experience, there is no honour like that given to servility, flattery and bribery. We are like dogs licking the boots that kick them for the sake of their stomachs. There are thousands of people to hang out their tongues after the mere smell of money, aye, and to endure being kicked for it, whether they receive anything or nothing.' The thoughts thus expressed reveal the state of Tilak's mind in these days.

He was also reading a great deal, and committing many books to memory. From time to time one finds such sentences in his diary as, 'I am memorizing *The Letter Writer*' or 'I am memorizing *Cicero*.' The Bible is also mentioned many times, and books written by that learned Indian Christian Baba Padmanji.

From the very beginning he had always taken a great pride in doing things according to the dictates of his conscience, and many of the things that he did looked very extraordinary to the common people of that time.

It was the anniversary of his mother's death. I was continually reminding him that the anniversary was drawing near and that we must send the invitations to Brahmans and married Brahman women whose husbands were still living, as was customary.

'I will not hold the anniversary!'

'Why not?'

'If you will serve those I invite to dinner, then only will I consent. Not otherwise.'

'Whom do you mean?'

'The blind, the lame, any caste, any religion.'

'This is the day your mother returns. Will you make a mock of it?'

'My mother loved mercy. She was not straight-laced about religious observances.'

'What of it? Let the Brahmans dine first, and then feed your blind and lame. I will not hinder you.'

'I intend to seat those blind and lame in the place of the Brahmans. There will be no Brahman invited.'

All against my will I agreed and myself went secretly and invited a Dravidi Brahman and Retrekar's wife who was a married Brahman and not a widow.

Tilak's blind and lame came. My Brahmans came too. Tilak's table was spread outside, mine inside. Tilak gave his blind and lame an outfit of clothes each. My Brahmans began to protest:

'Why have you not invited other Brahmans? And who are all those people outside?'

I explained everything to them and said:

'If anyone asks you, say, "I was invited, I went. How was I to know who would come, and once one has sat down for a meal, how can one get up and go?"'

There are notes about all this in Tilak's diary of 8 January, 15 and 25 February describing our bickerings.

'I made Lakshmi read ten poems,' writes he, 'her mind is not on reading. Her head is filled with her aunt's fundamental philosophy—the greatest good of man consists, according to her, in continuing without deviation the institutions and beliefs of the bygone ages. If one begins to give any explanation of the

ancient customs which goes against the trend of that philosophy, at once she becomes possessed as if by a devil.'

'*Dhanurmas*—the feast of *khichadi*—was not held. I only said it is better to invite some poor people who never see such food, than the utterly low-minded, mean, vain, foolish, fat priests. Enough! Up she flares!'

Then follow three poems written about those days and this note:

'In the end my mother's anniversary was held, but Govindrao Retrekar's wife Anandibai, an old Brahman beggar and one blind, low-caste man were invited for dinner. The *Sankalpa* was recited in Marathi instead of the usual Sanskrit. Dinner was at two o'clock. During dinner the blind beggar was quite overcome with emotion.'

Oratorical competitions were held at Poona, Bombay and Nasik, and as far away as Nagpur. To each Tilak went and received prizes. He set his heart on this triumph reaching Rajnandgaon also. There was of course no one in the town able to make a speech in Marathi, so it was decided to have the competition in Hindi.

I expect it was Waman Daji Oak of Raipur who encouraged him in this attempt, because he was for ever coming and going between Rajnandgaon and Raipur, and there are many references to W. D. Oak in his diary. W. D Oak seems to have been editing a monthly paper at the time. Tilak makes the comment, 'Oak has changed his mind, and has decided to send the poem to *Vistar* instead of *Dnyanasangraha*. I had signed my name beneath the poem. He took a rubber and rubbed it out judging it inadvisable. He thought that, since my name was little known, my poem would be little esteemed on that account.'

Tilak made a table of the number of times he went to Raipur in the month of January. It shows that he was there once every five or six days. At the bottom of his account he balanced the days.

Days spent in Rajnandgaon	...	20 and 14 hours
Days spent in Raipur ...	...	10 and 10 hours
	Total ...	31 days

How little care Tilak had for money there is now no need to tell the reader. To the four winds letters of invitation were sent for the oratorical display. It was an unprecedented event

in Rajnandgaon. Everywhere there was great excitement. You would have thought a wedding was being held at our house.

Tilak gave half his salary as a contribution. All preparations were made for feasting the visitors. I had the salt and spices ground and ready. Sakharam and his wife Rakhmai were staying with us at the time. It was decided to do the cooking for the guests separately, but the cook asked far too much, as much as would cover the subscriptions, prizes and all other expenses put together!

Tilak began to ask me what I would give as a subscription.

'What shall I give? Your giving is my giving.'

'How so? If I dine does it mean you do not need to dine?'

'How could that be?'

'Well, in the same way my subscription cannot be also yours.'

'But where have I got any money?'

'There is one way out. We cannot get a cook. He is asking far too much.'

'I shall do the cooking and then shall not have to give a subscription. Is that it?'

That was the way in which finally I gave my contribution I cooked for two or three days. There were four or five other women there. One of them was in charge of the grain She said: 'Whatever is left over in the afternoon we can heat up, and dish again'

I said: 'I shall not serve it. Though it is only rice and lentils it must be fresh. These are our guests.'

Done! From this speech the quarrel spread, and I rose up in a temper and went home

The meeting was over. The members gathered for dinner. I was not to be seen! Tilak was very annoyed with me. He brought all the people home with him.

'Are the guests to go hungry today?'

'Of course not! Everything is ready. You go and keep them talking for a bit.'

'But why have you come home?'

'I had a quarrel.'

I took out all our stores for seven or eight days, did the cooking and Rakhmai served it. The guests dined and went. Tilak was delighted and the meeting was a success.

The following description of it is in his diary.

'Assembling the members for the meeting. The Diwan Saheb was invited today, but that image of selfishness and greed said,

"I will see later", and never came. Milton was busy so he did not come either. Shankar Prasad, Anandi Prasad, Appaji Modak are all out of town. The headmaster Ayodhyaprasad, promised to give a month's salary and because he would have to produce it today he did not turn up. Never mind. Having been elected President, V. Sharangpani opened the meeting. After a short preliminary address about the competition, the order of business was discussed. Thirteen members of the committee were elected. The president is Sharangpani Advisers to the president—myself, Bhagwandatt and the treasurer, Laxmanrao Modak. An approximate estimate of the expenses suggested two hundred rupees being necessary. Upon this the members lightly got up and went, and of twenty-five men only twelve were left! As the expenditure seemed heavy, and the contributions not likely to cover it, and as we cannot give a hundred and fifty rupees in cash, I offered to entertain the guests for all the meetings. In consideration of my poverty many people voted against it, and in the end agreed only after my continued pressure. Whatever I do others are sure to attack me. I have heard plenty of their boasting, but have not seen one of them serving his country for pure love. Having divined that their only desire was to round me with low-minded hatred, I was roused and a marvellous battle ensued. They say it was my fault. That is quite true. Today's collection is Rs 135.'

'A talk with Bhagwandatt about yesterday's quarrel, and my resolve. From now on, if ever the service of man be hindered by the rage that overcomes me then at that very instant, I shall put an end to this body.' (21 May)

'Today the first Hindi Oratorical Competition has been begun here.' (12 July)

'The Headmaster Vishwanath Sharma from Bhalod and other teachers are in it heart and soul. There were nine speakers on the first subject, nine on the second, and nine on the third. There is some doubt whether we shall ever receive the hundred rupees from the Raja.'' (13 July)

'The whole day has been spent in trying to collect that hundred rupees from the Raja. With great difficulty we have got one hundred rupees out of a hundred and eighty due.' (14 July)

Entries in the next day's diary give the names of those who received prizes and at the end Tilak writes: 'I as secretary have received my prize—abuse from two Maithili Brahmans.'

23 KHARE'S HOUSE IS IN THE OTHER DIRECTION

Undercurrents in Tilak's mind, and how Lakshmi tried to discover where they led.

AS soon as he came to Rajnandgaon, Tilak undertook a big programme of reading and study. He employed a Munshi to help him to master Urdu. He used to read many English books and a few were committed to memory. It also appears from his diary that he was reading the Bible with avidity. He was also keeping up a correspondence with the famous Christian writer Baba Padmanji and Dr Abbott. Probably on their recommendation, he must have read the lives of great Indian Christians, and a comparison of the Hindu and Christian religions. That he should write to so many people, that so many should come and discuss with him, seemed to me rather strange, but I had no conception of the depth of his intrigues.

As for my own reading and writing, I was doing my best, but the results of this were not upto Tilak's expectations. Fathomless is my achievement in learning from beginning to end! Pencil, nib, the end of a pen, or even a match will do for me. Tilak says in his diary, (7 February 1894): 'My gentleman Dattu is singing. I am teaching him the following verse: "God give me the strength to play, to see the happiness of the world, to please my father and mother. Lord hear my prayer." Lakshmi is writing down the verse with the end of a match! Though I tell her a line a hundred times she cannot do it. What innumerable mistakes!! She is the very spit and image of her aunt. She works like a beast but is hated by everyone for her shrewish tongue.'

In those days he was reading the Bible with great enthusiasm, and this gave rise to sharp encounters with the neighbours. He writes in his diary: 'Vishnupant came in. He returned Padmanji's life after reading it, and he cursed the Bible. This led to an argument between us. Lakshmi got angry and broke in like a fool. We had a small quarrel over it.'

Nevertheless, the reading of the Bible, and in particular the

Sermon on the Mount, began to have an effect on him. He was very repentant about the quarrel mentioned above. Later on he himself says, 'There is in me no forgiveness, no peace, nothing; alas, alas, all my learning and thought are but vanity.'

About the Christian religion he writes on 18 February 1894: 'My mind is being drawn towards the religion of Christ. Here appears a faith capable of giving the mind of man, peace, devotion, righteousness, salvation. Better to live in this small garden of Christianity, forever filled with flowers and fruits, than to inhabit the boundless spaces of Hinduism, with its thorns and trees, deep rivers, terrible mountains, fearful deserts and pleasing mango groves. Yet today I have not the courage to let such a sentence fall from my lips. Lakshmi gets tired even of reading. I am held back only by fear of her, and love of her. O God! Guide her and guide me.'

Tilak was going out somewhere every night, but how could one find out where he went? Who could keep a watch on his movements? The landlady's boy was too young to follow him. Tilak might strike him in a fit of temper.

The day came when I decided to track him down myself. I fed Dattu and put him to sleep. Tilak and I had fallen out over something, so it was nearly nine o'clock at night before I got the stove lighted and the pot on. Tilak in turning to go out said to me, 'I am going to see Khare, and will be back again.' I closed the door and began peering through a gap in the wood. Making his shoes ring with a firm step, he took the path to Khare's house. After ten to fifteen strides he turned in his tracks, and making no noise with his feet, began to creep like a thief in the opposite direction. It was bright moonlight.

Leaving our meal in the pot on the stove, I threw open the door and began to follow briskly in Tilak's footsteps. Then it came over me that rather than make a scene at some one else's house, it would be better to go home, and that before Dattu woke up. Immediately, and so that he could not fail to hear, I spoke, 'Khare's house is in the other direction. This is not the road.' As the words fell on his ears Tilak wheeled round. I doubled back too, and now a race was begun between us. A mist came over my eyes. I could not see the road. How I longed for the earth to gape and swallow me up! I reached home, fled into the kitchen and put up the chain on the door from the inside. Tilak came and began to beat on the door.

I would not open it. Finally, when it seemed the door itself would give way, I unlatched it. As soon as the door swung open, Tilak gave me a great buffet. Our supper on the fire was left to cry to 'Ram.' When our anger had cooled down we both went hungry to bed.

Only the next day, when he saw my bruised and swollen back was Tilak completely conscience-stricken. That night he had been going to an European called Milton. He went regularly and read the Bible, discussed the Christian religion and also ate their food, as will be seen from this extract from his diary:

'I enjoy an intimate acquaintance not only with Milton but also with his wife. Discussed my views of Christianity and truth with Milton. Read him some of the poems from my diary. I am beginning to believe that Christianity is the only comforting, easily attained, happy religion for man on this earth. I do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, but that he was the most generous of great spirits, I readily admit.' (13 February 1894)

He writes as follows about what happened at a meal in Milton's house:

'In order to witness the marvellous event Yeshwantrao, the constable, here invented excuses four times to come into the room. Milton's daughter was bringing in bread and rice Then only was the man properly convinced. On account of caste distinctions, the people here consider even dining with a friend of another race a crime, equal to the murder of a Brahman. Even I was not a little shaken by the appearance of Yeshwant. How lamely do our thoughts run without courage! Two American Missionaries have come to the Fort wishing to work in Chatisgarh. One is old and the other only eighteen years I read the Bible, discuss, dine and pray with Milton and these two Americans.'

Tilak's correspondence had now grown enormous, but I never knew to whom he wrote, nor from whom he received letters. Many people told me to steal his letters and let them see them. I would never agree to such a thing

Once I was incited to burn his Bible which was on the table. I replied: 'I do not even know what the Bible is. Though I did burn it, is it impossible for him to get another? Will all the books in the world be burned thereby? So I will not burn it.'

I know now from his diary that he was writing to the leading

Christians in Bombay and especially to Baba Padmanji. Baba Padmanji published his experiences in 1895. In them can be found the following reference to Tilak's correspondence.

'Some days ago I received a letter from an unknown, learned Hindu scholar. He said that he had read my book called *Arunodaya* and others. Then he confessed that, though he found in them neither beauty of expression nor any good quality if looked at from the point of view of the Shastras, still he was compelled to re-read them a hundred times In them he found true sincerity, true worship, simplicity, and selflessness. He is reading my autobiography for the sixth time This Hindu scholar had met some Christian with whom he had a conversation the gist of which is given in the following extract from his letter:

' "That Christian man asked me if I had read the Bible. I replied that I had read all the Hindu scriptures 'All scriptures are written by man and by men of lesser mind than my own. Now my Bible is this sky, this earth, this open country. Now in all nature do I read the life of God' When he heard this the man replied in English. 'I have no power to argue with you, but take this Bible, read it at least three times.' I said 'yes'; then because I had promised, but unwillingly, I started. As I read I began to feel that this was no fearful jungle, as described above, but a lovely little garden.

' "This man asked for and I sent him many books. Later he must have studied the Bible very closely." '

In his diary of 13 September 1894 instead of the usual 'I got up in the morning', the page is covered with notes and comments like a student's examination paper on a book in the Bible.

24 TILAK'S DIARY

Tilak's health fails, his preference for Christianity becomes known, Lakshmi writes a poem. Temptations and dangers surround Tilak.

ONE day as a pearl merchant passed our door, Tilak said to me, 'Do you not think an earring would suit me?' He had never had any taste for jewellery or ornaments, and I was most distressed when I heard him say he wanted earrings Though we were not paupers, Tilak's behaviour kept us on the verge of poverty. That day at least it was impossible to buy new pearls to get him an earring Also how angry he would have been if I had bought the pearls! I had once bought an ornament with red stones, and what an uproar he had made! He entered it into his diary, 'My wife says I must do the shopping, which means I must pay attention to worldly matters. Lakshmi herself bought a cheap gold ornament today, with an imitation stone, for three rupees. The balance in the house was Rs 8 and we had to live for a month on that. Now this senseless expenditure! Rs 4 have been lent to Janki, the wife of that vagabond Patwari; had I behaved like that, she would have made my life a misery!' It was indeed my complaint that he played the prodigal.

I decided to sell my nose-ornament and get him his earring. It was the same nose-ornament that the Bombay goldsmith had set with false pearls. I gave it to the goldsmith and he made the earring; and from the one-and-a-half *tola* ornaments, given to Dattu by his uncle Keshav, I got him a gold ring for his finger. He wrote a poem in his diary about it, headed:

'This morning a scene was enacted to melt the heart.'

He wrote another poem on an occasion when we were in difficulties, as usual, and I decided to spend fifteen rupees of some twenty owed to me by Tilak, on ornaments, and keep five for household expenses. Tilak said, 'You have a craving for jewellery.' That began a quarrel and then he wrote his poem.

Tilak's health went down rapidly. He began to fear that he was very ill, that he had consumption, that he had asthma, that he had something else. As a result we were snowed under not only with books by post, paid on delivery, but also with medicines. He had his chest examined at Raipur. A doctor there told him he had dyspepsia, and both lungs near the liver were gone. I do not know if he said it in fun, or to make some money. Had Tilak remained in that state, his death would have had to have been recorded some twenty or twenty-five years earlier.

He began to show openly his preference for Christianity, and had some articles to that effect printed in the Christian paper *Dynanodaya*. Here is another extract from his diary: 'I have finished the life of Hari Ramchandra Khisti The joy I experienced in reading the Vedas during my study of Hinduism, or which I experienced during the enthusiastic conversations with Mohammedan religious leaders when I was making a study of their religion, is as nothing compared to the joy experienced in reading these Christian books. How many books, given so kindly by missionaries, have I thrown away without reading, torn up even! But that was only when I was very young.'

As usual Tilak went out one day. I put Dattu to sleep and sat down with an anxious heart. We need someone to whom we can tell our griefs and joys. Whom had I? One boy, who knew nothing beyond his play and sweets There were some people against Tilak, so I did not dare to speak to anyone outside—also they spoke another language. Everyone was saying that Tilak was going to become a Christian.

When he came in, I asked him:

'Are you really going to be a Christian?'

'Who says so?'

'People.'

'Did you marry me or people?'

'You.'

'Then will you believe what I say or what people say?'

'What you say.'

'Then I tell you, that I will not be a Christian.'

Having said this Tilak went out.

I put the chain on the door, and with great sobs, cried my heart out. I felt better after it. Waves rise on the calm water's face with light puffs of wind. My mind was churned by storms from past, present and future. I wrote my first poem that day.

I remember it still:

> I rise and leave thee, saith my lord.
> Who then shall I call King and God?
> Since Thou alone pervadest all
> Say, say, at whose feet may I fall.

The last line was barely finished when the door was shaken. Crumpling up the paper in my hand, I threw it into the waste-paper basket. The door was still being shaken. Tilak was angry because it was not opened at once. He said:

'You never chain the door, why do it today?'

He was suspicious of me:

'What were you doing?'

'I was resting.'

'Why did you not open the door at once?'

'One needs a moment to rise up. You would think I was a machine.'

'Away! Bring me my dinner.'

I went through to the kitchen As soon as I was gone, he began to look about. He thought I must have been writing a letter to someone. He could not understand it at all. He came to the wastepaper basket and turned it upside down. Turning over all the papers he found my poem. He was filled with pleasure, took it and locked it up in the cupboard.

During these days he kept all his papers under lock and key. When he was out people came to me and asked to see his correspondence and papers. I used to reply, 'I shall never show them to anyone. Though you desire it for my own good, I can never let you see them.'

'At least burn the copy of the Bible on his table.'

I replied, 'If I burn this copy will all the Bibles in the world be destroyed? Answer, and I shall burn it.'

On receiving this reply they used to go away.

My real reason for not letting them see his papers was quite different. We were living in a small State. I thought the State at this time was watching Brahmans from the West coast, because some had been thrown into prison on one pretext or another; if there should be found something against the Raja amongst Tilak's papers what would happen? Tilak had tried very hard to put an end to the oppression of the labourers in the State. He has a note to this effect in his diary of 4 January:

'One hundred workers are being brought out of the Fort in charge of five or six policemen. They are carrying an iron cage for a tiger from Mr Khare. Yesterday from morning till three o'clock one hundred men were kept unfed and the cage not moved twenty cubits. The cage was on their heads; they could not even draw breath. In this position one of the men hurt his foot. Agonized with the pain of it he ceased to exert his full strength, and a servant struck him with a whip, as if he had been a beast. What tyranny! What cruelty! What cowardliness in these parts! What endurance! In Western countries, could a couple of policemen tyrannize over a crowd of a hundred men? If the Raja with his own eyes could see their pitiful state it would be a good thing.

'First a petition should be sent to the Raja about it. A petition has been written in Hindi about four or five labourers, and given to Sharangpani and Sadashivrao to be presented to the Raja. It has been decided that while these two are at hand, I shall go and speak to the Raja about it. Many people think that I am mad to attempt it. The head clerk of the court thinks this is presumptuous. O God, have mercy upon these poor men, and give me courage, and the Raja a compassionate heart. Come what may, trusting in Thee I shall make the effort without fail' In another place he says, 'I intend to write a book that will open the Raja's eyes'

I believed that either on account of this agitation or because he was going to become a Christian, but still using the agitation as an excuse, some people wished to get Tilak into trouble, and therefore were asking to see his letters. As a result I began to keep a very careful watch.

It was a Native State. With no cover or concealment Tilak wrote what he liked. What would happen if any one misinterpreted his writings to trap him. I began to take care of every scrap of paper.

More and more visitors began to gather in our house. Always new and more guests came. There was the unending commotion of argument and discussion between them and Tilak.

One day I asked Tilak who all these people were and why they came?

'They are trying to convert me,' he answered.

One man said: 'Look here Tilak, I have no one. I have a lot of property. I shall will it all to you.' He was prepared to adopt him.

Tilak replied, 'I shall not be a Christian. And if I did become one, it would not be for money.'

Appasaheb sent Gopal to Rajnandgaon on purpose to say, 'I shall give you a hundred rupees a month for life with a house, and educate Dattu, but do not become a Christian.' Tilak calmed Gopal's mind and sent him back.

Pendse heard in Nasik that Tilak was going to become a Christian He sent a letter saying, 'Come and live with me. I shall provide for you all your life and pay for Dattu's schooling If you like, eat meat and fish in my house, drink what you will, I shall never stop you, but do not become a Christian.'

Appasaheb had private banks all over the district. Everyone of them was told to spy on Tilak As he left, Gopal told me all about it and gave me money.

'If anything untoward happens we shall hold him back somehow. We shall prove he is in debt and put him in prison, but shall not allow him to become a Christian. Do not be afraid.'

25 WHERE IS MY MILLSTONE?

How Lakshmi returned from her visit to Sakharam, and how she tried to protect Tilak.

IN the midst of these days I went with Sakharam to stay with Rakhmai in Pandharpur for her confinement. The very day her baby was to be born Tilak sent a wire from Rajnandgaon, 'I am ill, send my wife quickly'. Tilak preferred a telegram to a letter. A telegram goes as quickly, but you need more money in your pocket for it. If he had the money he sent as many wires as he wanted.

When he saw the telegram, soft-hearted Sakharam took fright and immediately made preparations for me to leave. Things were not easy for them at that time, but he took no thought for their own needs. 'You have been here a long time. Tilak

will not be properly fed. You had better go today,' he said, and gave me money for my ticket.

From Pandharpur I had to go to Kurduwadi by bullock cart, and change trains five or six times after that, and I had a young child with me. So I said to Sakharam, 'Send someone with me. How can I go alone?' He wrote out for me, carefully with explanations, how I was to go, and Dattu and I left.

There was an overseer called Tatyasaheb at Pandharpur. As I was leaving I went to say good-bye to his wife, who was a friend of Bhiku. I said, 'I am going today.'

'Who is with you?'

'No one. I am going alone.'

'What will Bhiku say to me? I shall look for a woman for you. Take this money,' and she put twenty rupees in my hands Having got a companion, I left. She was a widow. I was very upset by the wire, and had taken nothing to eat or drink with me. We made our journey fasting We bought Dattu something every now and again, and so reached Bhusawal.

Rakhmai's father lived there; he came to meet me at the station. Sakharam must have sent him a telegram. He had brought plenty to eat and began to press me to stay over one day.

'Uncle, I cannot stay. I have had a telegram. I must go home quickly.' The old man was very free with his tongue, kindness itself, but given to using strong expressions He tried to persuade me:

'Look here, I tell you Tilak will not die if you stay one day here.'

'What a way to speak, Uncle!'

I was almost in tears; the train moved off

At night about eight o'clock the train arrived, and we stopped at Nagpur. I took my travelling companion with me and after inquiries we finally reached Bhikajipant's house The door was closed. We were both faint with hunger Dattu was complaining continuously, and I was still anxious about Tilak. A long time after we hammered on the door it was opened, and the first words that greeted my ears were, 'Lakshmi, where is the millstone?'

'Perish your millstone! I am dying of hunger. First give me something to eat.'

'Come in, I have just served Bhikajipant's dinner He has gone out. You eat first'

I dined. The woman with me had a bite too. Five or six years previously, when we were in Nagpur for the first time, I had borrowed the millstone, and taken it to Boou's tenement. We had changed houses three or four times after that. Tilak had given the stone away to someone.

When Bhikajipant came home he pressed me to stay, but I had received a wire, I could not stay. We went by the morning train at seven o'clock, and reached Rajnandgaon at eleven o'clock. We could not get a porter at the station. I took my bundle, the woman took Dattu, and we arrived home on foot. There was a padlock on the door. I turned sick with fear. The landlady was not at home.

I went to Khare's. There I found that Tilak was in perfect health. We dined at Khare's house and then returned and sat waiting for Tilak on the veranda till four o'clock.

At four o'clock he came back

'What is this? Why did you send a wire?' I asked.

'In case you were overworked.'

'Having stayed all that long time would I have been tired out by another ten days? They were in great need of me.'

'They will manage without you.'

So after our usual slight skirmish and bickering, we settled down again in peace and happiness.

One day Tilak said to me, 'I met two missionaries today. They prayed in English. In all my life I have not heard so beautiful a prayer. I was greatly impressed.' While Tilak was speaking I was paying no attention to what he was saying. My mind was taken up with what would happen next.

Very soon afterwards Tilak left for Bombay. I asked him why he was going there. He replied:

'I have to buy some horses for the Raja.'

He alone knows whether it was true or not.

The neighbours told me not to let him go, that he would become a Christian. I did not know what to do. If I asked him, I would only get, 'Did you marry me or the people?' as a reply, and a useless quarrel would be started between him and those who had spoken to me. I kept quiet, but became lost in thought.

At last I conceived an infallible plan, an arrow of Ram, I told Tilak to take Dattu with him.

'Why? What for?'

'Just for no reason.'

The true reason was that he would not become a Christian if he had the boy with him. After much wavering he decided to take Dattu, and I was relieved of my anxiety.

Tilak stopped at Nasik on the way, left Dattu with Pendse, and continued his journey to Bombay. Dattu was only two years old. He had never been away from his father and mother before. He cried so much there that they sent him to my brother in Jalalpur. When trouble enters by the door, sickness thrusts its head in through the window. Dattu took measles at Jalalpur. Everyone was anxious. Only his father and mother knew nothing about him.

I sat alone in Rajnandgaon playing my part as usual of Parvathi from Ceylon I had two rupees left out of the five rupees given me by Gopal for the telegram. The rest had been spent on the house.

With Tilak away, the neighbours began to gather round me; 'What have you done?' they said 'Why did you send the boy with his father? He is only a baby. What can he understand? Can Tilak not make him a Christian too?'

'Oh true! How had I not thought of it?'

My breast was pierced now by two knives. Nevertheless I told my neighbours that Dattu might yet win his father back. I myself was in the depth of sorrow. Night after night, five hundred miles away from my relations, alone, no husband, no son, I wept and tossed with grief on my bed. Three weeks had passed since Tilak had left. Where was my son? Where was Tilak? I had no inkling I began to blame myself. It was I who had sent Dattu One's own mind is one's worst enemy. The station was near. Twice a day I went to the station to return hopeless with downcast face.

There was a jailor called Sakharampant in Rajnandgaon. He was a friend of Tilak. There was much coming and going between them. Hoping that he might have some knowledge, I thought of going to him. Considering it again, I was afraid of what people might say. In spite of this I went. He was out on duty. I left word that I had sent for him, and fled home all of a tremble.

The whole town was saying that Tilak was sure to lose his work. One well-meaning friend came to me and said, 'If you want your husband to keep his work, you should go and fall at the feet of the Diwan, the Raja's Minister, otherwise he is sure to lose it.'

My true adviser was God. I could not face prostrating myself at any Diwan's feet, but urged on by other people I set off. Within sight of his house I began to think that if I did fall down before the Diwan, and if he did keep Tilak's work for him, then people would say Tilak was dependent on his wife for his work. What matter if Tilak lost it, they should not be able to say that of him. Though he had no work, we should not have to beg. And if he did have to beg I could follow holding the beggar's bowl. With these thoughts in my head I turned back from his very door.

At four o'clock the jailor came.
'Where is Tilak?' I asked.
'I have no idea.'
'Really and truly?'
'Truly.'
'I thought at least you might know.'
'Really I do not.'
'Then send a wire.'
'To whom?'
'Send a wire to Narayan Krishna Pendse.'
'What shall I say?'
'Is Tilak with you?'
I gave him the one rupee I had, and he did as I bid him.

26 RESIGNATION

Tilak's farewell.

THE day my telegram arrived in Nasik, Tilak himself turned up there from Bombay. As soon as she saw him, Bhiku put fifty rupees into his hand and told him to go at once to Rajnandgaon and bring me back. It was two years since she had seen me, I had sent a wire that morning. They were afraid they were going to be transferred to a distance.

Hearing this Tilak left immediately, and came to Rajnandgaon. I was on the station platform as usual. I was filled with joy when I saw him, but Dattu was nowhere to be seen! My blood froze.

'Where is Dattu?'

'With his uncle.'

'Why?'

'We have to go back there now.'

'I am not coming'

'Pendse is going to be transferred to somewhere far away. You will not see Bhiku soon again, so she has sent for you. She has even given me money for the journey.'

'She may have given it, but I am not going.'

'How obstinate you are! Do you not want to go and see your sister? Have you no mercy in you?'

'Say what you like about me, I am not going.'

'Then what will you do?'

'What, but stay here?'

'But I am coming with you.'

'And what will become of your work?'

'I am sending in my resignation'

'Then what about all our things?'

'We can come back for them.'

Catch it and it bites, leave it and it escapes. I was again in this predicament Whenever we went away, I used to gather everything together, pack them all in a box, and seal it with my name. Neglect to do this meant that Tilak would give everything away. Yet not necessarily were the sealed up articles safe from his depredations. More often than not, once I had left the town, the boxes and I never met again. If we never even saw the town again, how could we see our goods? I at least was mistress of the keys, and at the time of Tilak's death I had about two to four pounds weight of them saved up.

'We shall come back soon,' Tilak said, 'so need not take much with us.' All the same, as we left I planted two new saris in his bag, one torn sheet and a broken pot.

We said 'Ram Ram' to Rajnandgaon and our train moved off. Right upto Nagpur Tilak stayed with me, but at the station there he remembered some important work and said to me, 'You go on ahead. I shall follow later. I have some very important work in Nagpur.' Tilak always had some important work to

do. For the most part I never knew what it was. What was the use of arguing with him? To argue was to bind the wind.

The train left Nagpur with me alone. I had no money and no jewellery except my nose-ornament. I had sold Dattu's ornaments to make a gold ring for Tilak, which he had given away to somebody, and then told me it was lost. I had not even money to hire a horse tonga. The train drew up at Nasik station at three o'clock.

In name I was 'Treasure', in truth Parvathi from Ceylon, in torn sari, the thinnest of gold nose-ornaments and in my hand a bag with Tilak's name written large. This apparition descended onto the platform, and two men ran towards me. They seized the bag out of my hand. I stared at them in terror. I did not understand what these unknown people were doing.

'Aunty,' they said, 'how do you not recognize us? We have come from Pendse, and have brought a tonga to take you home.'

Bhiku was at the door, waiting impatiently for me. As soon as the tonga drove up she helped me down, but was very grieved at the picture I presented. Passionately she clasped me to her breast. 'Lakshmi, what a condition to be in?'

In a little while, after we had gossiped a bit and I had bathed, I sat down to a meal. No sooner was I finished, and out on the veranda, than my brother arrived in a tonga.

'Lakshmi, Dattu has a bad cough Come to Jalalpur.'

'Take her away,' said Bhiku, 'mother and child have been separated for nearly a month and a quarter.'

When I got to Jalalpur and saw Dattu, I shed torrents of tears. The third day a tonga arrived in Jalalpur from Bhiku to take us back, and the two of us returned to Nasik.

Now the only anxiety felt by everyone was for Tilak. He turned up after a week. Then only were all our minds at peace. We were all happy. Beneath the surface I was still worried. Everyone was advising Tilak what he should do next. Gharu suggested that he should be a singer and go round giving *kirtans*. Dattu and I could stay with them; he could come and go as he pleased.

Pendse said, 'Now do not go away anywhere. As long as I am alive you can all live with me. I shall feed you, and moreover give you twenty-five rupees a month for your expenses.'

Tilak replied, 'I do not wish to be under an obligation to any one. I shall do as Gharu says, and become a singer, but for

that I shall need instruments. I shall have to go to Bombay to get them.'

'Why go to Bombay just for that?' said Pendse, 'I shall write Bala, and he will at once send you all you need.'

Tilak was not pleased with this suggestion, and replied, 'How can he? Everyone must choose his own instruments according to his own taste.'

Pendse could say no more and the poor man relapsed into silence.

The Jahagirdar of Chandori was staying with Pendse at the time. Pendse took him aside and told him the whole story, and asked him to take Tilak with him and interest him in something else. He agreed to do it.

After a little while Tilak said to Pendse, 'The Jagirdar has invited me to go to Chandori.'

Pendse replied, 'Very well. Go for some days.'

At his departure Tilak said good-bye to everyone in the house. When he took Dattu on his knee and kissed him, the tears welled up in his eyes and ran down his cheeks. Everyone thought he was repentant, that he would now look after his family properly.

Ten or twelve days later Tilak left Chandori and went straight to Bombay, therefore that was his last day in Pendse's house. After Tilak left him, the Jagirdar wrote Pendse a letter.

Pendse drew my sister apart and showed it to her. Having read the letter, Bhiku took to her bed, and did not rise again. Three or four days later it was published in many papers, that Tilak had become a Christian.

27 CONVERSION

Tilak's own account of his conversion.

IN the second part of this book, I shall tell of those things which happened after Tilak was baptized, and shall conclude this first part with what Tilak himself wrote about his conversion.

'You all know that any seeker after truth, who tries to assess the worth of the Holy Bible in the strength of his own deficient judgement, finds the miracles of Christ as related in the New Testament, lying in his path like mountains. That Seeker will have an acquaintance with the Son of Man. He is not yet worthy to understand the Son of God. The Crucified he knows, but to comprehend the risen Lord is beyond him. The best way to bring conviction to such a Seeker is to pray with him. Through the great golden door of prayer he should repeatedly be brought into the presence of the Father, and in his heart should be awakened a true love of the merciful Father of this world In this way he will come to know the Father and his doubts about the miracles will be removed naturally. I have always thought that God Himself resolves such difficult questions for the true Seeker.

'Round a new convert,—and such am I, because it is only eleven months since I was converted,—rather than lovers of the truth, gather those whose pride is in idol worship, heretics who sit conning negations, or those who understand nothing, having no desire to understand, and no ability in them beyond that of making mischief, such a crowd as this will gather. Many of these people laughed at me for being so mad as to believe in miracles. To those who know me well it is a mysterious riddle. For all these I have one reply I say to them: "See, I myself am a walking, speaking miracle. Look at me."

'At least to those who know me here is an irrefutable miracle. Am I not a Christian? Have I not full faith in my Lord Christ? Only two or two and a quarter years ago was I not the sworn enemy of this Christ and His followers? With this hand, now so eager in His service, how many papers have I scribbled off in the heat of my scorn for Him. This tongue, which today is always ready to witness to the one great mercy of Christ, has here-to-fore poured what unrestrained contempt on that Holy Name?

'In former days did anyone think, or even dream, that I would become a Christian? Could any one have conceived in those days that this man so proud of the Hindu religion, would propose to forsake it, and glorying in the Bible, abandon himself to the Will of God?

'Nevertheless, this my pride perished, and today I stand like a small child before God holding the hand of Christ. Is it any

wonder that people should see this, and be astonished? I myself am astonished at myself. What other miracle is needed? There is no question of the truth of this wonder.

'Truly, Brothers and Sisters, herein is a miracle, that this was the mercy of God. Were it not so, no other words could explain it. I had no intention of becoming a Christian, but that Good Shepherd leaving His ninety-nine lambs searched for me amongst the terrible mountains, and brought me in. What overflowing pride and arrogance were lodged in my breast, I, who was going to found a new religion myself, have become a disciple of Jesus. Blessed be the Lord! Truly all blessing be His!

'It is true I was trying to establish a new religion for India, and not only that, but I also wished to evolve one by which all the nations of the world, being bound in one brotherhood, would be united in Spirit. I was engrossed in this thought for many many years. Later, by the merciful hand of God, this idea was set as a foundation-stone in my heart for the building of the great temple of Christianity.

'No work is accomplished at once I became a Christian: to describe exactly the succession of reasons behind this event will not take long It is enough that my mother was a very religious and loving woman. How she attained to such a virtue I do not know. I never remember her to have mentioned the name of Christ, but, "Live in the fear of God", "Be kind to everyone", were the sermons she always preached to us. I have never seen another woman, who fulfilled as she did her holy, maternal duties.

'There is no need to let any question arise as to how a worshipper of idols could be so, because we know that God for His own particular purpose can endow an idol-worshipper with virtue and make her His instrument.

'Also, when I was extremely young I had a teacher, whose heart, though he never understood how best to serve his country, was always flooded with love for it. He filled the small heads under his hand with a madness of love for their land such as was his own. Under this and other like conditions my mind received a strange training.

'I remember well when I was very small, sitting in my class with a geography lesson in progress, only my body was there, my mind was travelling far away, because while the lesson was

being taught my spirit was lost in deep thoughts of what would happen to India in the future. Even in childhood I was stirred to anger when I saw the caste distinctions of my country.

'I was only fourteen or fifteen years old, when once in a boys' meeting, I spoke on the subject of, "Have the Brahmans a monopoly over alms and charity?" I remember at the time, my father half in fun and half in anger, remarking, "This boy will be outcasted some day."

'I never remember being under a teacher who was bound down by ancient customs For the most part I fell in with teachers with progressive ideas. As a result I formed the habit of regarding all subjects with an open mind. These teachers gave me courage of thought, speech and manner My mother left this earth very early In the whole of my childhood it was never my fate to meet with such intimidation as would interfere with my freedom of thought It was my firm conviction that, if India was to return to prosperity, it would be by the great door of religion Therefore, according to my ability, I gave myself up to the study of Religion and Philosophy.

'Finally at Nagpur I found a true patron. To this day I honour that worthy man as my father Four or five years previously I had accepted work under him. The work was only writing and reading He had spent thousands of rupees for India, and especially in gaining as much knowledge as could be accumulated about Hindu Vedas and the Science of the Supreme Spirit manifested in the Individual Self. For three years I dwelt in that ocean of meditation and spiritual knowledge. I delighted in study and I was given every opportunity by that good friend. At last I prepared the philosophical foundations for my new religion:

1. The Creator of the world is some particular, personal Spirit, and He regards all mankind as His children

2. All scriptures are the work of men, and there is only one book giving a knowledge of God—that book is the world.

3. There is no such thing as former births or re-incarnations. The sorrows and joys of man are dependent on a man's heredity, his own spirit and his attitude towards his duty in society.

4. Faith in God and brotherhood of men on this earth is the essence of all religion.

5 There is no sin equal to idol worship.

'In pursuit of the foundation of these ideas I must have become as abstracted as one of the ancient sages. I began to

study the lives of the founders of different religions. With many of them I did not agree. However in Gautama Buddha, I found one to my liking, and I thought of copying him except for his mistakes. The astonishing thing is that not even into my dreams did the Bible or Christ enter, the chief reason being the extremely simple language of the Bible. It has become the very birthmark of a Brahman that he will only turn his mind to incomprehensible subjects or those which will exercise his utmost intelligence

'If the Sanskrit books in the Hindu religion were translated into the everyday speech, and put into the hands of the Brahmans, I am convinced they would regard them as rubbish and throw them away If someone begins to repeat an incantation of which even one letter is not understood, then are the people pleased. These same words being translated would only be ridiculed. This is one reason for not looking to the Christian religion, but there is another far greater.

'I never met a Christian preacher, nor did any religious book in Marathi fall into my hands, that could arouse my interest. I had not even, like some other idol worshippers, read one or two pages of the Bible I had only heard and read plenty of things against it.

'I saw the Christians of my own country, but the unspiritual state of those I saw was deplorable. I used to think the only difference between Christians and idol worshippers was in their eating and drinking and customs These then were the causes that separated me from Christ and the Christian religion

'In the year 1893, to please my patron, I agreed to start a new magazine on religion and philosophy. I had only the editorship. Two issues were published and then because of my new beliefs I had to give it up.

'In those days about 175 miles away lay the small State of Rajnandgaon. The Raja there gave me work. I boarded the train to go. In the Bengal-Nagpur Railway there is another class between the third and second. It is called Intermediate. I took an Intermediate ticket.

'When I came to the carriage and looked in, a European was sitting there. I expected the usual experience of being turned out. Nothing of the sort happened, on the contrary, smiling a little, he made room for me.

'Here, O reader, with your permission, I will suggest one thing to you. Many European travellers and servants in trains become

by their behaviour, positive mountains in the way of the spread of Christianity. The Hindu people have a laughable ignorance about the religion. All the same they have some conception of how a man called Christian should behave. Add to that the belief that every white man is a Christian, and Christianity is stained in their eyes by the evil behaviour of one Sahib. The trains and stations are filled with people who, by their bullying manner deal deadly blows to the Kingdom of Christ. I have often wondered with regret why this should be. May God send a servant to teach people on the Railways what love is. Enough!

'Our companion in the compartment was extremely polite and gentle, so much so that anyone seeing him would have been drawn towards him. I had with me only one book to read, my well-beloved Bhavabhuti's *Uttara Rama Charita*. Of all Sanskrit poems I love best the noble works of this poet.

'The two of us talked for a long time on poetry and poets. I was greatly pleased with the gentleman's conversation and quickly discovered that he knew a little Sanskrit, and was familiar with Sanskrit literature.

'Slowly he turned the conversation, and then questioned me about my opinion of the Christian religion. I told him my idea of a new religion When he heard of it he said with the greatest gravity, "I think that, counting from today, within two years time you will be a Christian" I was astounded at this. I felt his prophesy was nothing short of lunacy. We continued talking for a long time The Sahib said to me, "Young man, God is drawing you. Study the Bible Apply yourself wholeheartedly to the life of Christ, and in truth you will become a Christian."

'Considering this an exceedingly rash speech, I cursed it in my heart. Lastly he prayed, took out a New Testament, and gave it to me. I disliked the book at sight; however, I promised to read it. I did not promise, thinking there would be any meaning in the book, but only for the sake of gratifying this good man. My station having been reached we said an affectionate farewell, and I got out It is a strange thing that to the end neither of us asked the other's name or dwelling place.

'At Rajnandgaon I was teacher, Clerk of the Royal Court, and Government Clerk. Towards the end I also took up the work of Sheriff. However, for a man with a passion for reading,

there was little there to occupy the mind, and all my most beloved Sanskrit books were in Nagpur. This forced me to keep my promise to the Sahib whom I have just described, and I achieved the reading of and meditation upon the New Testament. I decided to follow my usual practice of reading the book through from beginning to end, marking the passages worthy of more thought, but I only got as far as the Sermon on the Mount.

'It became impossible to leave these jewel-like sentences, so filled with love, mercy and truth The most difficult questions of Hindu Philosophy found their answer in these three Chapters of St Matthew I was most astonished to see problems like that of re-birth fully resolved, and being filled with a desire for more knowledge of Christ I read eagerly on to the end. A Christian held the position of Police Superintendent in Rajnandgaon. He gave me a little book and bundles of tracts Among them I found a book written by Bushnel, *The Character of Jesus*. After reading it my hunger for a knowledge of the life of Christ grew

'Christ has said "Ask and thou shalt receive." One day, doubting this promise, I thought, like any foolish, immature boy, that I would put it to the test. I made my petition: "May I receive here and quickly a book, containing the history of Palestine, and an account of the life and period of Christ." To this prayer I added, "If I do not receive the fruit for my asking, then for evermore I shall hold it false that God hears and answers prayer." This was mere folly, but God had mercy on His poor child The very next day I was suddenly transferred from one office to another. When I got there what should I see but, under the rubbish in a box, three beautiful books; two of them were very big, nearly as big as Webster's big dictionary, and one was called *Beautiful Stories and Jewels of Virtuous Thoughts*. In these three books I found the information I wanted. Now one after another God sent answers to my prayers. I was dumb with astonishment. My mind became riveted on Christ.

'On 10 March 1894 I wrote my first letter to a Christian. I knew this man to be an author. (Rev. Baba Padamanji's *Anubhavasangraha*, page 269)

'After some months I began to feel that in spirit I was a Christian, but love of my people and love of honour led me

into temptation, and I ignominiously denied it. Amongst my reading was a book on Church History and *An Account of Men who gave themselves for Christ*

'Once in a letter some one disparaged a missionary without cause. I could not endure it, and wrote a poem, *Missionaries and their Work*, in answer, and sent it to the *Dnyanodaya*. After this I had many articles published in this paper. Though I signed these articles with a nom-de-plume, my Hindu friends recognized my writing. In the end everyone was convinced that at heart I had truly become Christian.

'It is difficult for others to understand the persecution that must be endured, when his caste brothers find out that some high-caste Hindu has become a Christian. Though God may have been far from me at other times, in time of trouble He was near me, as a mother is near her child night and day when it is ill and crying From all kinds of trouble He saved me. How many times and with how many men have I played hide-and-seek in most ignoble fear, but God did not abandon such a sinner. I lost my work, I was reduced to an extremity of poverty; I had to go away leaving my only child. My wife with whom up till today I have lived as object and shadow, after great indecision at last clings to her own people; but God has not deserted me In the end in November 1894 three nights running someone came and said to me in my sleep: "Follow Him Do not be afraid" Then could I restrain myself no more; though there were so many difficulties in the way of my baptism, I was resolved to make it known at once to the world that I was a Christian, and thereupon requested Dr J E. Abbott of the American Board of Foreign Missions to publish this fact. He announced it in the *Dnyanodaya* and my greatest desire was fulfilled Now ask no more Did I not love my fellow countrymen I could easily let the world know what things happened next. But, no, it is better that they should be forgotten. May God be praised, I was soon after baptized on 10 February 1895 in Bombay, in the American Mission Church. The prophesy made two years earlier in the train by that stranger had come true. God had drawn me to Himself, and even today, He with overwhelming loving kindness guides forward His weak child.'

PART TWO

1 I AM LED TO THE SHRINE

Lakshmi hears the news of Tilak's Baptism.

TILAK forsook the house of the landlord of Chandori to walk up the front doorsteps of Dr Justin Abbott. He left the train at Bombay, sought out the American Mission High School, and entered. The Rev Anandrao Hiwale, who later went to America on his own initiative, was at that time a student there, and met him on the doorstep. Anandrao introduced him to Dr Abbott and the Rev. E. S Hume known as Hume Saheb Junior.

Tilak and Dr Abbott had been corresponding for a long time. Tilak was taken in, and after they had made him study the Christian religion for four months he was baptized in the American Mission Church in the Bhendi Bazar, Bombay.

It is possible to say that the course of the thought of the Christian community was changed from the day of Tilak's baptism. One might also say that from that time Dr Abbott became Tilak's preceptor in religion, or *guru*, although, because he expressed the determination not to be baptized by Dr Abbott or any other foreigner but rather by the hand of an Indian, the Rev. Tukaramji Nathoji administered the sacrament of baptism. Mr Nathoji was the editor of the *Dnyanodaya* at that time.

The news of Tilak's baptism spread like wild fire on all sides. It was heard at once in Nasik All his friends and relatives began to come in a steady stream to see Pendse, but Pendse arranged that no one should say a word inside the house. When people came they sat in silence. Some of them would turn towards me and Dattu, screw up their faces and wipe their eyes. When I saw this pantomime I fell into an indescribable state of mind. I wondered if Tilak had been killed in some terrible accident 'A man's own mind is his worst enemy.'

Pendse sat stolidly leaning his head outside the window, his brow clasped tightly in his hands. We gazed at one another with vacant eyes. No one spoke. At the most we just wiped away our tears.

Dattu was in an extraordinary position. People were forever

lifting him up, or giving him something to eat, but no one would speak. When I saw all this the strength in my hands and knees turned to water.

One day Pendse hired two bullock carts and sent the whole family off to see the Pandav Leni caves near Nasik. Only Bhiku and Pendse stayed behind. Next he sent a tonga to Jalalpur to fetch Keshav. He wanted to discuss freely with Bhiku and Keshav what should be said and done without letting me overhear anything. Pendse began, 'Well, Keshav, what has happened has happened. What is to be done now?'

Keshav replied, 'We are two brothers. We must look after her as if she were a third maimed, lamed brother, whom it is our duty to support.'

Pendse said, 'That is so, but we shall see presently what is to be done with her. First of all we must get reliable information about Tilak. I think you should go to Bala in Bombay, and the two of you can look for him. If he has really changed his religion it is another matter. If not, take this ring, drop it into his pocket or somewhere, and then inform the Police. The prosecution will be held here. We can see then what to do. Here are twenty-five rupees to take with you.'

Keshav left at once. Bala was the son of Pendse's elder brother. The two men searched every Mission in Bombay. Finally they learned that Tilak was at Bassein, and at once followed him there.

Tilak met the pair of them, and asked them why they had come. Keshav replied, 'We came to look for you.'

Tilak said, 'I have become a Christian. Look after your sister. The river Godavari runs by both Nasik and Jalalpur. See that she does not commit suicide.'

'Whether she lives or dies you have now nothing to do with her.' So saying Keshav and Bala left Bassein, their hearts very heavy. As he left Keshav saw that the sacred lock of hair on Tilak's head had been cut, and he sobbed aloud. However angry he had tried to appear, his eyes had been brimming over from the beginning, now the very last tear was drained out of his heart.

As soon as Keshav returned home he went and sat near the bed where Bhiku lay. He told her everything. She was nearly choked with tears.

'Tell Lakshmi anything you like,' she said, 'I cannot say a word to her.' I was called upstairs. I was so overcome with apprehension I could not climb the steps. Like a small child, drawing myself up by my hands I came, and sat before my brother and sister. My brother began a sermon: how many chaste and dutiful wives had there been, Sita, Savitri, Tara and Draupadi, whose fame would last for ever. I broke in, 'I know all the scriptures Did you call me to give me a sermon? You went to Bombay to get word of Tilak. Tell me first, is he alive?'

'Yes, he is alive, safe, happy. He has got work as a teacher there but . . . but . . .'

'Then why "But"?'

'He is a Christian.'

'Then let him be one! Enough that he is somewhere, and that he is well Though he has gone he has not taken so much as a bit of skin off my forehead, or touched my fate written on it.'

I spoke, rose, and descended the stairs in a hurry. Having reached the bottom, the strength flowed out of me completely. The rest of the women in the house were waiting anxiously by the door. They caught me, and made me sit down. They had all heard the news before I had, and now began to comfort me.

'Never mind if he has gone. God has given you a son of gold One child is worth all the world. He will prove a dutiful son to his mother. You will enjoy as much happiness in the future as you endure sorrow now.' The whole of this sermon was as water poured onto an upturned vessel. I had become as stone. I could not shed a tear. My throat was completely dry.

Most of our relations came to spend the night with Pendse. No one ate any dinner. No one spoke a word. One after another they came, spread on the floor whatever they could find and lay down to sleep where they fell. Not one said to another 'Come in', 'Sit down', 'Eat something, drink something'.

There was a large number of us sleeping in the house. I was in the middle On one side lay Keshav and on the other Bhiku. Each of them had thrown an arm over me. At about one or two o'clock sleep began to weave her net. Everyone was caught in it except me. Very gently I drew off the arms encircling me from either side. Binding up the loose end of my sari tightly I looked for Dattu, but could not see him. I then

retraced my steps. Going to the front door I began to lift the wooden-bar.

At that instant the night-watchman's 'All's well' fell on my ears, making a new thought master of my mind. If these men should catch me and take me to the Police Station, and if there were an inquiry on the morrow, the world would babble that I was the sister-in-law of such and such a man, and Pendse would be put to shame It had been my intention to throw myself into a deep pool in the river, but I changed my mind, and went and stood by the household well. It was a very narrow well. Now came the thought, that if I committed suicide here my body could not be retrieved without infinite trouble; and at the Police investigation the next day Pendse would have to hang his head for me. My ears were buzzing. I could see no way open before me

I returned to my bed, and lay down. In a little while I grasped Keshav's hand so fiercely that he woke in a fright, and roused Bhiku with, 'Bhiku, look at what Lakshmi is doing'. Everyone awoke, and sat up. They all began asking each other, 'What has happened?' What has happened?' Keshav managed to unclasp my hand, and with that it seemed that all the strength drained out of me. I was quite conscious. I knew all that was going on about me, but in no wise could I move.

Each one had a different remedy of his own to suggest. My jaws were locked. Some said I had had a shock, some that I had taken poison. Bhiku replied, 'She has not a farthing. How could she buy poison?' Someone suggested that I had swallowed powdered glass. A new kind of glass bangle had just appeared on the market and my sister had bought nine each for Gharu and me. She at once counted mine.

A doctor was brought. He could not find my pulse, and he also gave the opinion that I had taken poison. They began to try to open my teeth, and pour a little medicine between them. I was aware of everything, but lay like a log of wood. My tongue was drawn together and covered with prickles which did not go away for a whole month Bhiku's sickness vanished, and rolling up her bed she now spent night and day standing beside me. She had to wait on me hand and foot. I could only lie. She even had to brush my teeth. From time to time I was given milk and buttermilk. Many days later my strength returned a little, and I began to sit up in bed.

Now were the flood gates of my tears opened. I cried continuously. My tears could not be dammed, unless indeed there was respite in sleep. I spoke to no one. One day I went to the house of someone living in the same courtyard, and sat down weeping. Dattu spent all his time with Bhiku, but seeing me now sitting in a new place, he came up, and taking my hand led me to the shrine of the house, and made me sit down; then he said, 'Mother, cry in my aunt and uncle's house. Do not cry in other people's. Tell me what you want. Do you want lots of jewellery like cousin Gharu, or bangles and bracelets like Aunty? Or do you want a beautiful bordered sari? Tell me, but do not sit crying!'

Bhiku was standing nearby Clasping him to her breast, and weeping herself she said, 'Borrow a little of his good sense.' Dattu's comforting words only increased my grief.

2 DIVORCE INDEED

Tilak's health improves. Lakshmi finds a new occupation. Sakharam suggests divorce, and Tilak sends a wire.

GOPAL heard in Nagpur that Tilak had become a Christian, and at once went to Bassein to see him; he then came on to Nasik to me At the sight of him I burst out sobbing, and so did he. Through his tears he said, 'Bai, look on me as your elder son and Dattu as your younger.' Having said this he left. Immediately afterwards he sent me ten rupees from Panchwati, meaning to send the same amount every month, but my brothers and sisters did not approve, and let him know, though in such a way as would not hurt his feelings. He also wrote to say he would bring his wife and children to see me. This plan did not materialize either.

That hot weather Tilak went for the first time to Mahabaleshwar. Gopal also rented a bungalow there intending to take me and Dattu. For some unavoidable reason that I cannot remember this plan too came to nothing.

While in Mahabaleshwar Tilak began to write the first of his famous poems on flowers and children. Dr R. A. Hume of Nagar, more or less kept him in his own house. There were Dr Hume's children, his sister's children and all the wild flowers growing in Mahabaleshwar, and well did it suit Tilak's mood to write of them. His famous poem, *The brown hair flowing freely down her back*, was written about that graceful child, Miss Fairbank. His alleged consumption vanished in this happy environment. When he left Mahabaleshwar, Tilak began to study in Nagar Theological College under Dr Hume, and at the same time also began to teach some subjects as well.

Pendse was transferred to Pandharpur. Sakharam was already there, and I went with Pendse. Yet as I was, so I remained; that is, the tears never dried out of my eyes, and no speech fell from my lips. Everything had to be done for me by Bhiku and Vahini,—the widow of Pendse's brother. She was the stepmother of Bala and a child widow Dattu was very fond of her. From the colour of her widow's sari he called her Red Aunty. He had named all his aunts in this way. 'Short Aunt', 'Thin Aunt', 'Red Aunt'. And each aunt was amused when she heard her own name. Bhiku was fat, so she was called 'Fat Aunty'.

No sooner had we arrived in Pandharpur, than Bhiku engaged a master for Dattu. She thought that if Dattu could learn and make good, all would be mended, she need have no more anxiety for her sister She was forever urging him on to study. Pendse would protest, 'Why worry him? Let him play. He is not so old yet. He will learn in time.' But Bhiku never swerved from her set purpose. Pendse used to spoil Dattu. He would never sit down to a meal without him. Bhiku thought Dattu should not be present when his uncle was eating. When it was time for a meal she would say, 'Dinner time', and Dattu would say, 'I shall play outside Aunty.' Pendse was always grieved to hear this suggestion and its answer. Bhiku was afraid Dattu would annoy him. Better, she thought, that Pendse himself should call for him. Nevertheless, not for one day did Pendse dine without Dattu. He used to call him Tilak, and as soon as he was back from his work he would look for him. 'Where is Tilak? Call him for dinner. Tilak, ho Tilak! Here is a sweet for you.' Then Dattu would come, and both sit down to dinner. This was the daily routine.

'Red Aunt' had to ask Dattu's advice everyday about what should be cooked for their light supper, and dishes were prepared accordingly.

I just lay on my bed. With difficulty I was forced to eat. Presently I began to tear my sari to pieces, and Bhiku thought I would lose my reason altogether. Better that I should die! Who would look after a mad woman after she, Bhiku, was gone. Tilak heard of the state in which I was, and a telegram came from him. Upto now we had not even had a letter from him, but at last I received one, and in it an addressed envelope. In absolute secrecy I wrote to him. I was not allowed to send letters, and I never wrote anything but poetry. I remember three or four lines of the one in my first letter.

> Oh Friend, as cruel as a second wife,
> My own thoughts make a burden of my life.
> I have a sister, Hope, relief to bring;
> Yet slave Anxiety hath words that sting.

One other poem I sent to him headed, *A Husband*. My new occupation brought back some semblance of life to me, but Tilak would not believe it was I who wrote and sent the poems.

Sakharam was also in Pandharpur and used to come and see me everyday. There was a rumour in circulation that Sakharam sent Tilak a hundred rupees a month to spend. Even though Tilak was a Christian and she was very angry with him, Bhiku could not help feeling proud of him When she heard the rumour she scolded Sakharam well.

One day he came when Pendse was at his dinner. A low wooden seat was set for Sakharam. Bhiku came and stood before him saying, 'Since when has your brother become no better than a barber?'

Sakharam completely failed to understand her action and words. He said, 'I do not understand what you are saying.'

'Why shouldn't you understand? Who will believe that you send your brother one hundred rupees a month when you do not even see that Lakshmi's saris here are in rags!'

Sakharam listened to all this quietly, his head bowed. The next day he sent me a sari and Dattu two shirts.

Another day Sakharam came and sat down beside me. Having talked of this and that he gently broached the subject of Tilak. I was lying giving only grunt's in reply.

'Lakshmi,' he said, 'you are ill. See how many people there are to look after you. Do you think anyone is looking after Tilak? Tell me. If you give him a divorce he will be free. There are plenty of people to care for you.'

When I heard this I sat up promptly. 'And was there no one to take care of him? Who keeps him away now? How can I give him a divorce? Have I run away? Or have I left him? I have no money, no education, my child is young, what can I do? Shall I not sit and polish pots for all of you till I die? Enough of your interference! Send him a letter saying "First get your wife married properly and then arrange for your own marriage." Do you not realize to whom you are speaking?'

As I spoke, I stood up Sakharam listened to it all with his head down

I got a letter from Tilak everyday, sometimes even three at a time If I wrote at all, it was only a poem. I had nothing to ask of him, nothing to tell him A wire to Pendse one day said, 'I am coming to see Lakshmi.' Pendse sent a return wire, 'Do *not come to my house*'

The household fell straightway into the state we were in in Nasik. No one ate, no one slept, no one spoke to anyone else. I knew nothing of the cause of it.

At eight o'clock in the morning Tilak was in Pandharpur. By two in the afternoon there was still no answer from Pendse. Tilak was very annoyed to get no reply to so many letters, and in the end wrote this. 'I have come on purpose to see my wife, because I hear she is not well. Since my arrival I have sent three or four conciliatory letters from here You have not replied to one. I am very hurt. I shall not leave until I have seen her. I did not intend to go against you, but tomorrow I shall meet her in the court of law.'

3 THE HEADMASTER'S HELP

Lakshmi and Tilak meet again The kindness and generosity of Hindu friends and relatives.

THE letter arrived. Pendse called Bhiku and asked her what way she could see out of the predicament.

'You must do what is right,' she said. 'I know no law, but rather than have a scene tomorrow let us take Lakshmi quietly to meet him today Then he will go away.'

'Do not be at all anxious about Lakhsmi. I shall never let her run away with him. We shall send her for an interview. Vahini can go with her I shall also provide two servants.' Pendse then wrote to Tilak saying he would send me to meet him after nine o'clock at night If he had time he should wait, if not there was no help for it All I knew was that Tilak was in Pandharpur. I knew nothing of the commotion it had caused

Pendse and Bhiku were in the sitting room talking, and I was stretched on my bed as usual, when Yesu came to call me. Yesu,—later the wife of Dr Bhat of Yaola, was Pendse's granddaughter. She delivered her message that Pendse had sent for me. Accordingly I went and sat down before the two of them.

Pendse began, 'Lakshmi, do you want to see Tilak?'

I said, 'Yes,' and at once he rejoined, 'Then lay your hands on my feet and swear that you will not go away with him.'

I touched his feet, and swore, 'I shall not go with Tilak,' then straightway retired. Bhiku followed me talking volubly. 'Out of sheer love have I given hospitality to my sister, and now we are faced with a court case' These words had an extraordinary effect upon me. I hardly knew myself what I was doing, but was afflicted with a desire for motion. From upstairs to the centre hall, centre hall to the flat roof, from the roof to my bed, back upstairs to recommence the round, I went. Bhiku was very upset when she saw me. 'What insane behaviour is this? Go mad and complete the orphaned state of a son of gold. Your husband has lit a torch so you must start

a bonfire!' I heard everything she said and understood too, but as I had begun, so did I continue till evening. Why I should have behaved like this I myself still do not understand.

Evening came and then supper time for all. I still had a great deal of doubt as to whether they would send me to meet Tilak or not. My whole attention was fixed on the tonga, horses and servants. I could not speak to anyone, because every one was keeping watch over me. I was beseiged by the fatal nine constellations, office-servants, house-servants, women-servants, water-carriers, cook, sister, Vahini, Yesu, Pendse. I could not move from here to there for the strictness of their guard. I was pestered with questions from everyone. 'What are you doing?' 'What are you eating?' 'Where are you going?' 'What are you writing?' Though I only went out of the back door, someone was with me.

The clock struck nine, and my heart began to beat faster. I had doubts whether I should see Tilak or not, and my suspicion grew. I watched the courtyard below steadily. At last the horse was harnessed. Vahini threw her shawl round her shoulders, and her call of 'Lakshmi' fell upon my ears. I came out as soon as I heard her, and seeing me, Pendse said, 'Lakshmi, do you remember what I told you? Take care or I shall put the police onto you. You know who I am.' I only nodded my head. Pendse having finished, Bhiku came forward Her blow was on the other side: 'Lakshmi have pity on this child.' To her too I answered with a nod of my head. My mind was full of fear, and my heart a quiver at the thought of what was in store for me. I was trembling in every limb. My mouth was dry. All my life was in my eyes, and the end of my sari took its measure in tears from time to time.

Somehow or other I descended the stairs, then I was lifted into the tonga. We five people,—two servants, the driver, myself and Vahini, with five mouths entreated God's mercy as we sped along.

Tilak was standing at the door of the rest-house for travellers, watch in hand. As soon as he saw the tonga he went inside. I was lifted down and placed before him by two men. He was standing. Straightway I laid my forehead on his feet. 'Tell me in what I have sinned against you that you should behave so strangely, then I shall loose your feet.'

'You have not sinned against me in anything,' he said, and

withdrew his feet. Done! That was all we said. Tilak was leaning up against a post. Neither of us could say any more. Then Vahini spoke; 'Lakshmi, come now, Dattu will be waiting for you. It is very late.' I left at once, and the men lifted me, and put me into the tonga again. Tilak standing outside watched till the tonga was out of sight.

At home Pendse and Bhiku were consumed with anxiety. The moment the tonga drew up Pendse ran out and began to ask what had happened. When Vahini had described everything as it had occurred he was much comforted. Dattu was asleep. Sitting beside him and caressing him Bhiku said, 'May God give your mother some sense now.'

That night the whole family slept quietly. Only Tilak spent the hours in restlessness having seen my condition. Because Tilak was to have left the next day Sakharam went to see him, but Tilak said, 'I am not going just now. I shall go when she is better.' Sakharam telling Pendse this news, added. 'I shall provide his meals, but let your servant take them to him.'

'Not so,' Pendse replied, 'we shall send him his food.'

Bhiku in the afternoon began to fill a lunch-box for Tilak, and all the waters of Yamuna and Ganga flowed from her eyes. She was unspeakably grieved to think that he, whom she had served so lovingly in her own house, should now have his dinner taken to him by another hand, and that to a common rest-house. Rather would she never have had a sister! Tilak's meal was sent first, and afterwards the household sat down to dine. They were all sitting together, and the cook serving, but Pendse could not eat. His eyes were full of tears.

'I do not feel it right,' he said. 'A Mohammedan servant is allowed to come to our house, and eat his meals here. These people eat anything they like. Why should Tilak have to dine in a way-farer's shelter?'

'But what would people say?'

'What will people say? I have no daughter to be given in marriage. Our one child is already married. I am going to bring him home. Let the world say what it likes. It does not matter to me.'

Our meal was over. Pendse ordered the tonga and told the servant to go to the same place as yesterday and bring back the visitor staying there.

After the tonga left, Pendse sat with his eyes glued to the road. He was longing to see Tilak. The tonga returned, and all the people in the house gathered round the door. Tilak lifted up Dattu, but he did not recognize his father. There was a vast alteration in Tilak's health. Dattu went to Pendse, and finally took refuge with his 'Red Aunt'. Pendse told him to order tea. Two cups were brought, Tilak and Pendse drank together.

Bhiku came and sat in front of them.

'Tilak, I shall never be afraid of you as I have been up till now. You can write as many poems about me as you like, and print them. I shall now challenge you.'

Pendse said, 'What is this? Only today he was going to drag us into court. Shall we aggravate him further?'

'I know nothing about that. A fight in court is man's work. What evil have I done in bringing your wife to see you, that you should behave like this?'

'Bhiku, scold me as you will,' said Tilak, 'I write no more poetry about you, nor do I print it.'

'Lakshmi are you not coming to meet Tilak in Court?'

I was listening to everything behind the door. Since Tilak's arrival I had improved immensely, only the tears in my eyes would not dry. Pendse was the Magistrate there. A great number of people used to come to see him, and the gossiping would continue till ten o'clock at night. Among these was the Headmaster of the school.

Pendse introduced Tilak to them all. Tilak had brought my letters with him, and set about proving who had written the poetry in them. When he was convinced that it was I, he was filled with pleasure. Correcting some of them he sent them to be printed.

Tilak sat outside to eat his food and the rest of us sat inside. Sakharam was also coming nearly everyday. Bhiku one day said: 'Sakharam, can your brother not be taken back into caste?'

Pendse answered, 'Yes! Why should he not be taken back? Effort and money are all that are necessary.'

'Then I shall give all my jewellery. Had I four sisters I would have had to have borne the expense of all four weddings. I shall consider that I have provided well for my four sisters. Speak up Sakharam. How much will you give?'

'I shall give one thousand rupees.'

'Whatever else is necessary, I shall give,' said Pendse, and as he spoke we heard the sound of someone talking loudly to Tilak outside.

'Sakharam, go out and see who is talking to him,' said Pendse. Sakharam went and returned. The Headmaster had come, and a discussion was in progress with Tilak.

'Come Master, well met. Come in, will you not? Or are you following Tilak's example?'

The Headmaster having come in, his opinion was asked on the new proposition. He replied: 'Do not let Tilak know anything of this. First of all we shall hold a meeting tomorrow, and having gauged the general feeling, settle later what we should do.'

The Headmaster spent a sleepless night, countless ideas surging through his mind. Whom should he invite? How should he present his subject, and what would people say?

Bhiku could not sleep for joy She desired no more than that her Lakshmi should leave her house in happiness. Who can sit in the shade of jewellery? All night long her open eyes saw a dream of everything turning out as she wanted. Dattu and Tilak slept soundly. Dattu was lying beside his father who had had to tell him so many stories that, telling and listening to them, they had both fallen asleep.

The next day the Headmaster brought Sakharam to Pendse. It had been arranged to have a meeting of the leading men in the town in the evening, and that the Headmaster should give a lecture on 'Re-admission to caste'.

'You have all my sympathy,' said Pendse, 'but do not let anyone know that I am behind this'

The meeting was held as decided that day. The Headmaster gave a rousing address. The beauty of his language and his enthusiasm for his subject won nearly everyone to his side. At the end of his lecture he got signatures from most of the men present, and dismissed them with an invitation to return the next evening with their friends. Then he came to Pendse.

For three days he continued his meetings and collection of signatures. The townspeople and their leaders now undertook the work, and held meetings for eight days. Everyone felt encouraged. Nevertheless that backing from the Scriptures which was desired could not be found.

On our side Pendse and Bhiku were quietly sounding Tilak.

He said, 'Why go to such expense Bhiku? Just think; after you have spent so much money I may recant.'

'What of it? We shall recover it from you.'

More than this Tilak would not say.

I was feeling so much better I had begun to speak, and walk about. Tilak may have wished to avoid bringing on a relapse, and therefore remained silent. The want of a suitable text from scripture brought Pendse to Tilak with the request that he should produce one he thought fit; Tilak did so. This difficulty having been surmounted a fresh difficulty arose. The Brahman council decreed that Tilak must fall at their feet, as a token of repentance and confess his fault. Tilak would not consent. With piteous supplication the Headmaster tried to persuade him, but he was not to be moved. In the end the Headmaster himself, in place of Tilak, went and asked pardon from everyone and prostrated himself at their feet.

Now the papers had to be taken to two holy places, and finally presented before the Chief Priest of all. That being done Tilak's purification ceremony would be complete.

In those few days Pandharpur's old inheritance, cholera, came to put the finishing touches to our garden Young and old and baby shoots together were shaken out of their places. In the very spot where Pendse lived there was a case, and a young pilgrim dropped dead before our eyes. Here opened a small by-path of escape for Tilak. Pendse was simple-minded. Tilak asked him what he would do if he, Tilak, went the same way as this pilgrim.

'Think of the trouble people would give you. Better let me go now. There is still plenty of time before you get the answer from the High Priest. By then the cholera will have become less here, and after that we can see what is to be done.' Pendse gave him permission, provided him with travelling expenses, and sent him off to Bombay.

4 BABY'S CLOTHES

Lakshmi goes to see Tilak and the consequences.

NO one was very upset by Tilak's departure this time. Everyone believed that he would most certainly come back. I was perfectly well again. After Tilak went away, Dattu fell very ill. At Wani, Kakaji's mother had made a vow that when Dattu was five years' old he should be taken to the Hill of Saptashringi and his first hair be cut there. Bhiku decided to go and fulfil the vow. She wrote to our brother in Jalalpur telling him to take things for a meal for twenty-five people, and come to Wani. Combining his contribution and her money the vow would be fulfilled. I did not go.

One day after they left, a notice came to me in Pandharpur through a lawyer to say, 'The boy is mine by law. No one can deny it. Within a certain date he must be handed over to me, or I shall have to file a suit against you.' Tilak had drawn his sword Everyday a letter came saying, 'Send the boy, or bring him yourself to me.' Everyone advised me without ceasing not to reply Some said, 'Do not accept his letters, and do not read them.'

While I was in Nasik some distant relatives had told me that if I went to Tilak he would marry me off to someone else, and I should be compelled to do scavenger's work, and that I should have to cook meat. I was threatened with this and I had had experience of Tilak Suppose I went to him, and he turned Mohammedan! Now at least my relations were taking an interest in me, after that even they would not do so. When other women's husbands died they used to say, 'Were my husband only alive I could at least fill my eyes with the sight of him somehow'; and I could not even send my husband a letter. Again was my spirit overwhelmed.

I began going to the temple of Vithoba to sit and cry for hours on end. I became known to everyone there. Some of the women would give me advice!

'Why do you cry? Eat and drink as you will. How long are you going to stay with your brother and sister? Grind for other people, open a restaurant, do any thing, but be independent.'

I listened to them all in silence. To one or two I replied, 'Far more happily shall I clear away the rubbish for my beloved brothers and sister than scavenge for outsiders. Rather than flatter strangers I shall flatter my two brothers, sister and brother-in-law. If I am not pleased with them, I have a fourth master to whom I can go.'

After this answer no one endeavoured to instill such teaching into me again. On her return to Pandharpur from Wani with Dattu, Bhiku heard the whole story; she was very grieved.

'He has struck back like a serpent,' she said.

Everyday Tilak's letters continued to come They were full of anger, full of love, full of emotion. One time he would say, 'Come at once,' another time, 'You have no care for me. I shall marry someone else Give me a divorce.' He thought I should abandon all my relations to go to him.

In the end Tilak and Dr Abbott discussed the matter at length. Tilak was at the time a master in the Mission High School in Bombay and Dr Abbott was in Bombay too.

'Look here, Tilak,' he said to him, 'from all that has happened it is obvious that Lakshmibai has a passionate love for you Do not send her angry letters. Win her kindly. Come, I shall go with you' Tilak decided to do as was suggested. He had great faith in prayer, and so they asked God's help. Soon afterwards a wire came to Pandharpur saying Tilak was on his way.

It was no longer possible for Tilak to stay with Pendse. Sakharam was living in the temple of Ram Who would allow Tilak to set foot inside a temple? He went to stay with Kashibai Zankar and came to see Pendse in the morning. He had only climbed one or two steps when Bhiku stood before him barring the way with her arm and saying, 'Take care lest you come one step more. The Courts are open to you. Betake yourself off there.' Tilak turned back.

Dattu had measles again He had very high fever, and as if that were not enough this other fever of anxiety had now come to plague me. I was torn between the two. That night Kashibai's mother came to me in a hurry. 'Lakshmi, come quickly,' she said, 'Kashibai has been stung by a scorpion. You can cure it.' I knew the cure for scorpion bites. Tilak used to use it and watching him I had learned too. No one knew he was staying there, so Bhiku allowed me to go back with Kashibai's mother. I arrived to find Tilak sitting waiting for me.

'How are you?'
'As before.'
'How is Dattu?'
'He has fever.'
'All right, then you can go.'

That was all we said, but seeing me looking so much better Tilak was very pleased. I went home and promptly lay down on my bed. Their house was quite close. Bhiku had taken Dattu in beside her She had told Pendse that I had gone to Dr Kashibai. He sent a servant to bring her back to our house. She told him everything that had happened.

When he had heard it all he asked, 'What do you think she is thinking?'

'She wants to go off with Tilak'

'Why do you think that?'

'She once asked me for poison. She said she had nothing to give me unless she gave me the silver rings off her toes. She asked for poison that would consume her slowly, because she wanted no inquiry later, and no one should be blamed on her account.'

'What did you say to her?'

'I gave her some good advice, and sent her back.'

'Very well, but do not be tempted to interfere in such matters again.'

So saying Pendse told the servant to see Kashibai to her home. I knew nothing of what had been happening.

Recently I had been sleeping very heavily From the time I came home and lay down till morning I never stirred. When eventually I woke up I was confronted with two saris, two jackets, some children's trinkets and a hooded child's cape all laid out on a low stool near the head of the bed

I began to inspect what had been put there. Since Tilak's arrival no one had spoken much with me Pendse's niece who had arrived was still there Looking at the tassels on the baby's hood I said to her, 'For what new baby are all these presents?'

She said, 'For yours.'

I fell silent when I heard her reply, and at that moment Bhiku and Vahini came in 'Lakshmi, you can go wherever you like,' Bhiku said, 'I have put all your own things and your next baby's hood, clothes and everything together there.' In no wise could I understand this devastating turn of affairs.

They said, 'Go', so I made up my mind to go, and be an ascetic living in the hills of Wani.

At once I picked up one sari, a small box of red *kunku* for the sign on my forehead, that my husband was alive, and set off. To myself I said, 'I want no one. How long must I fear for my good name? How long must I turn my back to the unceasing storm?' I bowed to God, my sister and Vahini and left.

'Where are you going?' asked Pendse's niece.

'Where God will lead me.'

'You are weak. You have no money.'

'I do not want money, I do not want anything. What money had I when I came from God? And now that I return to Him what money do I need?'

'They must have planned last night to go today,' said Bhiku, 'otherwise why should she leave so promptly.'

I came out on to the veranda. Pendse seeing me said, 'Where are you going?'

'Wherever God will lead me. Does He forget you when you are forsaken by mankind?'

'Tell the truth. Do not be foolish. Please go back into the house. Go inside and lie down.'

It was a play, like that part of the thread ceremony in which the boy gives up his pilgrimage to Kashi on his uncle's persuasion. I went in and lay down.

Many and many a time I had been on the point of forsaking this earthly body, but I had never actually done it, and I believe it was never possible. It was characteristic of me to grope on through the darkness of despair, but still to keep to the road. It was not in me to lie down and die half way. In short I rebounded like a rubber ball.

Tilak left Dr Kashibai to stay with Dr Abbott who had come to Gopalpur. Dr Abbott asked him if he had met me, and what he thought.

'My judgement was at fault. The love that she had for me is not a whit less now.'

'Then what do you propose now? People are just misleading you.' Having said this Dr Abbott made him search the Bible and read what the Christian scriptures teach about the relations between husband and wife. Then they both prayed and Tilak gave his promise, that he would wait for his wife until she came. Tilak went away.

I received a very nice letter from him.

'Take care of your health. Look after Dattu. I shall give you no trouble whatsoever; come with the boy when God gives you the light to do so. I shall be waiting for you. From now on I shall never do anything to cause you sorrow. I shall remain faithful to you, so do not worry about that.'

5 'O BIRD, THE BARS OF THY CAGE ARE OF LOVE'

Lakshmi's relations prove their love for her. Lakshmi's efforts to recapture Tilak.

BHIKU and Pendse began to treat me very kindly now, not that they had ever been unkind, but now and again they had harboured a suspicion that I might go away with Tilak. Bhiku gave me saris, jewellery and ornaments. She would only be angry when a letter came from Tilak giving rise to anxiety. In her home Dattu and I were well treated.

The day came when Pendse received word that he had been transferred to Nagar. This gave everyone something to think about. Though Tilak himself was not at Nagar, still there was a large Christian community. How could they take Lakshmi there.

While they were considering this question a letter came from Tilak enclosing an addressed envelope. Tilak had got work in Nagar too, and the letter said he was going there soon. Now indeed it was impossible for me to go with Bhiku.

Having consulted her, Pendse wrote to my brothers saying he had been transferred to Nagar, but he did not desire to take me there, and that he would send me to Jalalpur. He would arrange for my expenses and clothing. My brothers should be careful for one thing only. Their sister should be kept happy in body and mind. The moment they received this letter.

both my brothers said to their respective wives, 'Lakshmi has been three years with Pendse. We must invite her here now. As we enjoy other peoples' household pantomimes so let them now enjoy ours. However we shall send for her only if you will treat her as a guest or as a blind brother of our own. No matter what loss she causes us, we must be responsible for it. You must do nothing to give her any pain.'

'Let her come with pleasure,' said both my sisters-in-law, 'not by so much as one word shall we hurt her.'

Pendse went on ahead to Nagar in order to be there on the appointed day Bhiku, Vahini, myself, Dattu and Yesu went to Jalalpur. Bhiku called my brothers and their wives to her, and opening my trunk showed them one by one all my belongings. I had a big trunk packed to overflowing with money, ornaments, saris and jackets. 'She has already endured more than enough misfortune,' Bhiku said 'I have shown you everything so that your wives will not be able to say tomorrow that she has a padlock on her box, or that she has taken anything of theirs. Better to have the bitter first and the sweet later'

She stayed one day, and then returned home She was very sorry to go. The tears came into her eyes, and in the very act of leaving she said to my brothers, 'Do not stop Dattu's milk.'

The first five or six days went very heavily. Within three or four days' time a letter came from Tilak with an envelope enclosed. Who knows how he had found out that I was at Jalalpur? My sister-in-law would let me do no work at all. They divided my service between them. The elder one looked after my child, and the younger looked after me. She would not so much as allow me to wash my own sari. For my part I began to spend my time in the worship of the gods. It was my sister-in-law who drew my bath water and brought it to me. It was she who folded up my sari for me, and set out the things I needed for worship I used to say to her, 'What a lot of trouble you take.' To which she would reply, 'God will bless all I do for you. Not so if I do anything for Bhiku. Both God and man can say of my services to her that I do it for what I can gain What I do for you I do unselfishly.' It was this same sister-in-law who cared for Dattu when he was a baby.

Since coming to Jalalpur I had abandoned my bed, and thrown

myself upon God. I had nothing else to occupy my mind. Having risen in the morning, combed my hair and bathed I embarked on a fixed programme of reading *Gurucharitra* and *Shivalilamrita*, making offerings to the gods, telling my rosary and lastly a continuous repetition of the name of God. I ate only once in the day, and kept many a fast besides. All four Fridays, four Saturdays and four Tuesdays in the month were so observed On Friday night I ate only rice and milk, on Saturday night a vegetable puff and on Tuesday night I took nine handfuls of flour, six for the cow and three only for myself. The usual fasts like *Ekadashi* were kept as a matter of course. All this was done as a propitiation to the gods in order that Tilak should come back into caste. On the days that were not fasts my elder sister-in-law, having finished her work would bring a dish of rice and milk to wherever I happened to be lying, and with much entreaty force me to take it, at the same time delivering a lecture. 'Before all treasures, the treasure of one's health must be preserved. If you throw that away who will look after you Only the strong and well gain friends.'

I endeavoured to bring Tilak back not only by my fasting, but by adding any other thing I could think of. My sisters-in-law never once complained to me. All they said was, 'She does no harm, causes no loss to others, why should we hurt her?'

There is a very big temple of Maruti, the monkey-god at Jalalpur. I used to put a stick into his hand in the hope that he would chase after Tilak, and bring him back The people of the village had no idea who did this Sometimes I would place a stone on his head I had heard the saying, 'Who has laid a stone on your head?' meaning 'Who has compelled you to do such and such a thing!' I thought I might compel Maruti in my service I next began to write the name of Ram on slips of paper and stick them onto Maruti's image beginning from his head right down towards his feet I had to get up at dawn to bathe in order to do it before anyone was awake. I believed that, before he would allow the holy name of Ram to be defiled by touching his feet, Maruti, who was a devoted slave of Ram, would prevent such a catastrophe overtaking himself by delivering me from my troubles. A stick in Maruti's hand, a stone on his head and his whole body covered with

slips of paper roused the entire village to find out what it meant.

The headman decided to discover who was practising sorcery, and beat the witch. A band of men came one day, and hid near-by. Having bathed as usual in my sari, with it still wet on my body, I went down, stuck my piece of paper onto the image, and was turning to the right when three or four of them leapt upon me with sticks in their hands. There was just enough light to see a little. They all recognized me when they came close up.

'That it would be you,' Kulkarni said, 'we never dreamt. Well, well, the boy's mother nearly lost her life by mistake. We thought a witch was practising her craft, and were lying in wait on purpose. Proceed with your remedies, and may you succeed in bringing Tilak back.'

From the river back to the house I used to draw footsteps with white powder so that Maruti might find the way to our house when he brought Tilak back Over and above that I had made it a rule to offer to the goddess a red flower everyday. The days I could not obtain a red flower I fasted. To save me from these additional fasts my sisters-in-law would bring red flowers from anywhere. One of my occupations was to try to propitiate the gods, and the other to teach the children. I was Dattu's first school-mistress and later the first mistress of Dattu's children. Everyday when I found time I used to take Dattu and my brothers' children, and teach them to read and write. One day as I was thus engaged in the evening, my two brothers came home, and sat down beside us. They were discussing the crops. The children laid down their slates and pencils, and we all joined in the conversation.

The other children said to Dattu, 'Dattu see! Our fields, our bulls, our ploughs!' Overhearing them Keshav said, 'Bapu, Bapu, the bulls and ploughs are not only yours. They are Dattu's too. Is he not your brother?' The children would not agree. How could he be their brother? He was a Tilak, they were Gokhales. Dattu pushed his slate in front of them saying, 'This is my field, this pencil is my plough, and these, my fingers, are my bulls.'

'But your field does not produce grain!'

'These letters are my crop,' Dattu replied. When my brothers heard this, their eyes filled with tears, and Keshav caught him

to his heart. What I felt, I leave it to the reader to imagine.

Bhiku had deposited me in Jalalpur because she was afraid I might all of a sudden run off to Tilak. She used to sing a song about me:

'Oh bird, the bars of thy cage are of love.'

The theme of the song was as follows:

'Oh Myna though thou art imprisoned, thy prison is no gaol. It is love that compels us to hold thee, lest thou flutter and fly away.'

6 'OUR BROTHER-IN-LAW HAS SENT US AN OFFERING'

How Tilak came to Jalalpur, what he saw and the present he sent to his son.

TO Jalalpur too came Tilak's daily letters, sometimes furious ones, sometimes in excess of fury an empty sheet of paper. When I received a sheet of blank paper for a letter I used to cry. If anyone asked me why I was crying I would show them the empty page People used to say the page was not blank, that there was some hidden device in it. Whoever would send a letter with only blank paper! Lakshmi must be able to decipher it. I would only cry the more

Tilak came three times to Jalalpur to see me. He was in exceedingly good health now The first time he came, Vishnu was prepared to thrash him He was ranging all round with an axe in his hand 'Say what you like to him,' I said, 'quarrel with him, but do not hurt him.' Dattu spoke up, 'If I see any one hurting my father, I shall kill him.'

Tilak arrived. Behind him came the leading men from Gangapur, and a swarm of children Of course all the people of Jalalpur gathered too. In a small village the neighbours always collect to see even an ordinary visitor. Tilak was well

known and changed beyond all dreaming. He came to the house, but Vishnu would not come out. My elder brother Keshav was not at home. Standing in front of the door, in the midst of a crowd, Tilak exchanged two words with me and left.

The second time he came, Keshav was at home. We took Tilak in, and gave him a seat. There was no quarrelling, and no fighting After another five or six months Tilak came back again. Neither of my brothers were in the house this time. I had just bathed, and washed my hair, and it was loose; in order to reply to interfering gossips I had painted my whole forehead with one big red *kunku* mark, the sign that my husband was still alive Thus with flowing locks, an enormous *kunku* decorating my whole brow and hands on hips, like Medusa herself, I stood before Tilak. There was a European woman with him, and the two of them were standing in the courtyard.

The European said to me, 'Lakshmibai, see what a good man your husband is! He has not married again' The instant I heard this I blazed up at her Pointing to Tilak I gave my answer. 'He has brought you here as a pleader, has he? How is he so good? And am I bad? Neither have I married again yet. I am married to him only. There is no need for you to come and mediate between us. He will say to me himself what he has to say' After this she kept quiet.

The children of the house were behind me, behind them my sisters-in-law, beyond Tilak and the European woman the people of Jalalpur and Gangapur with their children. The stage was set.

'Is everything all right?' Tilak asked.

I replied, 'Everything is going very well, as you have arranged it. There is no need to worry about anything.'

This conversation ended here, and Tilak and the Madam returned with the village people following them.

The European who came to Jalalpur with Tilak told him at once, that she was convinced his wife would come to him, and come very soon. Some days later she wrote me a letter saying, 'Come to your husband. I shall give you ten rupees a month.' I replied, 'Not for any money shall I return to my husband.'

This European woman was the famous Zenana missionary of Nasik, Miss Harvey, commonly known as 'Ayee' or 'Mother'. Thirty years later when we came to Nasik we had experience of her loving kindness. As she was dying she called to me

three or four times, 'Lakshmibai, Lakshmibai'. Yet the first time I saw her I greeted her as I have just described.

The reason why I wore so large a *kunku* is as follows: One day my sister-in-law found that in the village I was not counted among those whose husbands were alive I had been invited to a dinner for the village priest, to which only women whose husbands were living could go. Behind my back my sister-in-law had accepted the invitation, then later she went down to the river. The women of the village were standing talking on the steps beside the water. She pulled up on hearing them mention my name 'What is this? Lakshmi's husband is manifestly out-of-caste, and you have invited her with the married woman, to the feast of the goddess!'

'That's quite right I forgot all about it. Now what are we to do?'

'What indeed? Let her come to dinner, and invite another woman for the worship of the goddess.'

Having overheard this conversation my sister-in-law came forward and said, 'Excuse me, I did not know Lakshmi had vowed not to eat in another's house She will not be coming to dine with you, so invite some other woman in her place' This was just what the women wanted Ramabai told me and my elder sister-in-law all about it later, adding, 'Lakshmi, take a vow not to accept any invitation to dinner'

I never went against my sisters-in-law, so now I took a vow not to eat anyone else's food; and as long as I was in Jalalpur they for their part never went out anywhere for a meal They could not endure to hear anyone say a word against me To have such sisters-in-law is one of God's great mercies.

My two brothers' sons were six years old Dattu was five. Everyone in the house began to think of investing them with the sacred thread of the Brahmans. It was decided to hold a ceremony for the three boys together Some people, however, said that Dattu should not be included If his father decided to take him away later, the money spent on the ceremony would be wasted. Keshav said, 'Never mind It will cost nothing to remove the thread from his shoulder. I shall have his investiture first, and then that of our boys' He had been to Nasik to ask an astrologer if the ceremony could be performed for all three boys that year or not. The arrangement had been proclaimed auspicious.

Keshav brought back the news from Nasik that the town of Nasik was to be made like the city of Bombay, and the villages of Jalalpur and Gangapur like the town of Nasik. Everyone was delighted with the thought of small hamlets being converted into prosperous towns. Keshav had to make many journeys into Nasik to arrange for the ceremony. He brought further news one time, that a new disease had been discovered. While you were looking at him one or two lumps would rise on a man's body, especially in his armpits, and he would fall down dead. Great was the alarm caused in the village by this news.

The arrangements for the investiture were complete at last. My sister-in-law said to my brother, 'If you like, limit what you do for our own sons, but Dattu's ceremony must be properly held. Do not do anything that might hurt Lakshmi. It is her one and only ceremony.'

Keshav replied, 'I am spending most on his investiture. Do not worry.' However an investiture cannot be performed in a maternal uncle's house, nor on a maternal uncle's knee, so now the question arose as to what should be done. Keshav wrote a letter to Sakharam inviting him to take part in the ceremony. His reply was that Keshav should bring Dattu and the other two boys to Pandharpur, and he would bear the expenses of the ceremonies for all three. My brothers were very disappointed with this reply. They had written of one thing and Sakharam had answered another. We entertained ourselves for some four days wondering why Sakharam, who was willing to pay for all three, could send not even a farthing for Dattu.

Keshav next wrote to Pendse inviting him to perform the ceremony. Pendse replied, 'I have vowed no vow that Tilak should abandon his wife and I should hold his son on my knee for his thread ceremony. I shall share as much of the expense as you like. I cannot bear to be present at the ceremony.'

Announcements had been sent out that Dattu's ceremony would be performed first, and that of my brothers' sons later. Only on the card sent to Tilak the dates were reversed. This was in order that he should not know the date of Dattu's investiture, but should know only that it was arranged. It was feared that he might do something to obstruct the ceremony on the day, if he knew when it was to be. People wept for three days at Dattu's investiture. The village priest held him on his knee. He too was in tears, poor man, because he had no son.

'This,' said he, 'is the state of a boy with a father, and this the state of men with no children.' In short, Dattu's thread ceremony was well watered with the heart's tears of all the guests. With much weeping, but no other obstruction, Dattu received his sacred thread.

Just as the gods were set out for the boys' ceremony four enormous letters arrived from Tilak, to my brothers two, one for Pendse, and one for me. These letters contained a tapestry of all that was in his mind. What was lacking? Everything was laid out even to a million curses and threats of the law.

'Our brother-in law has sent us the prescribed offering of robes for the ceremony,' Keshav remarked.

7 THE CLERK OF JALALPUR

A digression to be excused and enjoyed by the Reader.

THE way of life in a village is very picturesque. The whole village is one big family Every single one is concerned about, and full of care for everyone else. Our common sympathy in Jalalpur prevented caste differences from being resented. The lower castes were never offended by the high-caste rites of purifications, nor were the lower castes held in contempt by the higher castes No shade of misunderstanding ever appeared in our village family on account of the caste system. In difficulty, illness and trouble they all became each other's guides and helpers, and shared their joys and sorrows. I at least found this true in my experience. Things may not be in that state now. I am writing of thirty or thirty five years ago. The villages nowadays have become, by train and motor, mere verandas or courtyards of big cities.

At the break of the monsoon a woman came with news, that there had been a theft at the village-clerk's house and Aunt Uma was in floods of tears. Only when and how the theft

had been committed was not known. As soon as I heard the news I asked permission of my sister-in-law and went round to their house. Truly on arrival I found Aunt Uma with her voice lifted up to the heavens.

'What has happened, Aunt?'

'What can I tell you? The Clerk has gone to Nasik. He has arranged a wedding for Baba, his brother, and today we are robbed of five to seven thousand rupees. Not so much as a gold bead or wedding necklace is left.'

The clerk's household was a big one. Two of his sons were married and the third was still young.

'When was the theft? Whose wedding? I do not know what you are talking about, Aunt Uma.'

Taking me by the hand she led me upstairs, and showed me the spot from which the things had been taken. A hundred times had I been there and never suspected the place of containing their treasure. There was a cupboard in a wall. It appeared exceedingly small from the outside, but in reality there was room for an ordinary man to creep inside. No one had ever the least suspicion that this cupboard contained anything special. From our childhood we had played a hundred thousand times in that room. Crouching inside the cupboard you could insert your fingers into a split like a half moon in the upper plank, having slipped the plank to one side it was necessary to jump up and worm oneself along on one's stomach; seven or eight cubits beyond stood a large earthen water jar. All the gold and coins of the house had been placed in that. Aunt Uma led me into this cupboard and told me to slide the plank along, draw myself up by my hands, then lying down work forwards.

'See,' she said, 'if you find anything.'

I did as I was told. My very life dripped out in sweat. There was little or no light inside. Only two or three silver vessels were left in the pot.

'There is nothing there,' I said, 'only two silver dishes.'

There was famine at the time and a great many robberies in the village, but it was not possible that this should have been done by an outsider. For fear of thieves the corporation of the pot had been filled with all the jewellery of all the women in the house, from thick gold bands to thin gold threads. Even ornaments in daily use had been consigned to the care of 'Mr Pot'. I was convinced the theft had been committed by the

clerk himself, to prevent Baba his brother from getting anything for his wedding; and in order that he should not be suspected he had departed to Nasik with the wedding as an excuse.

The clerk had arranged a second marriage for his brother, who already had one wife called Gita. The day after the theft the clerk and his wife came to us with an invitation. Both of them pressed me to attend the wedding.

'You will only sit and weep here,' they said, 'at the wedding you will be able to forget your troubles'

After hesitation and wavering I went with Dattu.

It was a journey of fourteen miles and the wedding procession was all in bullock carts. Some of them had covers of matting and some had none It began to rain on the way. The cart with the rice and provisions was washed out. The sack of flour became solid dough, and the sack of sugar dissolved away, but our clerk's mind was undisturbed, his home had been looted and his goods drenched in the rain; he neither wilted nor showed a single sign of grief We were a wedding party of some twenty five people. Although I had come to the wedding I was in no wise at my ease I saw no cause for blame in Baba's first wife and disapproved of this second marriage. One could not miscall Gita for her looks or her character, nor yet for her work She never lifted even her head. She always called me Aunt, and her husband called me 'Tai', as if I were related to them both. Although we were a different caste of Brahmans, we always felt at home in their house I was therefore by no means pleased that this well behaved girl should have to endure a second wife

Girding up his loins the Clerk pushed the wedding through in two days. Borrowing jewellery for the bride from the women guests he carried the day off in triumph. The bride's relatives began to grumble amongst themselves, saying that, if not a head ornament and girdle, at least there might have been a nose-ornament left in the house to give the bride. Though the Clerk overheard this he was not in the least perturbed. This only increased my suspicions. I said to him, 'I do not believe there has been a theft.'

To which he replied, 'Ram and the river Ganga know what has happened.'

'Why take Ram's name?' I said, 'say, the Clerk and Gita know what has happened.' The only answer he vouchsafed was, 'Let it be as you say.'

On Monday the guests for the happy occasion sat down to dinner. Our village priest Vishwanath and his daughter Sundri were leaving to see the procession of the gods at Trimbakeshwar. Sundri asked me if she could take Dattu to see the procession. As I could not go, I replied, 'Take him with you. But take care of him.'

Away she went with Dattu.

The guests were all seated. Hardly had they begun when they rose up and washed their hands again. From end to end in a winking the house was deserted. Only three or four of us were left. Aunt Uma was in the kitchen, Aunt Bhima in the store-room, and upstairs Gita and myself.

'How is the dinner over so quickly?' said I to her.

'Everyone is tired of eating sweet food everyday,' she said.

After a little while someone called up from below, 'Lakshmibai Tilak.' No one ever called me Lakshmibai Tilak, in those parts. So when I heard the voice, I began to tremble all over. The hair of my head stood on end I thought Tilak had caused a warrant to be issued. Again the same call. My heart failed me. There was a policeman standing below He called me down and Gita followed. He began to question me.

'Where is your son?'

'What do you want with him? Am I not here?'

'No! No! Has he not been lost?'

Hearing this Gita came forward to say, 'Yes, he is lost.

Where is he?'

'Was there any jewellery on him?'

'None at all.'

Then only did he bring in Dattu whom he had kept standing outside. My heart sank to rest now. Dattu had got lost at the sacred spring of the river. He had let Sundri's hand go in the crush, then begun clutching at the hand of any woman in a red widow's sari and wrapped in a white *dhotar*. There were many like that in the crowd, but none of the women were prepared to take his hand. In this way he slipped out of the crowd, and made straight for the Nasik cross-road. He and the policeman there conversed for a bit. Dattu requested him to take him back to his uncle. His uncle's house had a great many sweets. His uncle would give him a whole wide basket full. When names were asked he gave his father's as Nana, and mine as Lakshmibai Tilak. There had been only two

weddings in the village, one from Jalalpur, and one from Nasik, so it did not take the policeman long to find me out. It now flashed into my mind that the dinner had been upset on account of Dattu.

Once before the only son of a wealthy man had been lost there, and later was found dead, having fallen over the wall of the fort. As soon as Dattu came back, everyone gathered again like bees. Sundri's heart swelled to the size of a winnowing basket. The Clerk was still wandering about outside in his dinner clothes He returned disconsolate to find the scene described. He immediately went into the house and brought out a basket of twenty-four pounds weight of sweets; he laid it in front of the policeman, and then drawing five rupees out of his waistband he said, 'Sir, today you have washed a black stain from my face, and returned her wealth to my sister.'

That same Clerk who had been unmoved by a theft, or the drenching of his sacks could not endure the loss of Dattu. Before my eyes I see a line from Govindagraza's *Song of Maharashtra,* 'Oh Maharashtra thy mind is as generous as a Deshastha Brahman' From my own experience I can say that the heart of the Deshasth people is kinder and more generous than that of the Konkan The policeman touched not a particle of the sweets nor one pice of the five rupees. The Clerk then told him all my story. He was the more pleased when he learned that I was the niece of Uncle Govindrao. The next day the policeman's whole family were invited to dinner.

We returned to Jalalpur. On the way back I saw standing by the river Baba's first wife Gita. She called out to me, 'Aunt Lakshmi, have you brought back another niece?' These words pierced deep into my heart. I said nothing but went home thinking of this poor soul's fate.

Immediately after the entrance ceremony of the bride into her home she returned again to her mother, and the first wife was sent for. Now began the investigations into the theft. Gita was asked why she had left her father's house, and come back unasked while everyone was away at the wedding.

'Aunt Lakshmi sent for me.'

It was quite true I had asked her to come. I had composed a most heartrending song about her, and had called her to learn it. Hearing that I had invited her, her husband at once came to me. His lips were trembling. His eyes looked bloodshot. He was terribly angry.

'Tai, The Clerk has sent for you,' he said.

'Why? What does he want?'

'Come and you will see.'

We knew that the investigation was going on at their house. It was Friday and my day for a strict fast. My sisters-in law did not want me to go. Neither of my brothers was at home. My sisters-in-law said, 'Take care, or you may be blamed for something.'

'For what?' I said, 'God is the protector of the true.' I went. I found the Clerk and Aunt Uma sitting on the raised veranda outside the house.

'Why did you send for me?' I asked.

'See what Baba's wife says,' said she.

I went inside Clasping Gita to my breast I wept freely saying:

'What a plight is this you are in You are like my own niece Gharu to me. You have no mother. What will become of you?'

Sorrow had met sorrow Her heart was shaken, and her tears began to fall. Hugging me she said· 'I gave them your name without thinking.'

'Then indeed you have everything, and you yourself took the jewellery? Then please give everything back'

'They are not here They are in Gangapur.'

'Everything is found Aunt Uma. I am going now,' I said coming out.

'Do not go now, produce the things.'

We both left Jalalpur for Gangapur There was water upto the knees in the river. The strength of the current began dragging us both down. It entered into my mind that Mother Godavari, should now take me, but at once I thought of what would become of Dattu Baba's wife dragged out two boxes, from where she had hidden them, and gave them to me.

All of a sudden a voice came from out of the dark, 'You hag Why did you confess?'

'Because Aunt Lakshmi was being blamed instead of me, and it was not fair.' Just as the two of us were leaving the Clerk himself appeared.

'We have everything,' I said.

'Have you looked in to see?'

'No.'

'Oh, you fool, how do you know the boxes are not full of stones?'

When we opened them to see, all the jewellery was there; but it was broken up and crushed. We returned at eight o'clock at night with the boxes. Aunt Uma was very pleased.

'Lakshmi, truly you are a veritable treasure, not only in name. You have brought my treasure back to me.'

8 I MEET A CHRISTIAN WOMAN

Lakshmi invests her money. She leaves her own relations, and meets a Christian woman for the first time.

TILAK contented himself with letters, and there was no more trouble from him, but one day after dinner our woman servant took the vessels down to the river to scour. There she left them in the water, and fled through the village screaming that a Saheb had come! Immediately stir and confusion ensued. Neither in the house nor in the village were there any men. They had all gone to the fields. To the fields also had gone my aunt, sisters-in-law, and the children. The only people in the house were Dattu, my brother's sick son and myself. I let Dattu down over the wall by the backdoor, and told him to go off where he liked. My nephew had fever. It was not possible for me to leave him, and run away.

With a hand resting on either door-post I stood awaiting the Saheb. Women were to be seen running down the street. One raced away holding the end of a blanket, and trailing the rest on the ground. Another was running with a broom in her hand. Many a one rushed off, her baby still at her breast. Clutching wooden spoon, ladle or tin funnel they fled helter-skelter. All of a flutter inside, I screwed up my face, and stood in the doorway to meet the coming disaster. Behold, the disaster, in the shape of the Saheb, before the door! With him were the Head Officer of the village, the Clerk, the village servants and a great disorderly mob. The front door was open.

'Who is at home?' the Saheb asked.

'No one. All the women ran away when they saw you coming.'

'Is anyone ill?'

'No one. Go in, and see if you like.'

They peered about a little, and betook themselves off. My spirits revived. Slowly everyone began to gather. As soon as my brothers heard the news they came back in a hurry from the fields. 'So this is how Nasik has become Bombay!' they said, 'it is our life that has become a Bombay.' The vessels left to soak in the river came home next day.

I had received a great deal of money at the thread ceremony. It now began to itch in my pocket. I told my brother I had about sixty or seventy rupees; I would now start a business in peanuts. Money makes money. There would be profit in trade, and I would no longer have to sit, and worry over Dattu's education. My brother said I would not be able to manage it, I had no idea how difficult a business it was. It would be better to lend my money on usury. I was pleased with this advice, and bit by bit, as occasion arose lent him all my money. I have yet to collect both the capital and its interest.

Dattu's health here was not as it was at Pandharpur. He had malaria, and twice or three times a day would have shivering fits. His uncle applied many remedies, but there was no improvement.

'How was it he kept well at Nagpur and Pandharpur?' I began to say, 'and how is it he is not well here? If he is not well, for whose well-being I must spend my life, then what is the use of staying here?'

Yet where could I live? For fear of Tilak the people in the house would permit me to go nowhere. Finally I made up my mind to go to Tilak's brother in Pandharpur. But how could I get away? All my money had been lent to my brother. If I asked Tilak for money Pendse was sure to hear it in Nagar. Only recently Keshav had gone there. What would happen if Tilak went and told them? At last I wrote a letter to Tilak, 'I am writing you in secret, so promise you will tell no one'. Tilak replied as soon as he saw my letter, 'Man is prone to err. Even the greatest of saints have made mistakes. Do not be disturbed about the past. Though all

your people, or though the world should forsake you, you will never be forsaken by me. Say the word and I shall come to take you away. Look after yourself well.'

So this was the answer to my letter! I was stricken senseless. I did not know whether to laugh or to cry. There was one comfort—that he loved me so much. I sent him a reply by return, 'I have committed no fault. My relations have not thrown me off, nor yet has the world. For three months Dattu has had fever. I want to take him to Pandharpur but have no money. If my relations find out that I have borrowed, they will not let me go, so without letting it be known, send the fare for three people to Pandharpur. I shall go to your brother Sakharam.'

He sent the money at once, and promised to send ten rupees every month to his brother.

Immediately I prepared to leave for Pandharpur. I took my aunt with me, because otherwise she would have worried about Dattu. Keshav was against my going. 'I do not approve,' he said, 'of you going un-invited to someone who did not help in Dattu's thread ceremony by one farthing. If you go in despite, then never show me your face again.' To which I replied, 'It is not that I am pleased to go, but I must for Dattu's sake.' My sister-in-law said, 'If it is for Dattu's sake then go, but you are no trouble to us here. Only do not go to Tilak.' My younger sister-in-law was very sorry. She had nursed Dattu herself from the time he was eleven days old.

I left Jalalpur and arrived in Nasik in a bullock cart. I spent one night there with my cousin Mahabal. He too disapproved of my going to Pandharpur. Many people there tried to prevent me but I answered, 'I must look to Dattu's health.'

Dattu had fever. At the station there was an inspection for plague. I did not know such an inspection had begun. I caught the evening train. My mind was racing like the engine. I was breathing heavily. 'If only Dattu should be well,' I thought, 'if only I do not have to fall at my brothers' feet again, that is enough.'

The next morning about nine o'clock the train drew up at Nagar station. Since Tilak was at Nagar, naturally I began to scan the station with eager, excited glance. At that moment a strange looking woman came towards our compartment. It was my custom to make room for anyone coming into a carriage,

but this woman I invited to sit beside me. From the way she had put on her sari, skirt-wise instead of divided, her jacket sleeves reaching to her wrists, only two bangles on either hand, no *kunku* on her forehead, and yet still speaking Marathi, I deduced she would be a Christian. This led me deliberately to make her sit beside me.

I was relieved that my aunt was sitting on the opposite bench with the woman we had brought with us and Dattu, because my aunt was sharp tongued, liable to say anything anywhere, and I wanted information about Tilak from this woman. Cautiously I began a conversation with her:

'Where are you going Bai?'

'To Kedgaon.'

'Who have you in Nagar?'

'Our home is in Nagar My sister is in Kedgaon. I am going to see her. But why are you crying?'

'Because none of my other children have lived and this boy is not well today either.'

'Where have you come from?'

'From Rajnandgaon'

'Where are you going?'

'To my brother-in-law at Pandharpur. We shall see if the boy keeps better there'

'What is your name?'

'Manu' (This being my original name.)

'And your surname?'

'Joshi.'

'Do you know Tilak who was in Rajnandgaon?'

'Yes, but he is now a Christian He used to live near us there.'

'We too are Christians'

Now this woman began to talk to me about Tilak quite unreservedly. Dattu's fever began to mount. I said to her, 'Bai, his temperature is going up and there will soon be an inspection. What shall I do?'

'Put cold water on his hands and feet and let him have some air', she advised, 'then there will be no trouble at the inspection.'

'Where are you getting out?'

'At Dhond.'

'If you have to get out there, will you see me into the next train please?'

'There is nothing much in that. After this train has left, the

next one is for Pandharpur. Tell a porter and he will put you in.'

'What is your name?'

'Rajas Kukade.'

Thus continuing our conversation, we came to Dhond. I did as she told me and Dattu's fever vanished. As she got down from the carriage, I grasped her hand tightly.

'You will help me won't you? Have you recognized who I am?'

'How could I know you?'

'I am the wife of that Tilak about whom we have talked for so long.'

9 GOSAVI'S FATHER

Encounter with a thief How husband and wife were brought together.

GREAT was Rajasbai's consternation when she understood that I was Lakshmibai Tilak She probably thought that during our long conversation about Tilak she had dropped some inopportune remark However knowing who I was, she arranged everything for me, before she left for Kedgaon. The moment we descended from the train we were caught in a cordon All the carriages were locked, and to each in turn came a doctor, police and railway officials with a rope barricade, then, as animals loosed from a pen, the people in the carriages were herded into the enclosure. After everyone had been inspected by the doctor, the passengers passed were given permission to proceed The people from our 'pen' were likewise examined I was terrified for Dattu, but his hands were quite cool, and he was passed at once and we then went to sit and wait for the Pandharpur train at the other side. The train came in at its appointed time, and we reached Pandharpur station at ten o'clock at night. We were surrounded by a crowd of priests the second we set foot on the platform. I told

them we were going to Tilak's house, we were not pilgrims, and they went away.

We hired a bullock cart, and the driver told us the carts would leave for Pandharpur as soon as the moon was up; till then we should rest in the Pilgrim's shelter, and he would call us when it was time to leave. The three of us with Dattu went and lay down in the shelter. At the time I had with me in cash and jewellery a wealth of ten or twelve hundred rupees. My nose-ornament alone was worth three hundred rupees. I put the bundle containing my riches under my head. My aunt slept in the middle. Worn out with the journey everyone's eyes closed at once. I was wakened by someone pinching my foot. I had heard stories of bundles being removed from under a sleeper's head by pinching his foot. I lay still as I was, and told my aunt to light the candle, then sat up clasping my bundle to my stomach. There was a man standing at my feet.

'Who are you?' I asked sharply, 'shall I call the police?'

He replied, 'I am a traveller. You can go to sleep. There is still plenty of time before the moon comes up.'

Who would trust the advice of a thief? We spent the rest of the time sitting up. Now my aunt's tongue was unleashed, and all her conversation was about our opulence. I tried to hush her up, and she continued to boast about the jewellery she and Pendse had.

The moon was up. The cart left, but there was only one cart. A man continued to run behind us. I asked him why he was following. He replied:

'I am following you because there is a fear of thieves further on.' Was this not the echo of a thief?

'What trouble will robbers give us?' I said, 'and what can they take from us? We are on our way to Pandharpur to earn our living by baking bread in a poor house. Why tire yourself out for nothing?'

On this our 'protector' fell behind, and our anxiety receded into the distance.

Both Tilak and I had written to Sakharam, so he and his wife were sitting waiting for us. According to the Indian custom they both greeted me, and said their house was mine. I was to treat them as I treated Dattu.

Having performed the worship of God due from pilgrims to Pandharpur, my aunt and our travelling companion returned.

Sakharam and his wife behaved to me in the house as if I were someone in authority, and gave me the honour due to the wife of the elder brother. There were no sister-in-law's quarrels between us. On the contrary, if anyone came with a request or to say anything, Rakhmai would point to me, and say, 'Ask her, I am not the mistress.' The running of the house was put into my hands and Rakhmai worked under me Here too I continued my religious exercises with great fervour and strictness.

My whole anxiety was for Dattu Though I sent him to school, I used also to teach him myself morning and evening. He went regularly to school One day as he was on his way a horse came up at full gallop When he saw that it was coming straight towards him, Dattu lay flat, and the horse passed over without doing him any harm When I heard this, I began to take him to school myself, and return to bring him back again As he had promised, Tilak sent a money order for ten rupees. We were indulging in a furious correspondence. Sometimes his letters were most perverse, and I would go to the temple and sit for hours crying I had time to do that, because I ate only once in the day Sometimes people would reproach me, and I would be deeply hurt. Sometimes their arrows pierced right through my heart On top of that, now and again, Sakharam would add to it, so that I was nearly out of my mind. I could see no road I could take

One day I said to Sakharam, 'Sakharam, have you no pity for me? I can endure it no more Will you do one thing for me?'

'What can I do? Tell me' 'Send a letter telling everyone that I have run away with Dattu I care no more for honour and dishonour I am wearied of everyone. Make a list of everything I have belonging to my sister. I shall leave them all with you. I cannot let her say, "The guest has vanished, and the food gone with him".'

'Where will you go?'

'I shall go where the road leads me. Once I have left I shall write you. I myself have not decided where to go. I shall live my life for Dattu. Somehow or other I shall earn enough to feed us both, and educate him. For a short time at least I shall be free from this persecution.'

Sakharam approved of my plan!

The day before I had met a woman in the temple of Vithoba. Seeing me weeping she had come near and listened to my pitiful story with the greatest sympathy. She also had a sad tale to tell. Her husband and she were both old, and their only son had just died. They had no one left in their old age. Making one pilgrimage after another they had come to Pandharpur. They intented to go to Gangapur the next day, to spend the remainder of their lives there. Tears had come into her eyes as she listened to my story.

'I am young,' I said to her, 'I need someone's protection yet. Take me with you. It will be easy to worship the gods there. Let me call you Mother. There is no escape for me other than going into hiding for a while.' This woman agreed to my suggestion. The next day I spoke to Sakharam as already related. Later, everyone having been consulted, it was agreed that I should go, and I began to pack up my things. We were to leave in the evening of the following day, but that night a wire came.

It was in English, 'Gosavi's father coming'. There was no signature, no more. Everyone was puzzled as to who the father of the Gosavi—or holy man, could be.

The next day Tilak came and stood before us. His telegram was, 'Go, says father coming', meaning, God has told me to go and I am coming. But in a telegraph office who considers God and His messages? The operator thought the Gosavi's father must be coming, and put a wire to that effect into Sakharam's hand.

Tilak had come from Wai to Pandharpur. This is what had happened. A very simple godfearing and loving Christian woman, called Ashammabai Shaikh Umar lived at Wai. Tilak called her his mother. Tilak having become Christian, many interfering people began to try to arrange another marriage for him. The hope that I would return to him was for the most part abandoned. It was nearly five years since he had become Christian.

These words are found written in his diary six months after he was baptized. 'At night a carriage passed by my door and I opened the window to look out and see if my wife had come. I waited so till one o'clock. O God, have mercy on this Thy lowly servant, on her Thy lowly handmaid and that innocent

child. Bring us together for Thy glory. It is my belief that I shall receive the answer to my prayer this week.' (26 August 1895)

The previous day he says in his diary, 'Oh God, it is Thy will that my wife should come to me, but I am impatient. Have mercy on me.' It will be seen from this what Tilak was feeling, and in this state he continued for nearly five years. Now and again he would be entangled in thoughts of a second marriage but only for a moment.

On his way to and from Mahabaleshwar he never failed to visit his 'Mother,' and stay a couple of days with her. Ashammabai's husband and children had all died but true to her name she remained the incarnation of hope. Tilak stayed with her on his way down from Mahabaleshwar. Morning and night the two of them prayed fervently to God about me. One day they had prayed with the greatest earnestness, 'Not for us, but for Thy glory bring back mother and child.' Prayers being over, Ashammabai gave Tilak ten rupees saying, 'Send a wire and go at once to Pandharpur. Lakshmi is coming without fail.' Both of them thought that it was God's command that Tilak, instead of going to Nagar, should come straight for me. Accordingly Tilak set out and twelve hours before I was due to leave for Gangapur he arrived in Pandharpur.

10 REUNION

Tilak takes his wife to Nagar.

I WAS overjoyed to see Tilak. My plan of going to Gangapur fell to the ground. I spent two or three very happy days. There was in Pandharpur an old clerk of Pendse's. As soon as he heard that Tilak had come he sent for me. I went. Said he, 'If you are leaving here, go to Jalalpur. I shall give you the money. If you attempt to go away with Tilak keep it in mind that I shall take the appropriate steps.'

'I am not going to Jalalpur,' I replied, 'Dattu falls ill there. I shall stay here.'

As I left, the clerk gave me another warning, 'See that you take care what you do.'

When I arrived home Tilak asked me at once, 'Why did he send for you?'

'For nothing,' I said.

'How for nothing? No one sends for me for nothing.'

Only when he continued to insist did I tell him all that had been said.

After these happenings, within two days, that clerk was transferred from Pandharpur. To the very end I never solved the riddle of how it happened.

Sakharam would not speak to anyone. Neither to his wife, his brother, his sister-in-law nor to Dattu, even with his own eleven or twelve months old baby he was, as it were, not on speaking terms. We, his relations, could not understand the cause. Because he would not speak, the whole household also undertook a vow of silence. As time went on, everyone became heartily tired of the situation. Tilak in the end broke the spell by saying, 'I must arrange for Dattu's education. Now is the time for him to learn. Once his education lags behind it is a lifelong loss. Come with me to Nagar. I shall rent a separate house for you.'

'Why to Nagar?' I said, 'Give me a separate house here.'

'You have picked up my gauntlet. In all my life I never remember saying anything to which you agreed. Until today I have listened to you. Now at last shall I listen no more. I shall not let the boy suffer by dancing after you. I give you till half-past five today Within that time make your decision. I have given you five and a half years to consider things. Now I can give you no more time I shall take Dattu. If you do not let me then I have other ways open to me.' As he spoke his voice rose. In the end it reached the top of the scale. Both my sister-in-law and I were afraid, and began to look at one another. Again he said severely, 'I give you till half-past five. If not, within one week I shall show you what I can do.'

Having spoken, he went out for a walk.

I rose and went into the kitchen. I felt as if I were in the midst of a blazing forest. I could see leaping flames on all sides. Rakhmai came in. She embraced me and both of us wept copiously.

'Lakshmi, tell me what I can do for you. I am ready to do anything you say.'

'What can you do? God will perform whatever He proposes. I am besieged from all sides. You heard everything. He meant, "I take the boy, and you can sit slaving in another's house".'

'Lakshmi, rather than that, go with him. He never said you should become a Christian and if such a thing should happen send a letter here. I shall send you money.'

'Where can you get money?'

'I shall do as I like. No one gives you wise advice. To one this road is evil, to another that, and between them you are crushed. Some say he will marry you to someone else, some that he will make you cook meat. Can anyone stop such gossip? You are welcome here at any time and in any state, I shall give you the very food from my mouth. You have as much authority in this house as I have. My husband's brother comes here, then why not his wife?'

In the evening the two brothers came home together. No one spoke, and no one could eat their dinner. The next day Rakhmai began to do my packing. She tied together a bundle too big to be lifted in one hand. Everything was in it from pepper and salt to chutney. As she made up the parcel she wept.

We both asked Sakharam if I could go. He put his hands over his ears. This was his only answer. Rakhmai gave me a bath. She cried continuously. To herself she muttered, 'Now at my daughter's wedding to whom shall I bow? Lakshmi is as good as dead to me.'

The cart arrived. Tilak, Dattu and I sat in it. As soon as the cart appeared Sakharam went out. Rakhmai had on her ceremonially clean sari. Even so, with her baby on her hip and barefooted, she followed us. We had left without saying good-bye to Sakharam.

Tilak continued to comfort his sister-in-law and tell her to go back. She continued to warn him to look after me and Dattu.

'She is your sister-in-law, but she is my wife,' he replied. 'If you are so sorry for her, then think of how grieved I must be.'

I was staring fixedly at Vithoba's temple, which latterly had been my place of rest. Within my own heart I was repeating,

'Oh God, a torch in either hand, wittingly I leap into this river of trouble. Save me if thou wilt. Kill me if thou wilt. But do not throw me again on someone else's mercy.' I was weeping steadily. Though Tilak was outwardly trying to preserve his stern air, he was by nature very tender hearted, and seeing the state we were in was bursting with love and grief. Dattu was delighted to be allowed to ride in the cart and later he was to have the joy of sitting in the train.

As far as possible Rakhmai followed lifting her feet smartly. The cart was driven faster. She stood watching us. In a little while we could see her no more. Sob after sob broke from me.

'Why behave like a lunatic?' said Tilak. 'I shall never force you to be a Christian. I liked the religion, so I accepted it. If you like it and accept it, it will make me very happy, but I shall never press you. All the things you have heard about this religion are completely false. You will be married off to no one. You will never have to cook meat Who filled your head with such ideas? Today a letter has come from Dr Hume saying that he has taken a house at twenty-five rupees rent for you. It is a Brahman's house. Pots, pans and everything have been put in. Also the house is near Pendse's Why cry over nothing?'

I have experienced the truth of Tilak's words. During thirty-five years meat has never been cooked in our house.

At the station Tilak brought us some fruit and sweets. For himself what? He went to a Mohammedan restaurant. The train came and took us away. We arrived in Nagar at three o'clock.

As we began to approach the station, Dattu and I were filled with qualms. We hoped that Pendse had no idea we were coming to Nagar The gift from heaven we so much dreaded stood before us. The train had hardly drawn up at the station before Pendse was beside our carriage with Kakasaheb Mirikar and other friends. This group had come to meet someone or to see someone off. When we saw him, Dattu's feet and mine became rooted to the ground. Tilak went out quite fearlessly.

On seeing me, Pendse said, 'What brings you here?'

'I have come for Dattu's education. He was not well. I shall take a house and stay here.'

'Very well. Where are you going now?'

'Wherever you say.'

Pendse sent me and Dattu and our things to his own house. Tilak went to his own lodgings.

11 HOSPITALITY

Lakshmi is driven out of caste and learns to live with Christians.

THIS day the hospitality extended to me was of another kind. I went into the house and saw no one, only little Yesu came forward and began to ask me why I had come. I put her off saying, I just thought I would. My new sari, jackets, jewellery etc., I handed to Yesu to give to my sister. I took off my clothes defiled by the journey and put them to one side to be washed The servant gave me hot water. I bathed, and taking my washed sari to my new lodging hung it out to dry for the morrow The house was near, and I found it with the help of Yesu

No sooner did I appear there, then all the womenfolk gathered like bees. They signed to each other, some with their eyes, some with their fingers, and some with only a turn of the head. They thought I would not understand, but I understood everything.

I now surveyed my new establishment Tilak had written to Dr Hume from Pandharpur, and he had taken a room in a Brahman's house and furnished it. In place of the usual brass plates and bowls, there were China cups, saucers and plates; instead of our big, round spoons and ladles were knives, forks and spoons. I had never seen such things in my life before.

Having hung my sari out to dry and returned to Pendse I received a message from Tilak saying he wanted tea. Now, though the house was rented, Tilak was master of the place, master of his wife! I went and made tea for him.

'If you are tired now,' he said, 'go and dine with Pendse.

I shall not come in to a meal in the evening. I shall come tomorrow.'

He did not tell me that before my arrival the landlord had said that he, Tilak, was not to come to the house. If he insisted he must look for another house.

I returned to Pendse, and he to his own rooms. I began to build castles in the air. Was not I to live with Bhiku as my neighbour? I came back to Pendse's house. Their evening meal was over. No one would speak to me. There was a big pot of jam cooking on the fire. The cook placed a dish before me, on which there was one fourth of a cake of coarse *Bajri* bread and some salt. No one even stood nearby. Tears streamed down my cheeks. Dattu was fed and sleeping quietly.

Tilak having dined in his own rooms was probably calmly sitting writing. It was never in his nature to worry over much. When the landlord told him to look for another house he comforted himself with the thought that this too was the will of God. Why should one worry? The landlord had been paid in advance

Tilak was coming to breakfast in the morning, something must be prepared for him, so rising early I betook myself to my own new home. For two days my stomach had been given nothing but one quarter of a cake of unleavened bread eaten with salt. When I left Pandharpur I could not eat, it was not possible to eat by the way owing to religious scruples, and all I had received from Pendse was one bit of bread.

Arriving in my new house I tidied it up, did the cooking, and sat waiting for Tilak. My mind was darkened with premonitions. From room to the door, door to the window, I dragged myself without ceasing. Dattu was with Pendse, I was here and Tilak in some third place. Though we were in the same town, by evening we had not met All day long Tilak did not come, nor yet in the evening. Still I had eaten nothing. How can an orthodox Hindu wife eat before her husband has eaten? I waited till eleven o'clock at night and then for the second time returned to my sister. I had added two more days to my usual fasts.

A servant came from Pendse and took me back there. I arrived. There was stillness in the house. Pendse himself was sitting in his office. The servant said, 'She has come,' the only words I had heard the lifelong day. Pendse answered, 'Bring her in.' I went in.

'Is everything all right Lakshmi? Then, what are your plans?'

'To see to Dattu's schooling.'

'So you are anxious about that! Are we not anxious too?!'

'Why not? Everyone has it in their mind.'

'That's true! Then you go to Jalalpur. I shall give you money for the ticket.'

'I want no money. The climate of Jalalpur does not suit him. For that very reason I came here.'

'That's only an excuse. Why should the climate not suit him? Can nobody live there?'

'It may suit them, but it does not suit Dattu.'

'See, think well.'

'I have thought; if he, who is to support me in the future, is not well, then what have I left?'

'Do not be over clever. Listen to me. I shall make over a field to you, send you ten rupees a month, and later send you more. I shall give you two hundred rupees worth of gold.'

'I did not come here in order that you should give me anything. Only two things are before me—Dattu's education and his health. Though you were to give me all your wealth, I would not take it You have never stinted on me, but now on no account shall I go back. Let come what may'

'Very well, whatever you have of mine give back'

'That is already done On my arrival I took everything out, and gave them to Yesu I have no desire for anything. What man gives is never enough, and what God gives is never consumed. That I have learned full well'

'Your wisdom has grown truly great! Well now, it is one o'clock. Go to bed,' and to the servant, 'bring her bedding.'

A voice replied from the interior, 'No, give her no bedding. Give her the horse's saddle.' The servant at once threw down the saddle in front of me. For three days in place of bread I had not even had husks I judged the saddle softer than stone and on it slept soundly.

At dawn I rose, and went to my own house. There I offered to the earth the tea and food prepared the day before, and set about cooking fresh. For two days I had seen neither Tilak nor Dattu. Dattu was happy with his aunt. There was no need to worry about him, but what of Tilak? How or by whom could he be sought out? Living in a town I was no better off than if I had been in the wilderness. Hope and

despair had begun to play about me when Tilak turned up with two servants and a bullock cart.

'How I looked for you all day yesterday! There was no trace of you. Dattu was not here either. All I cooked had to be thrown out.'

'I have found another house for you.'

'What does that mean, I shall not come?'

'Though you will not come the landlord will not keep you.'

'Why so?'

'The house is his. The other house is also a Brahman's A Maratha woman has been engaged to clean your pots, and a Gujarati Brahman to carry your water. I could not come yesterday, because I had all these arrangements to make.'

Dattu was fetched, our things were put into the cart, and the three of us set off in a tonga. Even yet I had not seen my sister.

The next house was furnished My aunt's things now proved useful. I boiled the rice with spice, and the three of us dipped our hands in eagerly. Tilak went home. His house was only a hundred steps from ours. Dattu and I went to sleep in the happy thought that now we would have no more trouble at all. In the morning our landlady sent us a message:

'You must not use our lavatory.'

'The very lavatory then was to be kept "Holy"!'

'Then where can I go?'

'Use the public one.'

Necessity knows no law, and the laws of nature recognize no laws of religion, purity or impurity. The Maratha woman cleaned the pots once, and betook herself off. The next time she left word that she could clean them no more, or she would be put out of caste. The Gujarati man was forbidden to draw water. He began a defence, 'My mistress puts on ceremonially clean clothes, and worships the gods; why should you stop her water?' He was told that my husband was a Christian, and that was enough. He himself would have to undergo a ceremony of repentance and purification. The poor thing had to make his expiation, in which he had to pay four or five rupees of a fine, and all because of me. Now where could I obtain water? Three irremediable calamities had befallen. There was no alternative but to move again.

'Let us now go to the Fergusson Gate compound.'

'Where is that?'

'It is near here. Christian people live there.'

'I will not go and be their neighbour.'

'Then where will you go? Have you not seen for yourself the Brahman ways of the Brahmans? The guardian of knowledge is the Brahman, and this is a specimen of their knowledge. I am giving you no trouble. It is your own people that are casting you off. What can I do about that?'

Dr Hume heard of my predicament about a house. He also heard I was not willing to live next door to Christians. It was the rains Where could he put all the dwellers removed from Fergusson Gate Compound? In each house there were five to seven children. All of them, poor things, went somewhere else to live, and the whole compound was set free for my use. There were three houses in it, and four rooms to a house. It was all handed over to us There was no need now for Tilak to live somewhere outside, and, because I did not like them, the Christians stopped coming into the compound. Hiring a bullock cart we went to our new home. In one city within one month we had acquired three houses. Our third house had three suites of rooms. Dattu and I lived in two of them, Tilak in the third.

Here came Dr Julia Bissell and Miss Emily Bissell to see me. I have never met European women who could speak such beautiful Marathi. Upto now I had never seen any European lady except Miss Harvey. Because of Tilak's warning to all the Christian community no one came to call on me. Nevertheless, to Tilak's house they gradually began to come. In his house there were daily prayers, hymn-singing and Bible-reading, both morning and evening. In my house there was the energetic performance of the worship of the gods and goddesses, *Ganpati* the elephant-headed god and the sacred *Tulshi* plant. He had servants, I had none. I could not get a Maratha and did not want another caste. I had to do everything with my own hands. Tilak dined in my house.

There was no water in the compound. I had to bring it from the town garden The tap there was really a public one, but it would be better to say it was for non-Brahmans. One day when I went to fetch water, there were two women there. They were of another caste, and on one of them I noticed a number of feathers clinging here and there. I said to her, 'Will you stand aside a little and let me fill my water-pot?' At once she

answered, 'Stand aside yourself. What do we care how Brahmany you are! If you are such a fine Brahman why do you come to this tap?' The woman left and then I filled my pot.

At home I had the chutney prepared. Two feathers blown by the wind had fallen into it. Seeing them I was almost beside myself. Again a flood like the rivers Ganga and Yamuna was about to burst. Tilak came in, and asked the cause. I described everything from the tap to the chutney.

'What can I do?' he replied, 'they probably came with the wind!' 'Enough!' I said, no more but continued to weep

Tilak went to Church every Sunday, and Dattu went with him. Once after Church the two of them went to Malanbai Kukade's house. There was a Brahman gentleman there, who was doing full justice to the tea and biscuits offered by Malanbai. He pressed them on Dattu too, but Dattu would eat nothing. Later Dattu met this man once in Pendse's house. Tea was produced. Rising from his place he went and sat at a distance from Dattu where he would not be defiled! Still wiping his face he said to him, 'Your father is outcasted is he not?' Forthwith Dattu replied: 'His breaking of caste is better than yours. He eats and drinks tea openly. You do it in secret.'

'When did I ever do it, you rascal?'

'Were you not at that Christian woman's house on Sunday, and drank tea, and ate something, and you pressed me to eat too? And I ate nothing!'

Here Pendse made him be quiet.

From the day of my arrival, Bhiku had taken to her bed. Her nephew came to see her, and later he came to me too. Having on my ceremonially clean sari, I was sitting doing the cooking. Near the idol a brass lamp was lit. He saw the flowers and scent laid before it. He laughed, and I asked him why.

'Your sister has taken to bed,' he replied, 'because you have become a Christian, and here I behold the exact opposite.'

In some things there was trouble, but on the whole the month passed happily. There was no more fear of any Brahman coming to upset me.

No Brahman indeed came to tell us to vacate the house, but, as if I myself were the incarnation of all troubles, the god Ganpati—Remover-of-Troubles came riding on his little long-tailed mount to drive me out once more.

One day when Dattu and I were sitting at our dinner, a big rat came, and began to eat the offering to the gods laid beside Dattu's plate. Saying, 'The rats in this city are not afraid, are they?' we rose. Another came, and it too began to eat the food on the floor. In a short time they both began writhing in circles, and promptly fell down dead. We had often heard of such a thing, but this was the first time we had seen it with our own eyes.

Tilak came in Immediately he saw the rats he said, 'They are plague rats.' We sent them for examination and received the reply, 'Yes they are plague rats.'

Dr Hume heard the news and at once looked in to see us. He invited us all to stay in his bungalow; but how could I continue the practice of my Brahman rites and purifications there? Tilak went to him, and I took Dattu to stay with Malanbai Kukade.

The courtyard where Malanbai lived was exclusively for women. I was given a room at one side and set up house there. Here too was Rajasbai. We remembered seeing each other in the train and were greatly amused.

12 PRESENTATION AND ALMS

Christian charity is demonstrated Tilak is deceived.

NO sooner had we come together than plague separated us Tilak stayed with Dr Hume. Malanbai Kukade's compound, where Dattu and I were living, being an exclusively feminine institution all males were strictly forbidden entrance. Only Tilak was permitted to come and see me in the evening between four and five o'clock. Did he lose himself in either writing or talking and miss the opportunity, then not for another twenty-four hours could we meet. There was an unlettered Christian woman there. She had two daughters. They all

had great faith in God, and took the greatest care not to hurt anyone's feelings. Their companionship was a great help to me. I was more drawn to this woman than to the better educated, because she spoke so kindly. When I wept for my relations, she comforted me.

There were many different kinds of trees in the compound, and flocks of birds used to come and perch on them. Dattu was for ever chasing and trying to catch them. Rajasbai told him that if he put a handful of salt on their tails, they would not even move. Naturally it never occurred to Dattu that the birds would fly away before the handful of salt fell on their tails He took salt everyday from the house, and sowed it over the whole garden; but never a bird fell into the poor lad's hand.

Plague was rampant in Nagar. The Rev W. O Ballantine, a missionary in Rahuri was a well-known doctor with an M.D. degree. He was brought to Nagar on plague duty; Tilak was sent to Rahuri in his place, and consequently I began to live entirely amongst Christian people. To the west of Rahuri village was a Christian Colony; to the west of this again, at half a furlong's distance lay Dr Ballantine's bungalow and in it we all lived together. There was one detached, free room in the compound, and here I did my cooking, and worshipped my gods As strictly as ever I observed all the Brahman laws to preserve my uncontaminated Brahman purity. Next door to my room lived Dr Ballantine's ayah for his children She was uneducated, but so well had she learned to study the feelings of others that now only I realize the worth of such consideration

I was the daughter of Narayanrao Gokhale. The memory of that should be sufficient to give an understanding of the severity of my religious observances and purifications and the care with which I preserved my holy Brahman state With such a bigot living next door to a woman entirely free from all consideration of outward holiness there would naturally be trouble, but between us there was none

Ayah did not alter her usual fare in the least, but pursued her ways with great art. Sometimes she invited Tilak to dine, but I had no idea of what they ate. Whenever he was invited to a meal there, she would send me undressed rice and fuel to cook it. She always had something hanging up in her room to dry. If one asked her why, she would say, 'Lakshmibai, there is plague about, and the clothes should be aired.'

At dinner time, she always closed her door. I used to be surprised at that. 'Ayah, why do you shut the door when you are eating?'

'It is our custom, Lakshmi,' she would reply.

Sometimes at her meal hour one could hear the thud, thud of hammering. (I know now they were breaking mutton bones.)

'What were you beating Ayah?' I would inquire. Her prompt answer would be.

'I am closing up the rat holes, Lakshmi. We are terribly troubled by the rats'

Once when her door was shut I overheard a most astonishing conversation coming from Ayah's house. Someone said, 'I shall take the leg.' Someone else said, 'I shall take the head.' What could it be? I was filled with curiosity. 'Ayah,' I said, 'What a queer conversation I heard coming from your house!' At once she answred, 'We were telling the story of a giant.'

I had no woman to help me with the work. By degrees Ayah began to do small th ngs for me. 'What harm if I sweep up the rubbish?' She would ask me gently, and because of her sweet nature, I began to let her. The bringing of the water and the cooking only did I reserve for myself.

Here I met my first Christian brother. In behaviour, in clothes and everything he appeared a perfect Brahman. He was called Bapuji Adhav I asked Tilak what was the sub-caste of this Brahman. Tilak replied, 'He is a Gudshasta Brahman.' I had heard of Deshasta, Konknasta and Karhade Brahmans, but never heard of a 'Gudshasta' Brahman. I accepted his statement Many years later I learned that Tilak had only made fun of me, and that by Gudshasta Brahman he meant one who eats *gudsa*—meat.

Bapuji stayed two or three days with us For fully five years I had wept for Tilak; now my tears flowed for my relations; and I wept whenever I remembered them. Bapuji did his best to comfort me. 'Do not cry, take me as your brother,' he would say, and to the end he behaved to me as a brother would.

One story must be told that occurred before we came to Rahuri. A man came to Tilak saying he wanted to be a Christian. He used to call Tilak 'Papa', and me *Ai* i.e. mother. Tilak was very fond of him, and treated him like a son. Was there anyone for whom Tilak had not affection? He trusted

at once everyone he met. He thought he had true insight. On the other hand I thought I had a knowledge of character. I considered the man a humbug. Tilak thought him a saint. He used to tell me I knew no Psychology. I would reply, 'I may not, but knowledge of the world I have, and this man is a humbug I tell you so plainly.'

'You are impossible to convince,' he said. 'This man will be a great servant of God; you will see'

'He will become none of the things which you say,' I replied. 'One day he will scalp you properly, and decamp.'

He came with us to Rahuri too, and there he was baptized. Presently Tilak got him some work at Visapur. I gave him a drinking vessel, some food, bedding and clothes, and sent him on his way. After he left his letters came regularly. 'The poor thing has no one in the world but us,' said Tilak, and from time to time sent him parcels of oranges

One day Tilak went on some business to Nagar. The very next day a letter came from him saying our house had been burgled. It was an astonishing thing that it showed no signs of having been broken into The padlocks were still on the doors. All the doors were shut, but everything, to the very tin pot in the bathroom, was gone. Beddings, clothing, silver buttons, shirts, coats, a bottle of honey, of all these not one was left remaining. I suspected Tilak's new son from the moment I read the letter. In my own mind I decided that this was not the work of some outsider but of a sly thief in our midst. Tilak returned quickly. Introducing the subject with a lot of tall stories in the end he quietly said, 'The thief has been found.'

'Did you get back the stolen property?'

'Do not be so impatient. I shall tell you everything.'

'Well, tell me.'

'You know our boy at Visapur. He was there, so everything will be recovered; otherwise not even a broken pot would have been found.'

'Has he become a policeman or something?'

'No no, a thief did the robbery, and taking a vessel, on which was our name the foolish fellow went to the bazaar to sell it. There our boy recognized it, seized the thief by the hand and put him in charge of the police. Is he not a clever man?'

'Say what you will, what would a thief do taking bread-board and rolling pin, and a tin pot? He must have had a knowledge of the house. What would a thief do with such things?'

'How do you know? A thief can make money out of these things too.'

'Very well, what happened next?'

'What next? He has sent a letter asking for ten rupees. He has the things and as soon as he receives the money he will bring them.'

'Then we are to send him money now too!'

'Why not? Such work is not done for nothing. Come! Give me the money. Or shall I go myself for the things?'

I went into the inner room to fetch it Tilak was expounding the subject. There were always other people sitting in our house; private affairs were never kept separate from public. Having gone inside I could hear Tilak's voice plainly.

'He himself committed the theft, he got the key from Dr Hume and brought four carts and filled them. The neighbouring blacksmith's wife asked where the things were going and he told her I had specially sent him from Rahuri to fetch them.'

I heard it all, but having a plentiful supply of worldly wisdom, said to myself, 'Never mind, are we not getting all our things back for ten rupees? If the ten rupees are lost, let them go.' I came out, and laid the money in Tilak's hands. Tilak took it and went away and gave it to the boy, saying, 'I shall go on ahead. You follow with the things.'

Tilak returned.

'Where is the stuff?' I asked.

'It is coming afterwards,' he said.

'You have presented him with all our household goods,' I said, 'it only remained to give him alms after the presentation, which you have done now.'

Nevertheless, Tilak believed for many days that our 'son' would bring our belongings. He never came.

13 POISON OR NECTAR

How Lakshmi swallowed a mouthful of water. The plague isolation camp and Mohammedan hospitality.

IN four or five months the epidemic of plague became less, and Dr Ballantine returned to Rahuri. Ever since he had become a Christian Tilak had gone to Mahabaleshwar in the hot weather to teach both European and American missionaries Marathi. This work proved most remunerative He spent three months in Mahabaleshwar and nine months in Nagar Tilak was preparing to go up to Mahabaleshwar when Dr Ballantine came back to Rahuri. This year I was with him and also Dattu. Tilak wrote a letter to Wai to his 'mother' Ashammabai saying we were on our way and inviting her to accompany us to Mahabaleshwar. Ashammabai at once accepted the invitation. Some people in Wai told her not to go, that she and I would not be able to get on together and asked what she would do if we did not agree Ashammabai said to them, 'If we cannot agree I shall return home There has been no bargain made that forces me to stay with them'

Tilak had sent another letter to the Rev Ganpatrao Malhar in Poona. Mathurabai Malhar was well acquainted with all the Brahman ideas about what is clean and unclean. I was delighted when I saw her house, its orderliness and its cleanliness. She had an entirely separate arrangement for me at one side. We spent two exceedingly happy days in Poona.

At Wai too everything was prepared for us, sweets and mangoes for Dattu, and separate cooking facilities for me. I did the cooking myself and we all dined. Later Ashammabai putting her house in order packed up, and we left for Mahabaleshwar in a bullock cart. We had all been inoculated for plague but, as if there was a greater fear of infection from travellers in bullock carts, they had to undergo ten days quarantine in grass huts at Dandegar. We stayed there too.

I brought my gods and caste restrictions with me. The people in the huts nearby could not help wondering what kind of a family we were. 'The man looks like a Mohammedan,

the old woman appears to be a Christian and the young woman a Brahman. As for the boy, he goes about wearing the sacred thread over his shoulder!'

We were very short of water here. It had to be brought from a distance. It could be brought by a bullock, but that meant it was carried in water bags made from cow-hide and the water-carrier was a Mohammedan. I went myself with a pot on my hip to fetch enough for myself and Dattu. Everyone else used the water from the skin bag brought by the bullock.

One day there was some food left over. I began to give it away to a low-caste *Mang* woman She would not take it. 'We do not eat anything cooked by Christians,' she said. I was appalled when I heard this, and wept floods of tears. Both Tilak and Ashammabai tried to comfort me, but it made no difference. If even these people would not take anything touched by me, how could my relations permit even my shadow to fall upon them?

'Do not cry Lakshmi,' said Ashammabai, 'it will all come right. Your relations will come to you. You will go to them; but you must endure this for some days' My only reply to these kind words was a shrewish outburst, but she, poor, good woman, was good-natured and took it all in silence. The ten days being accomplished we were given permission to leave. Again the bullock cart was yoked and presently we arrived in Mahabaleshwar, goods and chattles, guests and all.

Tilak never changed his servants or his landlord. From the time he had begun to come to Mahabaleshwar he had stayed with Saidu Mistry, and this time he had written him a letter beforehand; so bed and bedding, milk, clarified butter, curds and butter, vegetables and wood were awaiting us; and not only all these, but this Mohammedan, playing the part of a Brahman, had even filled the water-pots Only the cooking was left to be done. We arrived at our abode in Mahabaleshwar about ten o'clock. The landlord opened up the house for us and our belongings were taken out of the cart Everyone embarked on his own occupation; Dattu began to play, Tilak to write, Ashammabai to decorate the sitting room, and I to cook.

The well was a mere four cubits distance from the house on the road side. I was delighted with the convenience of this. I drew some water. Cold water, cool air and sweet food, our

minds too at peace, no wonder we sat down to dinner with joy. Tilak and Ashammabai sat together and I served them. Then Dattu and I sat down facing them.

In the course of conversation I expressed my delight about the well. Until this subject arose our meal had proceeded most happily, but the mere mention of water brought, not only water into our eyes but also poison into our food.

'You are not to draw and carry water yourself,' said Tilak. 'It does not become my position. I shall put on a Brahman to do it.' My heart sank, for my experience in Nagar was still fresh in my memory. For my sake the poor Brahman water-carrier there had had to pay a fine, and was on the point of being put out of caste. We had a slight altercation, only slight; then, till the end of the meal, fell silent.

All the houses round about us without exception were Mohammedan. We had fallen into the state of, 'By birth a Brahman, by connexion a Mohammedan!' Where was a Brahman to be found tomorrow? And where had Tilak any time to look for one here? He was at work from six in the morning till six at night. Nevertheless, I still had some comfort in two pots filled with water. Our evening meal over, there were left one and a half pots of water. All night my very dreams went out to look for water and returned empty at four in the morning. Awake, I saw before me one and a half pots. Though I played the perfect miser all day, by the evening there was not enough left for Dattu and me. Now was I in an extremity indeed. Water in plenty flowed from my eyes, but what was the use of that?

'Drink this other water today,' said Tilak, 'from tomorrow I shall make a different arrangement.'

'But once I have drunk it, I have drunk it,' said I, 'what remedy is there for that?'

As usual I sat down to dinner. I was half choked with tears. Somehow I swallowed half my dinner. A mouthful stuck in my throat.

'It is true religion to take care of your body,' Tilak said. 'Also the Hindu religion says that polluted water is purified by merely flowing four cubits distance. Drink this other water.'

I raised the water drawn by a Mohammedan to my lips. Shutting my eyes tight and with a wavering mind I took a sip. It stayed in my mouth a brief moment, then having at

length reached my stomach was promptly and violently ejected. My fit of vomiting brought our meal to an end. I lay down on the spot shivering with rising fever. Tilak deeply regretted his obstinacy. Ashammabai asked what harm there would have been in my bringing water from the well in front of the house, and he admitted his mistake.

14 REVOLUTION

The result of Lakshmi swallowing a mouthful of water. Tilak enjoys himself.

LYING on my bed I washed my pillow with my tears. No one came near me till three o'clock Tilak was going about like a thief. Secretly in my heart of heart I continued to cry, 'Oh God! What have I done today? Today what are my ancestors saying about me in heaven? What can I do to make amends for such a sin?' By not one or two but thousands of such thoughts was my mind overwhelmed. My eyes were tight shut at the time, yet all at once I felt as if a light was shining about me. I do not use the word 'Light was shining' as a form of speech I truly experienced a brilliant light like that of the sun. My perturbation came to an end, and thoughts that had never before had entrance there began to whirl through my mind.

Tilak had great faith in God, and was praying without ceasing for me. Dattu could not understand the meaning of this frightful silence in the house, but in a short time occupied himself in his usual way, playing, and so forgot us entirely.

Tilak received the answer to his prayer. All the chains of caste distinction, that had bound my mind so tightly, burst and fell rattling down. It happened in the twinkling of an eye. At that time the ideas that came to me were so clear, that even now I can reproduce them on paper almost as they were.

Did God create different castes or man? If God, then would He not have made also differences in mankind? Birth and death, flesh and bones, intelligence, the power to judge good and evil, joy, sorrow, these things do not all men have in common? And if amongst men God made high and low castes, then why did that same God not also arrange an order of castes in the animal world? A Brahman bull and a low caste Shudra bull, a Vaishya crow and an untouchable crow? Do such differences appear among the birds and beasts? What is the difference between Brahman and Shudra? A Shudra has no bull's horns protruding from his skull. A Brahman is not born with the mark of his God-given greatness stamped on his forehead. If man and woman are of differnt castes that's all. Enough, my caste distinctions were gone. From that day on I would hold all equal. The very roots of my caste pride had vanished. I would eat from anyone's hand, drink too from anyone's cup

No sooner had I embarked on this train of thought than Ashammabai came and began her persuasions. 'Rise up now. Bring your water, and begin the cooking,' she said.

I replied, 'I shall not bring the water, and I shall not do the cooking. You do it for me, and I shall eat it.' She could not understand the purpose behind my words, and went and told Tilak. He too came to persuade me to draw water, and begin cooking; I told him plainly I was not going to cook.

'You are upsetting yourself about nothing,' he said, 'I shall never again say a word to you, either about the water or the cooking. Do as you please'

I, however, was not to be moved from my decision and answered, 'What I tell you I tell you in all sincerity. I am not saying it out of temper.' When Tilak was once convinced that I meant what I said he was exceedingly happy. He said in English, 'Thank God', and began to pray. Ashammabai cooked the meal, and with great joy we dined together. It was the first time in my life that I had ever eaten anything from the hand of another caste. The catastrophe that followed the drinking of the water was not repeated after eating food.

Having stayed some days with us, Ashammabai returned to her work in Wai. I was very sorry when she left. I had never worked under a real mother-in-law because she died before my marriage. At Rajnandgaon I acquired a substitute, and how

she served me I have already described. Ashammabai could better be called my own mother than my mother-in-law.

Tilak now started married life anew. There was no more question of eating and drinking. Though I had not become a Christian, and had no intention of doing so, all my caste prejudices had evaporated. Our two different regimes that had been kept going for so long on that account were now merged into one. Tilak put no obstacle in the way of my idol-worship, and I was always present at his prayers.

When one sets up house again, money is always needed, so Tilak undertook all the work he could get. For one hour's regular teaching he received twenty or twenty-five rupees a month, and he did eight or nine hours work a day with ease. Tilak's desires were never ashamed to show their faces; never did they sit decently in a corner. In the presence of money they began to frisk and gambol everywhere.

At our wedding he bound a garland of care about my neck, and I a garland of carelessness about his. As money earned in Bombay is spent in Bombay or the golden bricks of Ceylon are never seen in India, so now Tilak's conduct began to show every sign of his throwing away in Mahabaleshwar all he had earned there. Every now and again he would enjoy a bout of shopping. He thought no one could bargain like himself, and I used to think he had such a lack of worldly knowledge, that anyone could deceive him He used to say, 'I do the buying very well. No one cheats me' To which I would answer, 'You know nothing about shopping, and everyone cheats you.'

His wife and son were with him, and abundant money dancing in his hand. Tilak began his shopping First household necessities arrived. Everything was of new, foreign fashion, cups and saucers, spoons, forks and knives, sugar-pot, milk-pot, butter-pot, kettles, soup-plates, dinner-plates, flower-pots and wash-hand basins He bought a great deal of furniture. I did not even know the names or the use of the various things, and he never considered it. I did not like to see these strange pots and vessels before my eyes.

'Why have you filled the house with breakable china?' I asked. He was always annoyed with such remarks, and would say, 'You have no appreciation,' using the English word. Having furnished the house, he turned his mind to clothes.

He had four new suits made for himself. For me he had

two 'gowns' made! 'What is this you have done?' I said, 'Why did you not bring me two saris instead of these?'

'You do not understand psychology. When a man has done something with great pleasure you should not cast him down. This is why you and I never get on. You are never pleased with what I do.'

Each one of us had three pairs of boots made. For me alone the bill came to twenty-four rupees I never in my life put on even an ordinary pair of sandals. Though I had received two or three lectures on 'psychology' and 'appreciation' I still said, 'Why this useless expense? If you had brought gold into the house instead, it could at least have been used in an emergency.'

I received a third lecture of which this is an abstract:

'You are a perfect fool. Is it better to walk through thorns, barefoot in the sun, decked with gold, or to protect yourself with shoes and umbrella from the heat and do without gold.' Be that as it may, before we left all our money was spent, and Saidu Mistry—our landlord, received a present of everything that had been bought. His house was already 'furnished' for the next year. It was another matter that the following season we had to pay the extra rent for a 'furnished' house. Never mind. The days in Mahabaleshwar passed in happiness and merriment. We had plenty of fun.

I learned how to make bread. We gathered leaves of hop instead of yeast to make the bread For many years I had been afflicted with a pain in my stomach. One day the pain began again. Tilak had to go to his work at dawn. There was no one among the neighbours who could be of help, so Tilak asked what he could give me. I asked him to take some senna leaves out of the cupboard and extract the essence. He made tea for himself, gave me the senna essence and went off to work. My stomach began to swell. I did not know what to do. I was in extreme distress. As the afternoon wore on I began to think I should die. Only Dattu and I were in the house. In the end Dattu said he would bring Dr Julia Bissell. He used to go there sometimes with Tilak, so he knew the house. He went and fetched Dr Bissell. She inquired into what I had eaten and drunk. How could senna essence make anyone's stomach-ache worse? She was very puzzled. At last she got up and went into the kitchen. Everything was lying

where it had been left, by the stove. The vessel of tea and the vessel with the essence of senna were both there. She brought the latter to me saying. 'Look here, Lakshmibai you have swallowed the rising for the bread. These are hop leaves and not senna.' I recovered immediately on taking her medicine.

When we left Mahabaleshwar, our luggage was of the simplest and most convenient, two trunks, two bags and one roll of bedding On our way there for our luggage alone we had needed a separate bullock cart. A horse tonga held us and our belongings neatly on our departure. If the air of Mahabaleshwar suited us it was profitable to our minds and bodies only, and not to our possessions which had become so meagre.

Ashammabai was waiting for us in Wai. She had everything in perfect readiness She was most generously hospitable, and everything was always tidy, neat and in its place. She was most astonished to see our luggage. I complained.

'It would have cost as much to bring everything with us as to buy new in Nagar,' Tilak explained. It was true; but what the mistake was and who made it, who knows.

15 THE FAMINE CHILD

Lakshmi adopts a daughter. Tilak proves fair game.

TALKING, discussing and deciding on plans, we came near Wathar. Three or four miles short of the station there is a bridge. As there is water below, bullocks and horses are unyoked here. The nearby village is known as Pipurde. We stopped here and had lunch. Having eaten his fill Tilak took Dattu for a walk. I was planning what I would do in Nagar. It had been decided to break the journey for two days at Poona.

The beggars seeing two or three baskets of food in front of me began to gather slowly. I too was wide awake. Putting the best of the food to one side, I began to give away the remainder in alms. Among the beggars were some girls. I am

by nature very talkative. In the course of conversation I asked about their homes. To one I said, 'Why do you go out begging?'

'Bai, I have no one in the world,' she said.

'Will you come away with me?' I said.

As soon as she received the invitation she was ready to leave. Giving all her beggar's earnings to a friend and having whispered something in her ear, she came and sat down beside me.

'You will not cry?'

'No.'

'Then go and wash. Throw away that cloth you have wrapped round you and put on this sari. Take this jacket.'

She became a new creature, when she had done as I bid. The girl was rather dark skinned; but as her features were good no one would have guessed that five minutes before she had been begging for alms.

She was probably about twelve or thirteen years old.

'What shall I call you?' she said

'My name is Lakshmi. My son calls me Bai. Call me what you like.'

She too began to call me 'Bai'.

I was not a Christian but taking in my hand Tilak's Bible which was near, and putting up a silent prayer, 'Oh God, tell me if what I do is right or wrong,' I opened it and read from that page. It was as follows, 'And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither'

Any doubts or demurrings in my mind were removed by this passage. I was convinced that God had told me what to do. I made no inquiries about the caste of the child because my caste distinctions and rules for caste purity had gone with the winds of Mahabaleshwar.

'What is your name child?'

'My name is Nakoshi because no one wants me.'

'But I want you. I shall call you Houshi, which means, desired.'

By the time this naming ceremony was over, Tilak had returned with Dattu. We, mother and daughter, were sitting talking together. Father and son thought that this must be some way-farer, but seeing her wearing my sari and hearing the drift of our conversation, Tilak asked, 'Who is this?'

'This is a daughter,' I said.

'I know that, but whose daughter?'

'Ours.'

'Ours? What does "ours" mean? What new coil is this?'

'She has no one. She is in great distress because of the famine. She begs, then sleeps under anyone's eaves at nights. She wants to come with us. I have taken her in.'

'All right Never mind.'

I had been convinced that of course he would never oppose such an act Though not at other times, still when it came to doing a kindness we were always at one Our things were put into the tonga, we ourselves climbed up, but the girl would not sit beside us. She ran behind. We were very distressed and ordered the tonga to drive slowly. We threw down a pair of sandals for her, but she would not put them on. In the end she arrived with us at the station having run at least three miles barefoot behind the tonga.

No sooner had we alighted at the station than the bell rang for the train Tilak took tickets for us all in a hurry. At that moment an old man turned up. Houshi went to him and said something in a whisper. To us he said, 'If you are going to take away my daughter you must give me some money.'

'I have not come to buy any man or woman,' replied Tilak, 'take your girl away.'

'I cannot take her back. She has eaten from your hand, and worn your clothes. How can I take her back now?'

'If you cannot take her then leave her. We are off.'

The train came in and Houshi leaving her father came and sat in the carriage with us.

As the train steamed out I said to her, 'Why did you not tell me the truth?'

'I told that girl to send my father to see me. He had no right to ask for the money. I did not tell him to. I have a step-mother. She has little children. There is famine in the village and I was reduced to starvation. That is why I lied.'

'Well, never mind. You are a famine child Do not eat too much all at once. Eat just a little at first.'

She was a very good girl. She accepted all I told her and obeyed in everything

The train sped on and like-wise ruling common-sense. I had taken in the girl. How would she behave? Would she keep her person filthy or spit all over the house? My mind was perturbed by not one or two but thousands of questions. At

one time I thought I would put her into a boarding school, then I was tempted to abandon her at Poona Station but I thought, if I did that, what a betrayal of faith it would be. She had come with me because she trusted me; like my own son she had begun to call me 'Bai'. Could I throw her off? The final decision was, that come what may, she should not be turned away.

As we had arranged, we went to stay with a friend in Poona for two days. All was well till night fall, but bed time brought reason enough for my sleep to flee from me. The good man of the house and his wife told me they could not let my protégé come inside. Tilak did not know and I did not tell him. I concealed it because Tilak lost his temper so easily and I could not be sure he would not say something rash and leave the house, when he heard of this prejudiced behaviour.

I gave the child two of my saris and told her to lie down outside, then I too lay down 'Lay down,' means I lay down, I got no sleep. I could not help asking myself, if I would have so much as stayed to drink water in any house where Dattu had been made to sleep outside. Someone else's child had come with me believing she was now mine What did it look like to have left her outside? If I could not care for another's child as my own, why had I taken her? Then I thought, 'This is someone else's house and we are in another's hands What is the use of thinking all these things here?' Again I thought, 'Is not this a Christian family? Why should they be partial in their treatment?'

Houshi was sleeping outside the room. I was in. Every now and then I went to the window and peeped out at her. Her mind was not in the least disturbed She had gone to sleep in perfect peace. Only I thought the night terribly long. No matter what I did the hours would not pass and the day would not come. I decided to take both children to Nagar in the morning instead of spending two days there. Tilak would not prevent me; but he must not be told what had happened at night, otherwise he might say more than he ought

While we were drinking our tea in the morning I said to Tilak, 'I shall go on with the children. You follow.' He agreed at once. We had brought only a little money with us, because all he had earned had been left at Mahabaleshwar with the cloth merchant, the shoe-maker and others. Our treasury held our railway fares and one rupee in hand. I gave Tilak

his train fare and taking ours and the one rupee balance went and sat in the Nagar train with the children.

Houshi had no bangles on her wrists. When we reached Nagar she gave me no rest from her persistent demand for them. Giving her my only rupee I sent her to the market in charge of a servant. She came back with her bangles smiling and with great pleasure showed them to me.

'But Houshi, why did you buy such cheap ones?'

'Then do we not need the money for our expenses?'

I wondered at her greatly. However, all the change she had tied up in the corner of her sari had fallen out by the way. She felt all over for it, and when she was convinced that it was really gone she began to weep her eyes out. I thought it would have been better to buy good bangles than to lose the change. I did not mind the loss of the money, because on his arrival Tilak would draw money out of his 'Advance Bank'. This 'Advance Bank' was at Dr Hume's bungalow and money was drawn out nearly every month. The day after Tilak came back he brought home fifteen rupees from it.

Tilak dealt for the most part with the same people. He had one barber, one laundry-man and one tailor, like-wise he never changed his shops He was convinced that no one ever deceived him. When we got back from Mahabaleshwar we found a large quantity of cloth had been bought on credit and put down to Tilak's name in his usual cloth shop Showing him this bill the cloth merchant gently asked Tilak for the money. Tilak said he would send it and came home to ask if I had bought anything on credit for Haushi. Since I had bought nothing our servant was suspect. He had not come near us since our return He was sitting at home pretending to be ill. Tilak went to his house. Our servant repented. He wept. Tilak forgave him That was the end. Tilak came home to practise his persuasions on me.

'I have given him a good fright, saying if he does such a thing again I shall put him in prison. Another time he must remember that he will have to deal with me.'

'Did I not tell you not to trust these people so far? Why did you not hand him over to the Police?'

'It is natural he should fall into temptation when he is so poor. Also I have given him a good warning. How should we be benefited by handing him over to the Police? It would be a useless expenditure of time and money. Do you lose no money

elsewhere? How can we bring upon the poor man unnecessary trouble? Also, having sold everything he has spent the money. I have threatened him well.'

'I have threatened him well', continued as a refrain, but this was only an outward show. The truth was that the man had wept and Tilak had melted.

Our washer-woman, Balubai, took away our first washing after we came back from Mahabaleshwar. We gave her all our new Mahabaleshwar clothes to be washed. One day she turned up weeping and beating her breast. She had one shirt in her hand.

'Saheb, I have lost everything. All my vessels are gone, all my money is gone and with them all your clothes.'

We were all very upset. She began to say to Tilak, 'Come and get justice for me'

'Balubai,' he said, 'they will not be found now. They are all gone.'

'I shall repay your loss,' said she.

She had exactly one rupee salary. How could she repay any loss out of that? Tilak said to her, 'Balubai, though you work free for us all your life you could not pay back the money. Do not worry. My things have gone and with them your things. From next month we shall give you two rupees salary. Go away and do not cry.'

And, until in the future her wages were raised again, Balubai received two rupees a month.

16 A MEMORABLE OCCASION

Three unexpected Baptisms. Lakshmi makes a speech. Tilak rescues a baby.

A COUPLE of months after returning from Mahabaleshwar, on Dr Ballantine's invitation, we went for a few days to Rahuri. We were given a little house, and Dr Ballantine provided us with our food. Everyday in our home, both morning

and evening, there was Bible reading, prayers and hymn-singing. The hymns sung were composed by Tilak. The neighbours always gathered for prayers, and the group would repeat those Bible verses they liked. This custom was continued during our stay at Rahuri. Dattu and I were Hindus, nevertheless we were always present at Tilak's prayers. I began to like them. It was a new experience for me to commune with God in my heart. Hearing the Bible read again and again I grew familiar with it.

It was a Saturday, and a group had gathered for the usual prayers All the Christians present repeated a verse of Scripture. It was Dattu's turn. He said, 'God is Love.' Then came my turn and I repeated the verse, 'Oh God, have mercy upon me, a sinner.'

'God will never have mercy upon you,' said Tilak.

'Why not?'

'If being bound to me by promise, you desert me, what can I think of you? Even so if you live apart from Christ to whom you are devoted, how can God be pleased with such deception? How can He have mercy on you?'

Prayers being over I rose and went out.

I told no one at home where I was going, but made straight for Dr Ballantine's bungalow, and knocked on his door. He was very astonished to see me.

'Well Lakshmibai, have you come alone?'

'Saheb, baptize me tomorrow'

'Now, Lakshmibai, you have no knowledge of the Bible yet. You will have to study the Christian religion for at least five or six months.'

'I have a good knowledge of the Christian religion now. I want to be baptized tomorrow'

'But Lakshmibai why all this hurry?'

'Never mind, if you do not intend to baptize me say so plainly.'

'But they will put questions to you, and you will have to answer at the time.'

'I know nothing about that, tell me if you are going to baptize me or not, or I shall go.'

'You had better go for the present. I cannot give an answer now.'

'Saheb, tomorrow is Sunday. My baptism, Dattu's and Houshi's

must be performed tomorrow. I Even though I pass in no Scripture examination, my faith is in Christ. Why should I lie?'

Dr Ballantine and I prayed there and then, and our baptism was arranged for the morrow. He told me a story which I do not remember perfectly, but the gist of it is as follows:

'There was a man. An unexpected guest came to his house at night. The host had nothing to give him to eat so he went to a neighbour and brought back something.'

I failed to unravel the story at the time and later forgot it altogether, but today as I write I begin to appreciate the reference. The baptisms were arranged for the next day, and in that happy knowledge I went home. Dr Ballantine sent a man with a lantern along with me. On my arrival Tilak asked me where I had been. He was filled with joy when he heard the whole story from my lips

Before my baptism I was examined. A pastor from somewhere else was visiting Rahuri. He was a most kindly man and old enough to be my father. He sat beside me prompting me with the answers to the questions on the Bible, and I repeated his answers to the examiners I refused to accept baptism at the hands of a foreign missionary, and expressed my desire to be baptized by the Pastor of the Congregation, the Rev. Waniramji Bapuji Ohol. This request being granted I, Dattu and Houshi were baptized in the church at Rahuri. That day I was also received into full membership and was given permission to partake of Holy Communion

On Monday we returned to Nagar Everyone there was very pleased to hear of our baptism, but many of them thought the ceremony should have been held in Nagar instead of Rahuri, and so they were disappointed.

One other memorable event of that year was my speech. During the festival of lights at Divali a great gathering was always held in Nagar, called the 'Unity Meeting'. To this meeting came Christian people from the districts of Nagar, Satara, Sholapur and elsewhere, till it took on the appearance of some place of Hindu pilgrimage. From Nagar alone came one and a half thousand men and women; four or five hundred more from outside brought the figure up to two thousand. The old Church in Nagar was always packed to overflowing. On this particular day people filled even the doors and windows. It was considered a momentous event that Tilak's wife was going to speak.

Tilak had a great desire that his wife should become a celebrity. An author, a poet or an orator she must be, and he strove consistently towards this end. In the beginning he was in despair about the first two heads, though later he began to see a few signs of sprouting genius. Be that as it may, this was the first time I had aspired to be an orator. That woman was to face a furnace, who had never even lit a lamp. Let alone the making of a speech, I had never so much as heard one. I had had experience of one display of oratory at Rajnandgaon, but my part in that was the cooking and serving.

Tilak wrote out my address for me, and made me learn it off by heart. Oh, how many times was it rehearsed? The two of us would go out to some lonely spot and I, standing before him, would recite my piece in a loud voice. The preparations made in this way were prodigious.

Each speaker had been allotted ten minutes. There were three or four addresses before mine When my name was announced I too went up with great pride and stood in the pulpit. Before me an enormous crowd was spread out Tilak and Dr Hume were sitting in the very front seat. My attire was as it had always been, that is, nose-ornament, ear-rings, and red *kunku* mark on my forehead My sari drawn back between my legs and draped up to form a divided skirt in the Hindu fashion called *kasota*, completed my brave array The dress for Christian women had been already established, so I proved a novel sight for their eyes Added to that I was a new convert.

It is true that I went and stood up in the pulpit in great style, but for nine minutes out of the allotted ten, not one word escaped my lips Like a block of wood I stood, and like a picture sat the congregation Many a one put up a prayer for me, 'Oh God, let but four words come out of her mouth.' Someone brought a glass of water, someone else a few cloves. To what use could I put them in my pitiful state Some said to themselves, 'She has notes in her hand May she have the wit to read them' In my other hand was a handkerchief. I could not even raise it to my face. I was unaccustomed to the use of a handkerchief, and had no memory to read my notes. There were many addresses to come after mine.

Dr Hume rose to thank me. Immediately speech burst from me, and I began to talk so forcibly and so steadily that hearing me everyone was amazed. The speech was ended; but my

mind insisted that something had been left out. There was a blot on the paper at a certain place, and I felt as if that part had been neglected. In the end, beyond my learnt lesson I spoke. The situation was saved. 'What I had to say I have said,' said I, 'if there is anything to be added our dear Mr Tilak will do it now.' I came and sat down in my seat, and Tilak appeared in my place in the pulpit. He said, 'She has left nothing for me to say.'

When we got home I was very cross with him. 'Without being thrown into the water one cannot learn to swim', he said.

'Henceforth,' I said, 'if you think I must speak anywhere I shall learn nothing by heart I shall say what I want. My mind is confused by other people's writing.'

From then until now I have many a time spoken in public but never again committed to memory anything written out. If anyone ever created confidence in me it was that Christian congregation, a huge gathering who, by sitting so quietly for nine minutes during my first address, overcame all my terror. The disciplined behaviour of the listeners in the meetings of this community is of the highest order, sympathetic and quiet.

On becoming Christian, or rather on being caught in the current of Christianity I took a Mahar girl into my house, as if she were my own. Later when we were in Nagar, Tilak adopted a Mahar boy called Bhikaji.

One day when Tilak was visiting a little village, a boy of a year or a year and half was lying dying of hunger under a tree. Tilak searched the whole village for his relatives, but no one came to claim him. When he asked the headman of the village to provide for him, he too was unmoved by the appeal. In the end Tilak stayed two days there for the child's sake, searching the neighbouring villages. When nothing could be traced, he brought him home with him, and we made much of him. Tilak used to say he would make a learned scholar of this orphan boy, and he made him repeat Sanskrit everyday. From this he was nicknamed *Shastri-bawa*—Doctor of Scripture.

17 'YOU HAVE OUTSTRIPPED ME'

The coming of Tara. Tilak breaks a lamp. Lakshmibai embraces a sweeper.

GOD granted another of my desires For ten years after my last child, there had been no baby in the house. The hunger for small children had been assuaged in my brother's house, but now God gave me a baby to be called my own. We called her Tara—a star. We both loved her more than our own lives, and together we brought her through her babyhood with much trouble and difficulty.

Only four or five days after her coming she looked like leaving us Immediately we were delivered from that anxiety, it was time to leave for Mahabaleshwar, but for once Tilak's pilgrimage was neglected. Tara was three week's old, and would survive neither the cold of Mahabaleshwar nor the heat of Nagar, so we decided to take her to Wai. At this time of the year the trains as far as Wathar were very crowded. We took second class tickets. Dr Hume, who was on his way to Mahabaleshwar, was in the same train Getting down at each station, he put his head in at our window and asked how we were. In our carriage our party consisted of Dattu, one and half-year old Bhikaji, Tara, Tilak and myself Because the baby was so small and we were such a crowd Dr Hume reserved our compartment for us. Each of us sat in his or her own seat. Only Tilak kept moving from one to another and climbing from the lower to the upper sleeping berths

'Do sit still in one place, please,' I said

He thought I was very old fashioned. I believed in not moving from my seat once I was in it, and I would go and sit at the station for four hours in fear of missing the train. I would send a wire when someone was on the point of death, not unless. Naturally I thought Tilak should keep to his own seat in the train, but he would have none of it. Finally in leaping from one berth to another, his sleek pate encountered the shining lamp and both had a glimpse of paradise. A stream of blood began to flow from his head. The lamp was in smithereens.

Down below the children were asleep and the tiny pieces of glass were scattered over their faces. On the one hand I was afraid they would wake up and the glass go into their eyes as they opened them, and on the other hand Tilak was bathed in blood He however was perfectly calm, as if nothing whatsoever had happened. He went into the bathroom and poured cold water over his head, which stopped the bleeding but there was a very big cut left. With great care I picked and brushed the glass off the children's faces, then wiped the blood off the carriage floor with the end of my sari.

'How are you?'

'What is wrong with me?'

'What do you mean, "what is wrong with me?"'

'Tush! Such things must be. They add zest to life.'

'We shall be fined for breaking the lamp.'

'If we are, we can pay the fine. Will worrying about it make the fine less, if there is one? And will a wound be healed by anxiety?'

We had no fine nor anything to pay. Tilak's body was as wiry as his mind was vigorous.

We reached Wai. Ashammabai was there, as was also Hariba Gaikwad, the pastor. The two of them had arranged everyhing for us beforehand. Where had Tilak any peace even here? His lectures, sermons, speeches and writing continued as usual.

One day a woman turned up at the house. Having spent over a year among Christian people I had come to know a great many of their customs and habits. As soon as the woman appeared I rose and welcomed her. I put forward my hand to shake hers. I placed a chair for her. She neither raised her hand nor came into the house

'Where is the Saheb?' she asked

'He has gone out,' I said.

'He has engaged me to work'

'There is no work here,' I said.

I wondered very much what this woman could do We had brought two servants from Nagar to do the housework The woman left.

I was very astonished at her. She was a very strange woman. She had not come into the house. She had not shaken hands. She was loaded with ornaments, necklace, gold bracelets, a chain of gold coins for her neck, nose-ring, ear-rings, and she

was wearing a good sari worth fifteen or twenty rupees. What work could such a woman do in our house? 'It will probably be some writing,' I said to myself.

When Tilak came back in the evening he said, 'Has the sweeper come? I have told her to come from tomorrow to wash the children's soiled clothes. Did she come?'

My riddle was solved. 'She was a sweeper then?'

'Yes, why?'

'I gave her a chair to sit on, and tried to shake hands with her; but she said nothing. I thought she must be a Christian woman because she had her sari pleated like a skirt. But she had a signet ring on her finger, so I thought she must be a Hindu, and was completely bamboozled.'

'Why should you think that only your own caste are so particularly clean?'

From the next day the woman began her work. She swept the courtyard, and washed the children's dirty clothes.

'As you keep your own person so neat and clean,' I remarked one day, 'do you also keep your house clean?'

'Will you come to my house now Bai? Otherwise you will say I have swept it and plastered it for your benefit. Come just as you are.'

I went with her to her house I did not ask what caste lived in these houses, but all of them and the street were absolutely clean. The door of her house was big. Inside her brass plates and bowls and vessels for drinking water were gleaming. All the house work was done, the brass vessels coated with earth underneath to protect them from the smoke of the fire, the floor was swept and a *Tulshi* plant at the door. I was stricken dumb with astonishment when I saw it all.

My growing belief, that cleanliness and tidiness are dependent more on the man than on his caste, took deeper root. As in this sacred spot, Wai, the two rivers Koyana and Krishna embrace so I threw my arms round the sweeper's neck, and asked her why she would not eat our food?

'I would be blamed by my caste,' she said.

I replied, 'Now never mind; you have seen my house and you have seen me.'

'Bai, would you eat anything cooked by me?' she asked.

'Yes, why not?' I said.

No sooner said than done. The sweeper prepared and brought

round a lunch. Tilak had gone to Mahabaleshwar to meet Dr Hume. I accepted the food. All the servants in the house began to complain, because they themselves would not so much as touch a sweeper.

'I shall *not press you if you do not want it*,' I said, 'I and my children shall eat it.'

Therewith the three of us, Dattu, Houshi and I, ate the lunch. That I should so graciously have eaten the food prepared by her, gave the sweeper great pleasure. Tilak returned the next day, and when he heard about it he said:

'You have outstripped even me.'

18 OUR BALANCE

More flotsam is thrown up by the famine, and rescued by the Tilaks.

ONE day it was raining Dattu and Houshi had both gone off to school. Tilak was taking a class in Theology, so I was alone in the house. I was sitting near the door cleaning the rice when a girl came to beg She was only a skeleton of bones, her head looking as big as a basket with her uncombed hair, and no substance in her body. The last vestige of vitality was cupped in her hungry eyes Wearing a hand's breadth of worn out rag to preserve her modesty she came and stood by the door in the rain, a tin can in her hand. There was the fresh weal of a wound across her face.

I took her into the house, then began to question her

'Would you rather beg or live in a house?'

'Beg.'

'Would you stay with me?'

'Yes.'

'What relations have you?'

'No one. Everyone has left me. My village is far away.'

At the end of this conversation I decided in my own mind to

keep her. I gave her a bath, and provided her with one of Houshi's saris to put on. Even with so little what a transformation was wrought in her appearance?

When Tilak and the children came home in the evening they were very amused at her.

'What is this?'

'This is a picture of the famine. I have taken her in.'

'What for? We have Houshi, God has given us our Tara and . . .'

'And this is Daya whose name means Pity. I have had pity on her, and God too has had mercy on her.'

'All right, never mind'

We called her Daya. In a little while some of the neighbouring Christian women came to see us.

'Saheb, do you know whose child this is?'

'No Why?'

'Well, she is a Mang, one of the lowest castes.'

'Well?'

'Do you think nothing of it?'

'Nothing, why? Mang, Mahar, Brahman, all are the same.'

'You have outstripped us. We cannot go so far as that,' and so saying the women left. They avoided our house for several days Tilak, however, from now on began to employ Mang, Mahar and all the low castes for servants in the house.

The day after Daya arrived an aged Mang woman came to fight with Tilak about her From out of their vituperations the following information could be gathered.

In the course of her begging Daya had come to this old woman. She had given her shelter Daya would bring back what alms she earned, and the woman let her stay in her house. They both lived off the proceeds of Daya's begging.

'How long has she been staying with you?'

'Eight days.'

'From that you establish a claim over her? And who raised that scar on her cheek?'

'I do not know.'

'You lie, hag! Tell the truth or I shall send you to prison to grind gram.'

Wavering between truth and falsehood she confessed that, because the girl did not bring enough home she had branded her cheek with an iron. Now indeed Tilak was angry, and the woman fled, never to show her face again.

After she was gone, we learned a little more about her. We found that she gathered young girls, and sold them. In truth God had had pity on Daya in sending her to us. Both the girls began to go to school, and they were both put into the same class. By degrees they reached the Marathi third standard. We had not so much trouble as a blade of grass from either of them. They neither stole nor lied nor did any thing objectionable. They behaved in the house as if they were our own. When they went to school they went straight, and came home straight; they loitered nowhere by the way and misbehaved in no other manner; my fear that they would spit in the house, and scatter leavings and rubbish about proved absolutely unfounded. They did as they saw us do. Without being told they learned to plaster the floor with cow-dung, and to wash their soiled hands. They began to be able to prepare *koshimbir, lonchi* and *papad,* delicacies peculiar to the high castes, and became quite good cooks.

Presently the famine began to take on a fearful aspect. In addition the Mission suffered a loss, or something of the sort happened, and they turned some children out of the boarding school. This started an uproar throughout the whole town. The children had no place to which they could go. Tilak was told this news by the Rev. Sugandhrao Karamarkar He had heard nothing of it beforehand, and when he got the news he was very upset. He came to me and said: 'The Mission have suddenly turned twenty-two children out of their school. They will die of hunger. What can be done?'

That day we had in hand a balance of one rupee and four annas and one and a quarter seers of *jowari* in our meal bin. Nevertheless we had another large balance, that proved more than enough. It was our faith in God Both of us bowing our heads to the ground prayed from our hearts to the Almighty, then we made a vow to each other to make no difference between our food and that of these children We too would eat whatever black bread we gave to them.

We called Dattu to us and drawing him close said, 'My son, today, your starving brothers are wandering over the countryside. We are going to bring them home. You will have to eat what they eat. Will you do it?'

'I shall both eat and drink with them. I shall never grumble.'

he replied, and from the time the children arrived till the day they left he ate whatsoever was provided for them, and kept his promise faithfully.

Tilak told Karamarkar to bring in the boys. There was one big question left before us, that of Houshi and Daya. Where were we to put them? Tilak asked Sunderabai Powar in Poona if she would take the girls into her school, and by return of post was told to send them at once. They both left forthwith for Poona and the boys came to stay with us. It was about this time that Tilak picked up Bhikaji at Khare Karjune.

19 OUR GROWING FAMILY

Lakshmi and Tilak shoulder a heavy burden.

THE famine which had already been ferocious now began to beggar all description. Not only could food not be obtained, but there began to be a shortage of water too. From the year 1895 Tilak maintained a staff of servants who were never changed; among them was our water-carrier.

'Though in the bazaar I sell one buffalo-skin of water for a rupee,' he said, 'I shall supply your water at the usual rate. Only grant me this concession, that I may bring it as I am able.' He began to bring the water at one or two in the morning. A padlock was put on to the back door, and the key given to him. With the utmost faithfulness he brought two skins filled to the brim, and stored them in our house regularly. Nearly all the household pots were earthenware. The place was stacked with them like a potter's house, and these and all other vessels, even to the drinking glasses, he filled. By dint of purchasing on credit, and this happy arrangement with the water-carrier and as a reward of Tilak's own generous heart, the appalling famine outside was not so much as felt in our house. Cloth was bought on credit and clothes sewn for the

children. Coats, trousers, hats, shirts and all their outfit were made on the spot. Not only that, but a large quantity of coir was procured and twenty-two mattresses sewn. Naturally with them appeared a whole family of mats, pillows and blankets. Each child was given a separate plate and drinking vessel.

Mr Bhikya Shastri Bawa also got his share of all these things in proportion to his age. Everyone was very fond of him, but he was for ever being belaboured by Tilak on account of his intense stupidity. Was it not Tilak's good intention to turn him into a learned scholar? And he could not learn so much as the first lesson—not the first words of Sanskrit, 'Ramah, Ramao!' Wherefore, every day, before he had even brushed his teeth, he got a taste of Tilak's hand. First his Sanskrit lesson, then a little gingering up, then Bhikya's cantata, then Tilak's fury, and then the last scene of all in which everyone appeared with efforts at conciliation; thus a state of opera became our daily entertainment.

Tilak sent some of these twenty-two boys to school, some of them to the printing press, and some elsewhere to learn a trade The boys themselves began to look much improved, living happily and contentedly in their new home. They behaved very well with us. They neither stole nor lied. Among them all lived Dattu.

There were two women for the housework, but they could not get through everything. I always had to work with them. Even then the grinding proved a perpetual difficulty. If we sent the grain out to be ground the expenses were increased. Grinding from time immemorial has been women's work, but I called a meeting of the boys and put the question before them.

'We shall have to employ another woman. That means that one of you will have to be sent away. We cannot get through so much grinding. We require over twelve measures of flour a day. If we are not to employ another woman the small boys will have to grind six measures and the big boys six.'

The boys were pleased with this suggestion and our expenses were kept down.

If any of the boys fell ill, I washed their clothes myself, otherwise if the sweeper was called in she would have to be paid That money bought our vegetables. Another disaster overtook us in the midst of all this love and happiness Just as I always quarrelled with Tilak over money, Dr Hume blamed both of us,

and especially me, for being extravagant. As I had for so long worried over Tilak's mismanagement, so Dr Hume began to worry over our combined efforts. He was not in the least pleased that we should take charge of the boys. He was right in a way. By the first of every month not even the following month's salary remained. He considered that we were only involving ourselves in difficulties by continuing charity when there was such a lack of funds. Of course this dispute arose out of his unfeigned love for Tilak, so any anger we may have felt over his interference in our affairs was shortlived.

The phrase 'Now, brother', was always on Dr Hume's lips. Driven to speak out of the depths of exasperation he always began 'Now, brother'. He now set to work to goad us into giving up the children.

'Your salary does not even cover your own expenses.'

'We shall not give them up,' we would reply. 'As long as no other arrangement is made for them, we shall take care of them.'

'If your desire is to be called Father and Mother I shall make all the children in the boarding school call you Father and Mother.'

That remark at last roused our anger, and we told him as plainly as possible that God had given us children of our own to call us Father and Mother. We had not gone to all this trouble to satisfy a fad. It was seeing the helpless, neglected state of the children that had driven us to undertake the responsibility for them, and so long as no provision was made for them, we would not give them up

'Now, brother, but your expenses are far too heavy.'

'The money we receive is not given to us to spend selfishly upon ourselves. God has reserved part of it for others.'

'But, brother, you will find yourselves in difficulties'

I replied, 'Sahib, how can you say that? "The mother will not feed her children, and the father will not let them beg".'

'Now, sister, I do not understand what you are saying'

'I say that you will not make arrangements for them, nor will you let us take care of them. Is that fair?'

'All right, brother, I shall go now. Think over this matter well. I shall too.'

So saying Dr Hume left.

We thought long over it. 'To what a state of weakness have

these missionaries reduced us,' Tilak said. 'As if missionaries had a monopoly in helping others. Is anyone in need? Show them the missionary's bungalow. Done! That's all the help we Christian people can give. They have sown this habit. Come what may, we shall not let these children go until a suitable provision has been made for them.'

In this state of indecision we kept the children for eleven months. I had developed, as it were, a mania for adopting children. In the midst of looking after all the older boys I also nursed a boy of two months and a fifteen-days-old baby. Tara was still small. The bottles of these three infants and the strings to rock their cradles were never out of my hand.

Dr Hume came and stood before me holding out his hat:

'Now, sister, drop these children into my hat. I am begging alms.'

I replied, 'I won't.'

This was a daily farce.

When I heard from outside the compound one of Tilak's hymns, with some of its words turned topsyturvy, I would realize that Dr Hume had come again. When he came, he always came singing. One day, his patience worn out, Dr Hume said:

'Now, brother, you have the care of these children, and you are short of money. In the end you two will quarrel over it, and then bring your quarrel over to my bungalow.'

'Sahib,' I replied, 'was our wedding arranged at your bungalow? Shall we then burden you with the straightening out of our differences?'

'Now, sister, what can I do for you?'

'Sahib, you can pray to God for us.'

These children had come out of the 'Boys' dormitory'. One day Dr Hume sent me a letter, 'I have arranged to take all your children into my boarding school, and I shall see that they will not be sent away again.'

We were both very sad on receiving this letter and also very relieved. We were sorry to lose the boys, but pleased they were being well provided for. One matter for rejoicing was that the boarding school into which they were going was very near our house. That day, because the boys were leaving, sweetened rice was prepared for them. Till well after midnight we all sat talking, and as we talked the floods of Ganga and Yamuna came upon us—we wept. In the end Tilak prayed and we all went and lay down on our beds.

Our great, big family was to be broken up on the morrow. We were all very fond of each other. We had incurred a debt of five hundred rupees for these children. We added up the account that day; then Tilak said to them, 'Boys, I thought we should be deeply in debt over you, but by God's grace it is next to nothing, taken all over only five hundred rupees. We have done all this with a clear conscience, and without a doubt God will assist us to repay.'

It indeed turned out as Tilak believed. The next day some American gentleman gave Tilak a cheque for five hundred rupees. Before the boys' feet had left our threshold, the cloth merchant and the grain merchant had their money in hand, and we were free. The boys were gone. The debt was paid.

The remainder left with us now was three small children and Bhikya. The father of one of the three infants came and took him away. Another was very frail Do what we would for him, it was of no avail. One night he went to sleep and never wakened. I was exceedingly sorry, and vowed I should adopt no more babies

After three years, Shastri Bhikya Bawa's father got word of him, and came to seek him out When the boy did not recognize him, the father was very distressed. He stayed for four days in an endeavour to arouse his affection, but with no success In the end he asked Tilak's permission to take the boy home for a couple of days. Leave was granted. He departed with him at once, and as he had promised, returned with him in a few days' time. Within these four days the affection he had aroused was beyond all bounds Tilak had warned his father not to win him with bribes, but now Bhikya began asking for sweets every day. The result was that Bhikya finally left us in a huff. At the end of the week we hired a man, and having rolled Bhikya's things together, put them into his hand with two rupees, and packed him off to his father.

20 AGAIN WE MEET

A chapter devoted to the memory of Lakshmi's sister Bhiku.

ABOUT the time of my baptism, as we were going to the station on our way to Rahuri, we saw a servant a long way off following our tonga. Tilak took the tickets, seated me in the carriage, and himself stood talking with someone on the platform. At that moment the servant appeared in the carriage saying, 'Bhikubai Saheb says, "first hand over two hundred rupees, then let your foot take the next step".' When I heard this I felt more deathlike than the dead. Had I had any money with me I should have given it up at once to my sister, but, as they say, a poor man's desires are born to be rebuffed. That was our eternal condition. I turned to Tilak. He only laughed. The train began to move off, and the servant had to jump down. Would his threatenings act in the slightest degree as a brake to the train?

After my baptism we returned to Nagar from Rahuri. Tilak was working in the Theological College there. The students were married couples like ourselves. Every three or four years, twenty to twenty-five students arrived with their families. The course being finished, when the time arrived for these students to return to their respective villages, we used to invite practically all of them to a light meal.

The following incident occurred after our return from Rahuri. The students were invited to tea. I had barely fried a measure of *shev* for them when I was smitten sharply with hunger. I was very busy, so I rose from the stove, ate something handy, and gulped down a glass of cold water. All of a sudden my whole body came out in rash. My head became numb. I did not know what to do. My woman servant was as wise as I. She said, 'Bai, you have a cold.' It was now impossible to continue my work; all that was done later by Shahabai Misal and her daughter Tarabai. My temperature rose rapidly; then a lady doctor came and told me I had measles. She ordered me to be isolated, and accordingly I was made to sleep in another room.

After my mother died, my sister took my mother's place, but her kindness was equalled by her pride. Though she was in the same town with me, we never met. The last time I had seen her was at Dattu's thread ceremony. The only words I had heard from her mouth since coming to Nagar were, 'Give her the saddle to sleep on.'

On our arrival she fell ill and, after my baptism-vows were taken, she became riveted to her bed. It was almost impossible to yoke her pride and her love together. These two passions waging a fierce secret war within her laid her low.

Pendse too loved me as a daughter, but out of consideration for his wife he never even mentioned our names now. Nevertheless, the moment he heard I had measles he could not restrain himself and, without telling anyone, he came like a thief to see me. When we met we both sobbed outright with mingled grief and joy. He sat a long time. I asked him to arrange for me to meet my sister.

'Lakshmi, it is not possible. To her sorrow about you has been added her anxiety for Gharu'

Up to this time, as far as I can remember, in her whole life my sister had never known either grief or care, but now she had found the one to keep the other company. Her younger sister and her own child were both now become as knives laid across her throat. Gharu's husband had introduced another woman into his house. His money had begun to vanish in the public-house and he had lost his work. Gharu had to endure unlimited persecution, and for their upkeep Pendse had to send a large settled sum every month, without achieving any happiness for his daughter. Being caught in this whirlpool of troubles, my sister was utterly bewildered. Before I became a Christian she at least moved about the house, but after the news of my baptism fell upon her ear, she took to her bed.

On account of her illness, and in order that she should at least have a change of air, Pendse took a house near the station. From there she had seen our tonga turning towards the station as we left for Rahuri, and she had dispatched a servant on the spot to ask for two hundred rupees from me.

Pendse returned home. When I had recovered he sent a tonga one day to fetch me. I went. Gharu was sitting waiting for me. Our meeting had its fill of sunshine and tears. Our affection was unchanged. I was aunt and she niece, but added

to the ties of relationship was friendship's love, and in her sorrow she needed someone of her very own. She had no one but me in whom she could confide fully. That day we could do nothing but laugh and cry. Much time having been spent thus, she went into the inner room to her mother and told her I had come. On learning that I was there, Bhiku turned her face to the wall. Gharu did her best to persuade her but she would not even speak.

Gharu took me to another room on the same floor and I peeped in from there. What should I see? All that Pendse had told me was true: 'You will bring death upon her today instead of tomorrow.'

These words of his became as a menace to me. Making no noise I crept near and began to gaze at her quietly. Gharu said, 'Lakshmi has come' She never turned her head Only as I left did she say, 'Throw that low-caste beggar something.' It was the Diwali festival and, before receiving this order from her mother, Gharu had laid out a basket of crackers and sweets to give to me. She poured everything into the outspread end of my sari. Love knows no shame. She who had sent a servant to the station to ask for two hundred rupees of me, had also ordered alms to be thrown to the beggar!

From now on something began to be sent to me every feast-day and I began to visit Bhiku nearly every day. Dattu used to come with me too, and sometimes Houshi.

One day Dattu was alone with Bhiku in her room. She had made unremitting efforts to show she had no love left for us, but in the end the truth came out. Seeing Dattu alone she said, 'Come here, child.' He advanced. 'Come nearer.' Then throwing back her bed-cover she said, 'Come and lie down beside me.'

'But, Aunt, you will be defiled by me.'

'Never mind if I am,' and so saying she embraced him. I was watching from the middle door. We were both weeping copiously, but she did not see me.

'Dattu, you and Houshi must come every day to see me. It does not matter whether your mother comes or not.'

'All right. We shall come, Aunty.' From then on they visited her every day. Slowly I too began to be tolerated and, after some time if I omitted to go she would be quite distressed. She used to lie gazing out of the window wondering when

I would come. Sometimes I would stay with her night and day. Tilak too came to see her every day. Now if her sister were given only a mat on which to lie down, she could not bear it; and for that same sister she had once said, 'Throw her the saddle.' Now she would say, 'What, is she a highway robber? Give her a proper bed on which to lie.' She was very much distressed if anyone so much as said a word against me, and would put them through a fine inquisition.

There was a day on which someone said, 'Did your sister not run away even after you had done so much for her?'

In a flash she had silenced her: 'Does that mean my sister eloped with someone?'

I used to take Tara there with me Bhiku was very attached to her too One day picking her up she exclaimed, 'How heavy your child is! I can hardly lift her.' The truth was that she herself was very frail. It was beyond her strength to carry a baby Gradually the last traces of her animosity towards me were removed She began to say, 'Lakshmi, it is a good thing you went to your husband. I have now lost one big cause of anxiety.'

Tilak himself was more settled and seeing us like a newly married couple she was happy. No more evil thoughts were harboured about me. Only one thing was not recovered, and that was her former health. She was gradually wasting away. At last it was thought she might feel better at her own birthplace, and it was decided to take her to Nasik. I accompanied her to the station. Even there she cried, 'You have done well, Lakshmi, to return to your husband.'

The hot weather came again and with it Tilak's time to go up to Mahabaleshwar. However, it was decided not to go there this year either. A whole mountain of work lay before him. This was not Mission work but other people's.

As a result of the famine the usual occupations of the people were at a complete standstill Tilak was immersed in helping them—to procure a loan from the public funds for one, to purchase a loom for another, to dole out clothes to a third. The money for all this he collected by house-to-house visiting. When it was seen what he was doing he received some help from Government too. The trades of the tinkers and fruit sellers he set on their feet with grants of four, six and ten rupees. Saris were also distributed among them. I was employed in taking in the old

saris, because we learned from experience that one woman would come each day in a new guise, so obtaining as many as three and four saris. It being my fixed belief that Tilak could not be trusted with money, and seeing he had undertaken this hazardous responsibility for both money and clothes, I became treasurer, and consequently was tied to the house. It was three or four months before the people emerged from this terrible disaster. During this period I was quite unable to visit my sister. I knew that she had gone to Nasik but no more than that. As soon as the famine began to abate, I became consumed with anxiety for Bhiku.

I got Tilak to write again and again, but no reply came from Pendse. Like a lunatic I would question everyone I met about her. Quite casually someone came to our house and was thus interrogated. He replied:

'You do not know?'

'No; know what? I am in constant anxiety about her?'

'But it is now ten or twelve days since she died.'

My hands and knees turned to water. I was stricken as by a thunderbolt I had brought upon her trouble, illness and finally death. Better than words can tell you may imagine how I felt on hearing this news. Tilak sent a wire. The reply came by letter. 'My leave is over. I return in a day or two.' Nasik being the most bigoted of bigoted spots I had deliberately not been informed. They thought it would be confusion worse confounded did I, on hearing the news, rise and come to Nasik, precipitating all the care of preserving their caste purity from my contaminating presence into an already sorrowful occasion.

Pendse arrived and I went to meet him. It is not possible to describe our feelings on seeing each other.

He had to go out to dinner, but would not let me go without giving me a meal.

'Lakshmi, think that it is your brother-in-law who is dead, and that your sister lives. I shall be the same to you as she was.' So saying he sat beside me until I had finished eating.

21 GOD'S PLAN

Lakshmi as a nurse. One catastrophe after another, and more than one answer to prayer

I DESIRED to learn something Not that I would be a learned scholar as Tilak wished, but I wanted to learn something which would be useful in an emergency

Dr Julia Bissell was a most kindly doctor, her Marathi was exactly like our own. One would have thought a Brahman woman was speaking. We were great friends, and with her encouragement I decided to learn nursing. I did a little under her, and then her leave to America fell due. She left but in her place came two young, enthusiastic doctors, Dr Beals and Dr Harding

As soon as Dr Harding arrived in Nagar, he started a class for nurses. I could not read or write even plain Marathi; what, *then, of English? My courage however was great. I went and* requested Dr Harding to give me a nurse's training. I was Tilak's wife. I must be clever. In this belief the doctor consented at once. The class was in full swing. Taking my pencil and note-book I entered. Because one has a pencil and note-book in hand, will they of themselves begin to move? By the time I had with difficulty written two letters, he had finished two lines. My two lines being finished, he had covered two paragraphs. Gradually I began to write up all the lectures with the help of another student after the class Dr Harding taught in English To say this is as good as to say my studies were in a truly happy state! The ways of God are fathomless. A three-monthly examination was held and I passed! Or perhaps the doctor just passed me!

From the first I had a passion for nursing. I always had a large store of Indian medicines by me, and did I ever meet a fellow enthusiast we always exchanged prescriptions. In this way my knowledge of quack medicines had grown; my knowledge of country medicines was of the slightest. To these was now added English medical teaching, and not merely that of books. My knowledge was never bound in a volume, but was for ever

emerging to take the air. In this way I experimented one day on Tara's eyes.

We had with us then a woman saved from the famine, Sagunabai by name, and just like her name she was in temperament also virtuous. We were supporting and clothing her and her eight-year-old daughter. Beyond that we gave her eight annas a month pay for her work.

Tara had conjunctivitis. She was always complaining about it. I was a nurse who had passed the first examination. Making Sagunabai hold back the lids of her eyes I rubbed them vigorously with copper sulphate. Tara roared and made a terrible commotion. Tilak came home. He extolled my wisdom!

'Were you a doctor? If the child loses her sight will you lead her about by the hand?'

I thought, 'God strike me blind, but may the child's eyes be saved!' It was eight o'clock in the morning when I applied my medical science, and at five o'clock in the evening Tara still could not open her eyes. Now indeed my heart sank. Tilak was out, but on his return, he tried to open her eyes and look at them. A drop of blood welled up. Tilak had spoken the truth, and her sight was gone! Now what could be done?

Getting some cotton wool I forced open her eyes, and began to wash them with boric lotion Lo, something like a tamarind seed fell out. That had done it! Her eye had fallen out! Thinking I had better at least see the other eye, I began to wash it, when lo, something fell out of it too. The dish rattled. Tara opened her eyes, and looked in that direction. My happiness could not be contained in heaven itself. Her eyes were all right; the granulations had loosened and come away.

Tilak was overjoyed, but Tara was not yet well, and for many days she had low fever.

There was a second outbreak of plague in Nagar. The appearance of rats was like a written proclamation and inoculations were begun at once. A young man, Peter Vitthal Hiwale, who was staying with us, returned to his own village. People began to leave Nagar. Tilak took Dattu away to a man in Rahuri.

Tara was still ill and Dr Harding was brought to see her. Examining her he said there was no cause for anxiety as the fever was an ordinary one.

I said, 'But Doctor what are these lumps?' He looked at them and 'Children always have them,' he said.

'It is not plague?'

'No', he replied, 'but all of you should be inoculated.'

Tilak had gone to Rahuri to see Dattu. He disapproved of inoculation. He had been asked three or four times, and always replied, that he would not be done. That was the reason why I sent Dattu away. Before setting off for Rahuri, Tilak said to me, 'I purposely took Dattu to Rahuri. The Baby is not to be inoculated in my absence, and I will not be. If you yourself like to be done, I do not object.'

Daya had come to Nagar for a few days. A letter came from Sant Kaka, a Brahman who had recently become Christian, saying he had plague, and we were to send him twenty-five rupees the moment the letter arrived.

Tilak was away, and as usual I had no money by me. I put the letter aside, and Daya, Sagunabai, her daughter and I all went to Dr Harding and were inoculated in Tilak's absence. Having finished the inoculations, Dr Harding left for Vadala to do some operation. Tilak returned from Rahuri and found Sant Kaka's letter. At once he sold Tara's ornaments and sent the money by wire.

While operating at Vadala, Dr Harding got blood poisoning, and the news spread in a flash all round Nagar. Inoculation was new. The people were not used to it. All our arms were swollen and we all had fever, even Tara who had not been done. She was living amongst us and having all her meals with us.

One day a plague rat ran over her bed and died there beside her pillow. Everyone in the house was ill and Tara but a baby. The servant engaged to help was new. It was a fine state of affairs. At this very moment a message came from Dr Harding saying he had called all the students in his class to see him. I could not leave Tara to go, yet my heart was drawn to this doctor who was so dangerously ill. In the end, leaving Tara to the care of Daya and Sagunabai I set off. It was our last meeting with Dr Harding and seeing us all gathered together he was filled with joy and said, 'I am about to leave you. My race is finished. Do not give up your studies. This is great work. You have all done well and in the future will continue to do so.' He had high fever, so finally he said,

'Good-bye.' Not one of us answered his 'Good-bye.' We said, 'Sahib what shall we do?'

'Pray.'

So saying he turned his back to us. His wife was at hand, but there was no one else. She was quite young and soon to have a baby.

'If you have need of anything,' we said to her, 'call us.' From there we went to the Church and prayed before going home.

As soon as I reached home, Sagunabai said, 'Tara is most restless. She says, "Put on my best clothes and take me to Church".'

I looked at her and found she had high fever, and she could not reply to a question Tilak began to scold Sagunabai, 'You are always taking her out. That is why she has got fever. If anything happens now, can you give my daughter back to me?'

Poor Sagunabai sat still with never a word. She knew his ways.

Our next door neighbour was Nanaji Bhonsle, so we sent for him and administered the Indian remedy he suggested. All night long we sat with the unconscious child on our knees. In the morning we sent a servant for Dr Sorabji and he, standing at a distance said, 'There is no need to be afraid. I shall send some medicine.'

Then came the news that Dr Harding had died Within six months how dear he had become to all the people of the town of every caste and religion could be seen from the huge crowd that attended his funeral.

All day long it was difficult to secure tongas in the town. Tilak had gone to the funeral. I too was most anxious to go but Tara began to scream so wildly it was not possible for me to go out. The doctor had examined the patient as described. All were suffering from sore arms. The servant sent for the medicine had betaken himself off, and there was absolutely no money in the house. Sending for Nanaji Bhonsle from next door I gave him a gold ring to sell. He came back and said, 'All the shops are shut.'

Anyone he had asked had replied, 'Are we to buy gold or care for our own lives of gold?' I did not know what to do next. 'The lizard's race to the wall was finished.'

The boys came from the boarding school to do the grinding,

and we did the cooking as best as we could with one hand. We did not know exactly what was wrong with Tara.

Just then Dr Umrao arrived, and as soon as he saw her he said, 'It is plague.' When Tilak came in at twelve o'clock and heard the news, he said, 'We had better leave before anyone tells us to go.' We prayed, then Tilak said, 'God must have some special plan.' We were consumed with anxiety. There was neither money in the house nor was it possible to borrow from Dr Hume that day.

Tilak went over to Dr Harding's bungalow again. We were all ill. Tara's shrieks rose without limit. No money to hire a conveyance, and no one to send to look for one! At that moment a man appeared walking smartly past the gate. Everyone had heard that Tara had plague so no one came near us. I had lent this man three rupees at one time. I ran to the wall of the compound and stopped him. I did not ask him in, because he did not want to come; that was obvious from his behaviour. When I asked for my three rupees like a flash he presented me with a five-rupee note and vanished. What else did I desire? People were terrified of plague in those days.

I vacated our house like someone going to another town for a change of air. I filled the cart with everything, from baskets to grinding stone, and sent it off to the segregation camp. By the time this was accomplished it was four o'clock. Sagunabai was sent to fetch a tonga but could not get one. They were all held up at Dr Harding's funeral. To add to this the cart with all our things still in it returned to us No one was allowed to have so much stuff in the camp. Taking out as little as possible I sent the remainder back again, but everything had had to be unpacked, rearranged and packed again. Night fell. Tilak having gone on ahead had lit a lamp and was sitting writing something. We were waiting for the carts.

'The servant has run away,' I said to Sagunabai. 'If you are afraid you can go too.'

'Bai,' she said, 'no one escapes death. I cannot forget you who gave me and my daughter refuge during the famine. How can I desert you?' How great a faith had this unlettered woman!

When the boys we had looked after heard of our difficulty, they said, 'We must run and help them in their trouble. During

the famine they gave us the food out of their very mouths.'

Having so decided they went to their housemaster for permission. He replied, 'What you want to do is right. There is no doubt about that. But in such circumstances I cannot give you leave to go. Ask your Principal tomorrow.'

'Their need is today,' the boys replied. 'What use is there in asking him tomorrow?'

'Do as you like,' said the master, 'only I do not give you permission.'

'It does not matter even if we are not taken back into school,' the boys retorted, 'we are going.' And so saying they set out to render us assistance.

'Hallo boys! Why have you come?'

'To help you.'

'And if you are turned out of school tomorrow?'

'God is with us.'

'Very well then, go and bring us a tonga, or a cart.'

One brought a bullock cart, having promised that no one with plague should sit in it.

With the cool air Tara began to speak The driver believed that the plague patient had gone on ahead. She conversed with all the boys calling them by name. I began to think we were taking her away unnecessarily, she was chattering so sensibly. She would say something and the boys would reply; and in this way we proceeded.

It was a pitch-dark night and we had no lantern. The bumping of the cart, the babbling of the child, and the beating of my heart furnished the accompaniment for our journey, till out of the humps and hollows, by the aid of the light of a lamp before us, we reached the camp. Tilak, in the act of writing arose out of a hut, and came forward to greet us.

'We have been allocated three huts, one for cooking, one for Tara and one where I can sit and write,' he said.

The doctor came and examined Tara. She had a temperature of 105 degrees.

'You must not stay near the child,' he said. 'You will get plague. This woman will sit beside her.'

'Why?' I said. 'Who was Tara sitting near when she got plague? And even though I sit elsewhere, why should I not get it? And if I am to leave her and sit elsewhere, why should this paid woman stay with her?' The doctor remained silent.

The boys and Daya left. In one hut were myself, Sagunabai and Tara. Tilak brought us all something to eat, but what meat and drink! It was the month of November and bitterly cold. We were given left over *jowari* bread from the morning and water cold as ice from an earthen pitcher. My mind was filled with every kind of anxiety. Two rupees had been paid for the cart There was not a farthing left.

Both at the top and bottom of the walls of the hut there was a hand's breadth left open. Why? For ventilation! The huts were all built of corrugated iron. At night they were so cold that everyone inside was likely to be frozen to death. On three sides were ill people. They groaned, the corrugated iron rattled, then some delirious patient would climb over the iron walls, and drop with a thud into the adjoining room. There were no floors; one's feet were bruised with stones and gravel; there was no food for one's stomach, and no sleep for one's eyes

Tara was still crying out I thought to myself, if there were a Hades anywhere it was here. The place was frightful, the night was frightful, the conditions all round about were frightful, and the state of one's mind became frightful With the patients their relatives too were crying and quarrelling. 'Hi you! Your man is making too much noise. Keep him quiet. Our patient has just closed his eyes now.' Some were really ill, and some just shouting in terror.

The next day when the Doctor came round I said to him, 'Doctor, at night you go home and sleep soundly, but have you any conception of what goes on here?' I described the whole scene to him, and suggested he should issue some sleeping mixtures. From that day, he made some change in the medicine, and the nights began to pass more quietly. The dispensary was on the spot The medicine was Belladonna The medicine, the thermometer and the medicine glass were common to all, and only I kept separate ones for Tara, and would go myself to bring the medicine. There was a charcoal brazier in the hut which enabled me to foment her with warm clothes. Either Sagunabai or I sat all the time with her on our knees. The patients and their relatives with them received rations for ten days. We got uncooked rice and fuel, and Daya did the cooking. There were no less than ten of us, and she did the cooking for the whole group all by herself. No one was allowed

to come and see us, but the boys, watching that there was no one about would quietly come and go through the wire-fence to meet us.

Tilak's reading, writing and prayers were continued as usual. He used to say, 'Oh God, I do not as yet see why Thou hast brought this calamity upon us. I only know that there must be some purpose of Thine in it. Give me the wisdom to understand Thy will. If Thou didst not have some plan, then why should not one of us have had plague rather than this little child.'

Tilak had not been inoculated, but the Doctor now forced him to be done. It went very hardly with him and he endured considerable pain.

At first there were no proper arrangements in the camp at all. Ten percent of the patients survived On the fourteenth day the Civil Surgeon and another doctor came, and examining Tara said there was no hope.

Tilak burst out with, 'God gave us a daughter. We hoped she would be educated like Anandibai Joshi and God took her away. Now this!' Sagunabai went apart and sat and cried. She was very attached to Tara, and for all these days she had helped me to nurse her.

It was always my way to provide in plenty Were clothes to be made, I made them for a growing body. Did I set out to hunt a jackal, I prepared to slay a tiger. When we left home I brought with us fully two pounds of flour of linseed, castor oil, charcoal and many other such things as might be useful. Now I abandoned hope For ten to fifteen days the child had never touched the floor. Today I laid her down. She had become very quiet. The brazier was alight. I boiled the linseed flour and applied a poultice over her throat, chest and abdomen. Warming some castor oil, milk and sugar together I poured it somehow down her throat. I placed the brazier near her feet. I wrapped her up well in a blanket, and then said to her, 'Now die if you like. Let me not think that I have left anything undone.'

Leaving her alone and closing the door behind me, I went far out into the country. When I was quite alone I knelt down, and cried aloud to God in prayer, 'Oh God, our Father, let the child live. She is not mine; she is Thine. Thou gavest her to me, and I have cared for her. If it be Thy will take

her away. If she recovers I shall nurse the plague patients here.'

So saying I lifted up my voice and wept my heart out. After a little while I returned. I had no courage to open the door of the room. I had never before knelt and prayed as I had just done. My heart was quivering. With a great effort I opened the door and the moment it was open, Tara called to me, 'Mama, where were you? Where is Papa?' I was so relieved, I felt like taking her up, but reminding myself at once that it might have a bad effect on her heart, I closed the door and fled to Tilak's hut.

Tilak and a group of other people were sitting praying. When he saw me, he thought I had come to bring the news of her end I said to him, laughing, 'Baby is asking for you.' He could not believe it He thought my laughter and speech were madness. I was laughing hysterically, and saying over and over again, 'Baby is asking for you.' At last we went together to Tara's hut. As soon as she saw him she said, 'Why did you go and leave me, Papa? Bring me some mangoes.'

Tilak gave the boys a rupee, and sent them to the market for some oranges. There was absolutely nothing to be had there. With the greatest difficulty they found five or six wizened little runts. When the Doctor came the next day he was most astonished. We left the hut eighteen days after our arrival.

The answer Tilak received to his question, 'Why has God allowed Tara to have plague?' was as follows:

In the plague camp one day, there was an argument about the milk. Hearing voices raised Tilak went over to the spot. 'Let me see the note-book,' he said. He received the reply, 'Saheb, you would not understand it' Therewith Tilak snatched the book, and began to examine it. The figure entered was large, and the milk before him but little. Tilak returned to me to say he had received the answer to his prayer. He now understood why Tara had got plague. There were not enough trustworthy men in the place. It was a case of one man being set over another to watch him from the lowest paid to the highest. An excellent arrangement for the patients! Were the food and drink not of the worst, how then were they to be exterminated? The milk entered in the account was three times the amount delivered.

'I have made a resolution,' said Tilak, 'that I shall stay here, and render whatever service I can to those patients. Are you ready?'

'Yes, I am ready.' I replied.

God on that occasion gave us very great courage and big hearts. He gave us the mind of one who fears no disease, who cares not what filthy work he does, the very mind of a sweeper! That which even a mother will tire of doing, a sweeper will do, daily for us his ungrateful brethren.

With all our heart we two set to work.

22 TILAK LEADS THE WAY; I FOLLOW AFTER

Tilak and Lakshmi set no limit to their services of the sick and dying Tilak holds an auction sale, and Anand sits in the butter.

A HUT was built for us near the camp, but now the ration of uncooked rice and fuel was stopped. Water had to be brought by the water-carrier. The boys were taken back by the Principal of the school, and Sagunabai went to see her daughter at her own village. When she left, Tilak gave her a sári and a blouse, and four rupees for her expenses. Her salary of eight annas was raised to two rupees, and four months' leave granted on full pay.

There were only four of us left in our family now, but, all against my will, I took in two children The mothers of both of them had succumbed to plague in the camp. Tilak and I did whatever work fell to be done for the plague patients. We looked after their food and drink and medicines. We washed their faces and gave them sponge baths, and when the time came we also played scavenger. People of every religion and every caste were there, and on hearing that we were working among them, the fear of the camp became less. and more

and more plague patients began to come. Shidikshet made and sent us warm clothes. We had not asked for these. He sent them of his own accord.

In the camp there was a man of *Teli* caste, who was put under lock and key. No one had courage so much as to go and give him a drink of water. As soon as we undertook the responsibility we introduced a new nurse. She was a Christian, and put her whole heart into the work. On the first day after she arrived, Jaibai and I began to go towards the *Teli's* hut, only to find a guard at the door.

'Do not go in Bai,' he said, 'this man is positively dangerous.'

'Let him be dangerous or anything else,' we said, 'it is our duty to give him milk and medicine. Unlock the door.'

'Be careful, won't you? He may attack you.'

And truly, as soon as the door was opened he leaped upon us. As he approached I struck him violently in the face. Who knows what happened to him, for he immediately bowed himself at my feet, and being ordered to take his milk he took it without a word. He drank his medicine up at once too.

There was another man, Nana, the goldsmith. He used to say, 'Mother only let me get better and I shall clothe you in gold. We are born and bred goldsmiths. Our one hand is of gold and the other of silver.'

'All right, my son,' I would reply, 'array me in gold; but in the meantime you only make me wash down the walls you have painted with another kind of gold'

In time of need servants can take advantage. One day all the sweepers suddenly struck work for higher pay. They sat with folded hands. For two days Tilak and I did all the scavenger's work. It was the goldsmith who had trained us up for it. On the third day corpses had to be removed. Tilak girded up his lions. I tucked in the loose end of my sari. We lifted two and placed them in the cart. At last the sweepers were abashed. They came running and said, 'Saheb, flog our backs, but not our stomachs.'

'I have never said you should receive no more salary!' said Tilak, 'only that in such a crisis it does not do credit to your humanity for you to put such people into a predicament. We shall certainly endeavour to procure a rise in salary for you. It is not right that you should cause obstruction when these, your brothers, are dying. I shall now do what I can about

your pay, but if ever afterwards you should repeat this, understand that you get no more help from me.'

When Tilak first undertook the service of the plague-stricken patients, some people said that his daughter's plague had proved a profitable thing for him, that he was raking in easy money. Others said, 'See how he labours for the poor.' Tilak himself said:

The world's a game,
With praise and blame
To bait the trap
On Folly's lap
The trap touch not;
For praise laugh not,
Weep not for blame;
Weep not for blame.

The plague-stricken inmates began to get better. The death-rate came down to ten percent Everyone's photograph was taken. The Civil Surgeon gave Tilak a certificate, whereupon he, said, 'What do I want with a certificate?' But the Civil Surgeon forced it upon him, expressing at the same time great gratitude Tilak put it into a file for letters, but it ended its days somewhere among the waste papers.

After two months it was decided to go to Mahabaleshwar for Tara's sake Dattu was at Rahuri so we told him to meet us at Nagar station. Houshi and Daya we would see in Poona. We set off taking with us Anand, one of our twenty-two boys, and also Peter. Of the two new babies we had taken in, one was returned to her father when we left the camp, and God took the other. Though Tilak had cared for so many children it was for one purpose only—that they might be saved from destitution, and brought up properly. He never made the children a pretext for making money out of anyone, nor ever kept anyone's child against their will He used to say, 'If we take the children we must support them. It is no use ruining their career.'

In all Tilak's life I found one constant factor, he cared neither for praise nor blame in the pursuit of his duty; he thought absolutely nothing of fame. Saying, 'Write my life as it has been,' he would add 'in no wise cover up my faults.' One thing more was, that his life, so filled with high ideals, had

an immdiate effect upon other people; otherwise it would have been impossible for Narayanrao Gokhale's daughter to be ready to undertake cheerfully and enthusiastically the work of a sweeper. Had not my father for a whole life-time scrubbed and washed himself and all his household, because he imagined a mere drop of water from a low-caste Mahar's mouth had touched his body. Would I, this father's daughter, ever eat food from the sweeper's house at Wai, or in a plague hospital run to do work esteemed of the lowest?

If there be anything in that to be praised, then it is Tilak who must be praised. He was in these things my teacher. He led the way, and my part was only to run boldly along it with my eyes shut. If any portion of the credit be due to me, it is merely in that without wavering I went forward fearlessly in the trail he had blazed. So!

I was a great housewife, and had an astonishing propensity for accumulation. Even yet that good quality has not deserted me. Tilak liked everything spotlessly clean, so much so that he would shake out his money bag, and sweep out the till. Consequently I made it a habit to be careful of the rubbish. I sat in the house like a snake upon our possessions Tilak always longed for me to go out and give him an opportunity to begin a spring-cleaning My exit ushered in his 'Feast of Lights', and after that would follow my festival of 'The Devil Let Loose'.

I always kept a box-room. There was no saying what might or might not be found there. There would be bundles of old rags, bottles, burst shoes, worn-out sandals, a broken winnowing fan, a basket gnawed by rats, rusty tin boxes, broken bits of string, cord, torn string bags, a broken stool, pieces of webbing, tiny little cart wheels, garden tools, nails and not only these but also even a broken earthenware pot and its chips.

Our daughter had just recovered from plague. We were now going to Mahabaleshwar for three months, so I decided to go and see all my friends in the town I never used to go out much, but if I once began, I would make a tour of the whole town visiting every house.

The things that I used to keep I kept, not to sell, but because one never knew what might be needed in an emergency. The boys had left, and their mattresses had just been unpicked. A

mountain of coir had fallen out in front of us. Hands on hips, I stood gazing at it and wondering how this mountain could be accommodated in the box-room. The neighbours had gathered round about. There and then Tilak announced an auction sale; anyone who cared should take twice two handfuls of coir. Before our eyes the pile was reduced to the floor. Seeing that his work was accomplished, Tilak brushed his hands together and went into his office to sit down and write. As when the grain has been removed from the threshing floor, the beggars gather the remaining broken heads, so gathered I what was left to my hand after the main pile of coir had been plundered The mattress covers having been given to the washerwoman, the coir was tied up in a bundle and flung into my box-room, but I found after I came in from my days visiting the bundle with some of my other things was missing.

At Mahabaleshwar the landlord was the same, everything the same, except that this time the water he had put in and the meal prepared were acceptable to me and Dattu. Everything had been arranged for us. I did not even need to engage a woman for the work. Everyone became absorbed in his own occupation. For Tara a pram was hired. Dattu and Anand used to put her into it and take her out for a walk.

One day Daya told me that here one could get good fresh coconut. 'Please buy a bit for each of us.' I sent Peter out to fetch some. He brought it, and laying a piece before Daya said, 'Baisaheb, you take the first bit.' Baisaheb did so, but over that one word, Daya went into a most amazing fit of temper. She dressed herself in a torn sari, put on a torn blouse, would allow no one to do a hand's turn of work, and in the morning at breakfast she would not eat off a plate, but laying her bread and chilli on the floor ate it there.

For some reason Anand was also sulking. Though I, and those with me, did our best to bring them round, it was useless I had that day clarified five or six rupees worth of butter and pushed the dish as it was under the bed.

By midday the two children had not eaten their dinner. I wearied myself out trying to pacify them. I did not want it to reach Tilak's ears. He was as hot-tempered as he was kind, and I had no courage to tell him. Anand had gone and sat down by the roadside. Daya having finished the work was standing by the back door.

'Peter, go and tell Tilak,' I said at last.

Tilak was not teaching this year. He was giving a number of lectures in English, for which tickets were on sale. He sat and read or thought about his lectures. It was about three o'clock. I was sitting with Tara on the bed.

Tilak heard the news and came at once.

'Where are they?'

'One is at the back door and the other is on the road.'

'Daya, come in. What kind of an obstinate fit is this? Go and put on a proper sari at once. And what is this, you fool? Bring that cane here. Stand up straight. Hold out your hand and count the strokes.'

Anand having received two or three cuts opened his mouth and weeping, came and clung to me. I was holding Tara. The cane began to fall on Anand's back. I disengaged myself. Now the cane descended in rapid succession on his hands. He ducked under the bed and sat down

'Come out of that, wash your face and all of you go out for a walk.'

Off they all went They had not gone far when Anand's hands strayed behind him. They became covered with grease.

'Peter, I have sat in the butter under the bed. What will mother say? Dattu, I am afraid I have sat in the crock of butter.'

'Nothing more will happen Go quietly home and change your *dhotar*'

When they all returned home Tilak was busy administering to me a dose of the following sermon, 'You just sit and collect children about you. How are they to learn how to behave? They are all being spoilt by your softness.'

23 MY EDUCATION

Houshi is engaged. Lakshmi continues her nursing course.

THAT year at Mahabaleshwar a man behind our house died of fever. There was a by-law in Mahabaleshwar that no outbreaks of any disease were to be permitted. After the occurrence of this one suspicious case, Tilak said, 'Peter, you take the two girls and Anand and go back Who knows what this man has died of? The law is very strict here. We do not want any unnecessary trouble later. Take the children to Poona and you yourself go on to Nagar.' In this way the four of them left and we four remained.

However, it was not in Tilak's nature so long as he lived to have his house without visitors. Sant Kaka had had plague. Having recovered he came for a change of air. Now all the shopping was put into his hands Whenever Sant Kaka came to us he was always appointed 'Master of the Market'.

A letter came from Peter saying he and his company had all arrived safely. In this letter he also suggested we should arrange his engagement to Houshi, and asked us to get him work. Tilak procured work for him in Sangli.

The rains broke early. The first time I was in Mahabaleshwar I left behind as a present for the landlord a large quantity of firewood I had acquired very cheaply and stored. Being determined that such a mistake should not occur again, this time I was buying in more wood only when the first bundle was finished But on account of the rains there was soon no wood in the market All the neighbours had heaps of it, but they said, 'Though you offer us ten rupees we would not sell you a stick. This is our supply for the rains.' Tilak always called me, 'Penny wise and Pound foolish'. He reminded me of it again. After that we immediately began to pack up. There was still time before Tilak had to return to his work, so instead of going straight to Nagar we turned our batteries on Sangli and Miraj We stayed two days in Sangli to see how Peter was getting on and then left for Miraj.

Here Bhaskarrao Gowande and his wife Ramabai were studying. As Tilak knew them well we stayed with them. The sight of the hospital and the encouragement of this kind pair, revived my enthusiasm for nursing, but my house, Tilak and my box-room kept me in a state of indecision. Tara too was young and had just recovered from an illness and Dattu did not look at all strong. Tilak decided for the plan. 'Do not worry,' he said, 'I shall look after everything. I shall send you ten rupees regularly.'

Tilak met Dr Wanless, and with the aid of his advice everything was finally arranged Dr Wanless gave me a room. We had no money for our return journey, so a ring was sold, and Dattu, Tara and Tilak went on to Nagar.

My training as a nurse began again. There were no classes. One had to do any work that one was told. This was 'practical training'; Peter came once a week from Sangli to do my shopping. Jaibai's son was studying medicine in Miraj. He began to give me English lessons, because one had to know at least a little to be able to read labels on the bottles. There were many students there from Nagar, and I had help from them too

Four months passed by. I became homesick for the children, and one day I rose up and went to Nagar to see them. Dr and Mrs Gowande having finished their courses had gone to work at Kedgaon under Pandita Ramabai. It was probably about four o'clock in the afternoon when I reached home. Tara was playing; Dattu had gone to school; Tilak was out. Neither he nor anyone else knew I was coming. I arrived quite unexpectedly. Tara ran and clung to me when she saw me.

Mother has come,
Mother has come,
My mother has come,
Games are finshed, stories done,
My mother has come

Still humming these lines she hugged me. I too was overjoyed to see her, and clasped her to my breast Tilak and Dattu were not at home, and I had come for one day only. When they came in they too were delighted. A little while later Dr Hume called and invited us all to his house for a meal. After dinner we sat and talked.

'Now Bai,' Dr Hume said, 'your true vocation consists in

looking after your husband and your children. I do not think that you should go back to Miraj.'

'Saheb, I agree with what you say. What great pleasure have I in leaving them and staying at Miraj? But there is no telling what may happen, nor when, so people should prepare themselves to face all contingencies.'

'Now brother, what is your opinion?'

'My opinion is the same as hers.'

'Saheb, I have no education Do I not want some means of earning a living, and serving others?'

'Very well brother. Think well over it. You are always short of money. The children do not look well.'

After talking at great length we came home. I was going in the evening by the 7 o'clock train. Dr Hume was there sitting waiting at the station before us. As the train left, he pressed a ten-rupee note into my hand. 'Study well and afterwards take good care of your husband and children; here is, not a flower, but a flower's petal from me.'

'But Saheb, I have money I do not want this. If I need anything I shall ask.'

'But Bai, this is only a brother's gift of blouse and bangles.'

Though the children were not looking well, both Tilak and I had fully determined that my studies should be completed Tilak had come to the station to see me off. I began to feel like crying.

'Do not worry at all,' said Tilak, 'if you are the children's mother, I am their loving father. I shall take good care of them.' The train started. I was off to Miraj.

For two days after I arrived there everything went perfectly smoothly.

On the third day Dr Wanless said to me, 'Bai we need your room. Vacate it and go back to Nagar. You are not able to lift heavy patients.'

'But Doctor, I want to learn.'

'No, you are not able for the work.'

'Why not? Am I not human.'

'I have no time to argue with you. Clear your things out of the room today.'

I was in a state of complete bewilderment. I did not know what to do. Dragging my things out of the room, I piled them in the middle of the compound, and sat down on them.

Mr Prasadrao Waghchawre of Nagar was my neighbour. He came home and seeing this sight asked, 'What is this? Why have you brought all your things outside? Are there bugs in the house?'

'No, the doctor told me to empty the room.'

'Why? You yourself are paying for your course. What right has the doctor to put you out?'

'I can see no reason. I broke one thermometer, but replaced it at once. He is convinced I am not fit for the work, that I cannot lift heavy patients.' I was crying steadily. 'What fault is it of mine that I cannot lift patients?' I said. Prasadrao pressed me to take something to eat I replied, 'I will not eat. I must know the truth of what I have done wrong. I am going to sit here.'

When Prasadrao went to Dr Wanless he told him over and over again that I would never be able to do the work. Prasadrao said, 'She says she will not move until she really knows what is wrong.' Then only did Dr Wanless take out from his drawer Dr Hume's letter, and show it to Prasadrao. 'See this, Dr Hume says, "Send Lakshmibai back at once; her husband and children are being neglected here." It is no fault of hers. Look, Dr Hume has written above, "Do not show this letter to Lakshmibai. Do not let Lakshmibai know you have had a letter from me." Now what can I do?'

Prasadrao came and told me everything that had been said. The ten rupees Dr Hume had given me now clashed in my ears. So this gentleman had provided me beforehand with my return fare! I was grieved to death. How could I have the face to return to Nagar? What would people say? Yet the alternative was the bottom of a well. The wives of the Nagar students comforted me, helped me to pack, and put me into the train. All the way to Nagar I felt like getting out at each station and running away somewhere. Dr Hume might throw all Miraj hospital into confusion, but was not my mind my own? To the end, however, these thoughts were not translated into action. Tilak having just drunk his tea had come outside and sat down when my tonga drew up at the door.

'Hallo! How have you turned up?'

'I cannot learn nursing, that is why.'

Thereupon I told him the whole story.

I now understand why students commit suicide when they fail in their examinations. I know what examinations and learning are worth.

Dr Hume knew that I had arrived but he did not come to see me.

24 RAHURI

A house is built and hospitality dispensed.

AFTER I came home I made a beautiful little garden in front of the house. Fifty flower-pots were brought in. Trees were planted, and our garden began to flourish, but our own pride and pomp never having any roots, Tilak speedily dispersed all the pots in a bout of almsgiving.

Dr Ballantine, the missionary in Rahuri, was going on leave and Tilak was appointed in his place. It was before this removal that Tilak gave away all the flower-pots from before our door. We liked the village of Rahuri very much.

Tilak said: 'If only I could build a house and live alone in such a village far away in the country, how many books could I write!' When the missionary Dr Henry Fairbank came to see us, Tilak made his complaint about a house to him, too. Dr Fairbank said, 'Tilak, I was to get some money, but it looks as if it was not coming now. I have given up hope of it. If I ever do get it, I shall build you a house, as you say, in the country. Then you can sit and write as many volumes as you please.' The two of them sat down and prayed, and the subject was abandoned there. Three days later Dr Fairbank came and said to Tilak, 'Your cottage is as good as built. I have got the money. Come, what spot do you choose?'

The two of them went a mile or a mile and a half out of Rahuri. There was a field belonging to Dr Ballantine there. It was approved, Dr Ballantine's consent obtained, and the

field bought for two hundred or two hundred and fifty rupees. When I heard of it a sharp altercation ensued. If a house was to be built should it be built in a village or in the jungle? There was no company there, no neighbours, no water. If one called out in an emergency there was no one to reply.

'You understand nothing,' said Tilak, 'and whatever I take in hand to do you must needs rise up in defiance to prevent. We can bring water, keep a dog for company, and what do you want with people? You can call to me for help, and I can call to you.'

Here the building of the house was begun in due course and Dr Fairbank himself worked on it with the labourers. Carrying a skin of water, some bread to eat, and an umbrella over his head for shade, Dr Fairbank went in state to his work. He never wasted a moment. There was not a drop of water there, not a single tree for shade. The sun was lord of all. The umbrella would be turned inside out by the wind.

I said to him, 'What a bother for you Saheb!'

'Never mind, Bai,' he would reply, 'I must do all this myself, Tilak understands so little in these things.'

In place of five hundred rupees, one thousand were spent, and as the house was built with our own labour, it was worth two thousand.

'Every man to his own trade,' is a wise saying.

The house was ready in a month, but from where were we to produce anything for a house warming? Having finished the house Dr Fairbank presented it to us. With borrowed money we celebrated our entrance, and took up residence in our new home

Here we became acquainted with Mr Rajaramji Chandekar. He was the local school master. He was the first master of importance that Dattu had He taught and encouraged Dattu from the English first to the seventh standard. He was for ever coming to Tilak to complain that Dattu did not do his lessons. He only did enough to get him a bare pass at the time of the examinations, and no more. I never ceased to encourage the Master to scold Dattu well, and teach him with a show of severity and firmness. Tilak would only grunt, and sit silent Dattu passed the first standard. Tilak then sent him to Poona to stay with Mr Kotak. He was the first Christian student in the Nutan Marathi Vidyalaya.

Having come to the jungle Tilak forgot that the main intention was that he should spend his spare time in writing. He now took to farming. I was a farmer's daughter and knew all about farm work, but Tilak metaphorically set me upon the roof to scare away the birds of good sense, and himself did the farming.

The land was ploughed. Someone told him cotton would grow well. Cotton seed was sown. Plants hand-high appeared, then they began to talk about rain Rain did not come for four days Someone else said, 'Saheb, what have you done? There is no rain and no water. How can cotton grow? You must plant gram.' Done! The next day a man was hired to root out the cotton and plough the field again Two measures of seed were sown on it. The gram came up well. The pods swelled. People began to pay visits to Tilak. Whoever came would say, 'What beautiful gram, Saheb! May I gather a little?' With great pleasure permission would be given, and an armful would disappear. It was a good thing all the trouble of harvesting was saved The crop was harvested while we waited. Of two measures of sown grain about half a measure came back into the house.

Tilak began to think he would prefer to leave mission-paid employment, and decided not to do God's work for a salary. He made up his mind to collect volunteers and found a society. He sent in his resignation to the Mission and began to gather his 'volunteers' about him. One volunteer encamped in our house with all his family, and it was a family of six Next an assembly of four farm servants, the night watchman and the progeny of his three wives were all gathered round us.

Dattu was away. Ten rupees a month had to be sent to him Dr Hume did not oppose Tilak's new profession, but knowing that 'husband a mendicant' implies 'wife a martyr', he persuaded the Tract Society to give him work at a hundred rupees a month, which meant that he was working for nothing for the mission in Rahuri, and for a living was receiving a hundred rupees from the Tract Society Again things were going fairly smoothly, yet the hundred rupees had a hundred claims upon them.

Tilak called an urgent meeting of his volunteers. Four of them from Nagar missed the train. Goodness knows if they

did it on purpose. They hired four bicycles at four annas an hour, and came to Rahuri on them. When they returned they took with them the last fifteen or twenty rupees of our salary to pay for the hire of the bicycles.

The volunteer, who with all his family lived with us, used to shave Tilak, for which he received four annas. Gradually he began to ask Tilak for the money for cutting his own children's hair, and Tilak began to give it to him too. One day I said to him straight out, 'I am not going to give this money. What kind of a volunteer is this, who will screw pay out of you for cutting his own boys' hair?' We had a fine bout of stone throwing at each other over this. Tilak said, 'You have no brains You go and spoil a good piece of work by your miserliness. Do you not know that all the world miscalls you?'

'If they do, let them,' said I, 'but I am not going to be deceived like you by an impostor; he has only to say the word and you listen to this man. His body is filled with laziness; he cannot feed his four children, and marries again immediately his first wife is dead; a first-class sponge!'

We spent a miserable night Tilak sat writing. I sat crying. Our morning tea was taken in silence, then Tilak mounted his bicycle and went out. When he came to the village he issued an invitation to tea to all the women in every house in my name, and then betook himself off somewhere.

While I was resting in the afternoon, one by one the visitors collected outside, upto four o'clock. I was sound asleep. After a while I emerged to find a crowd of women waiting. They stared into my face, I into theirs. Each party was lost in astonishment at the other. It was a strange scene.

My friend Savitribai, wife of Bapuji Adhav, my adopted brother in Christ and her daughters Saru and Waru were there too.

They came and asked in a whisper 'Lakshmi, what has happened? Mr Tilak invited us to tea, and there is no sign of anything.' Now light broke upon my mind.

'Savitribai,' I said, 'you make the tea with the help of Saru and Waru.' She put the water on to boil, while Saru and Waru prepared for tea. *Harolyas* were made from wheat flour and sugar, and giving my last rupee to the servant I sent him into the village. He brought back melons, and our tea party was well provided for. The women left. Tilak came in,

'Well, you invited the women!'

'Well, you were not speaking to me, so how I was to get you to begin?' Our fit of 'not-speaking' was over!

25 ORDINATION

Tilak baptizes some converts. Lakshmi teaches more than one lesson, and a well is sunk.

TILAK was 'Ra. Ra.'—the Marathi equivalent of Mister. He became Reverend This is the story of it After Tilak began his volunteer effort, many 'inquirers' came to him, and he began to say that anyone having a call from God should baptize those who might be ready, that it was not necessary to be ordained in order to baptize; and without title, that is, without being himself ordained, he performed some baptisms

This action gave some people a great shock, but not even the great god Brahma could prevent him from embarking on any thing once he was convinced it was right; so now many people were in a dilemma, not knowing what to do. Tilak never cared much what people would think. If anyone came to him to be baptized, instead of sending him to some 'Reverend', he would perform the ceremony himself, and be done with it. And even with that he was not content. He would argue about it.

Two or three people were thus baptized by him in Rahuri Then, who knows what was decided in the Church Council, but it began to be rumoured that Tilak was to be ordained There was to be a meeting that year in Rahuri, and it was arranged that Tilak's ordination should take place on that occasion.

It was the first of the month. The ordination was to be within a fortnight. There was no salary coming from Dr Hume, from whom we used to go and get money whenever we wanted.

Though he would scold us for our prodigal ways he would grant us two months' salary in advance. Now, though the first of the month was past, our salary would not come for another five or six days. Tilak had issued invitations for three meals in the day and tea to everyone coming to the meeting. I was merely given the order. I began to be worried. How was it all to be arranged now? I had nothing. Where is food to come from if there is not a farthing in the house?

From the moment Tilak warned me of the invitations I began to behave like a perfect miser.

'Where is the money?'

'Huh! Why worry about the money? It will be all right.'

'All very well for you I shall have the responsibility.'

'You are always in such a hurry. There are eight to ten days yet. We can see about it later.'

'It is always the same with you "We can see", when the train comes in, and "we can still see", when the train is gone. What is the use of seeing then?'

'Look at the honour I have in the outside world, and you think nothing of it'

'How do I think nothing of it? For what other reason should I be worrying about the food and drink for the guests? Everyone will say, "The husband is good, the wife is bad." There is not even enough water to drink. From the beginning I said you should not build a house in the jungle.'

'Why worry about water? In place of one buffalo skin-full get in ten.'

'But where are the ten skin-fulls to be stored?'

'I have no time to sit and argue with you. It will be all right at the time' So saying Tilak went off to work. In the evening he left for Sholapur for six or seven days. In his absence we were nearly driven crazy by thieves, who were stopped just short of actual theft.

Going to Rajaramji Chandekar and Bhaskarrao Bhambal I said to them:

'See me through this I shall pay all the expenses when we get our salary; I have told you frankly the predicament I am in.'

'Bai,' they replied, 'do not worry at all. We shall make all the arrangements.'

And as they had promised, they provided for everything.

There was always a swarm of ascetics, mendicants, and sanctimonious quacks about Tilak. They used to tell him their troubles, and he believed them all. Most of them were hypocrites and liars. They would stay some days, eat, drink, lift some clothing and quietly take to the road again. Some of them over and above this would annoy me and the children. Tilak however never saw through them. He would always take the side of these good people and blame me.

One such gentleman turned up and Tilak gave him shelter. Later he even baptized him, then got him work somewhere. At the time of Tilak's ordination this 'lord' arrived back with four other holy men. He had also brought a bottle with him. Giving it to me to keep for him he said, 'Mother, this is my medicine. Put it away.' So I put it away under lock and key.

Tilak was in church The children were all engaged in some of their own games The women were cooking. Tucking the bunch of keys in at my waist I busied myself here and there. About one o'clock it was time for my 'lord' to take his medicine.

'Mother, give me the key for a moment.' I gave him the key. He took his medicine and went towards the stove Sitting down there he made some balls of wet dough about the size of an apple, and began to make an offering in the flames to his dead ancestors. All the women shrieked. The girls were terrified. His 'lordship' got up and rushed upon them.

In the midst of this Nilkanthrao Mategaonkar came back from Church. He was to be baptized that day. Tilak himself was to do it as soon as he was ordained. The commotion caused by the holy man and the arrival of Nilkanthrao coincided.

'What is all this hubbub, Nilkanthrao,' I said, 'can you not throw him out?'

Nilkanthrao went to lay hold of him only to be chased himself by the holy man flourishing a knife.

'You are a villain. We shall see what kind of a baptism you get today,' he yelled. With this a sharp brawl ensued. What an unspeakable calamity it would have been had the knife found a home in Nilkanthrao's stomach! Stealthily I snatched the knife out of his 'lordship's' hand and signed to Nilkanthrao to get out into another room. He did so and put up the chain from the inside.

To the holy man I said, 'Sir, I have no faith in him either. He is a very bad man. Come, do you want your medicine?'

He began to purr and leading him into the room where his medicine was, I gave him two such resounding slaps on the face that fire flies must have danced before his eyes. He became sober in a flash and prostrated himself at my feet. 'Mother, I fall at your feet. Do not tell my father Tilak.' So saying he clasped my feet. My courage rose with his show of humility. I told him to sit in a corner. He went and sat down without a word, and having watched him do it I quickly slipped out of the room, and put up the chain on the outside.

I now went and released Nilkanthrao. At the end of the ordination service in Church Tilak came home and during dinner he remembered the holy man. I described everything to him. Tilak had brand new sandals on his feet. With them he belaboured him soundly and putting him promptly into a tonga, dispatched him and all his followers to the station. Two years later a letter came from him saying he had now greatly reformed, but after this we never heard of him again.

The entertainment of the guests at the ordination ceremony was carried through without even as much worry as Tilak had foreseen. Sant Kaka was there. He had brought thirty rupees with him. It was his rule to bring in no more than was needed for the moment. 'Do not worry,' he said to me. 'I am always ready to go to the market. Just let me know when anything is finished.' So in truth he was kept running to the market.

From the very first we had the help of Rajaramji and Bhaskarrao, and also the whole family of Bapuji Adhav, who helped in the house. In the midst of all this entertaining, however, Bapuji managed to offend some people by something he said. I was very annoyed. This group went and sat at the edge of the river sulking. I set out in a flurry to placate them. I met Dr Fairbank coming towards me.

'Where are you going so fast?' he asked.

'My guests are offended,' I replied, 'I am going to try and bring them round.'

'All right. But don't go yourself. I shall talk to them, and bring them back.' At last about eight o'clock at night we had dinner. Rajaramji Chandekar, Kamble and others undertook the serving.

After dinner I tucked in the loose end of my sari, and holding up the company said, 'This is a gathering of leaders. Leadership should not be like this. Christ came to serve, not

to be served, you preach from the pulpit, and here you are offended with me without cause. You should, on the contrary have been helping. In your speeches you say we are all God's children, we are all each other's brothers and sisters. If I come as a guest to your house, I go in and help my sister. I ask her what I should do, and not to do, but today you have had me at your beck and call.'

'Bai, we are not offended with you,' said my audience.

'But, are you not offended with Bapuji Adhav? And what has he said, that you should be angry with him? Only "There is no hurry bathe at your leisure" And now during dinner also it was said, "Take your time", why are you not annoyed now? What was there to be angry about then? Now has your bad temper gone? Anyone who is no longer angry put up his hand'

All hands went up.

While my lecture was being delivered, behind scenes the left over food was being filched When the guests were gone those of us who remained found all the rice had been stolen We went hungry, and Tilak and I had another bout of stone throwing the next day about having built a house in the wilderness.

'The trouble we have just experienced springs from the lack of conveniences from the beginning'

'What troubles? I experienced no particular trouble.'

'No, you had no trouble. But look at the trouble we had.'

'If you will make trouble, what help is there? Is there any lack when no fuss is made! Time brings all we need.'

'Everything was done! There was not even water What a shortage there was of water! From the beginning I said a house should not be built in such a place. Trouble from thieves, no neighbours, no water . '

'No water? Chimbaba, bring pick-axe and spade. We shall dig a well.'

To begin with, our servant Chimbaba was an old man. He was also bent in three Hands on hips he stood before Tilak with his mouth open.

'Saheb, no water is to be found here.'

'Is not to be found! What does that mean? Come and strike with that pick-axe, where I tell you to.'

Chimbaba was only a servant under authority. He brought

pick-axe and spade, and Tilak went off with him to dig a well. They began digging three or four hundred cubits away from the house. Tilak and Chimbaba did the digging. Dattu and Tara and I set to, and carried away the earth. Guests and others enjoyed the fun with their hands on their hips. Doing a little every day the well was sunk waist deep.

The news of it spread in a winking, and one day some stone-breakers turned up. Tilak agreed to give them ten annas a foot, and they took over the work. When Rajaramji Chandekar heard about it, he came running and told Tilak he was being deceived, and such work should not be embarked upon hurriedly; but Tilak would not listen to him.

Bhaskarrao Bhambal was ill. When he heard he came with fever still on him, and stopped the men working. At that time they had only dug down knee-deep, from where we had left off, but from the amount due when the work was calculated at the rate of the men's measure, Tilak's mistake was brought home to him. He had understood he was to give ten annas when the whole well was sunk a foot, but the amout came out at ten annas a cubic foot. At this rate the bill might well mount up. Our salary had come that very day. After four hours argument with the stone-breakers they were somehow brought to reason, but nevertheless for four hours work they carried off forty-five rupees out of our salary.

Bhaskarrao now brought in other men. It was agreed to give them ten rupees to dig down the first six feet, fifteen for the second, and so on. At thirty feet water was tapped, and it was sweet and abundant

PART THREE

1 EIGHTEEN RUPEES

Dattu puts out a fire, and Tilak writes some hymns.

THE well was dug. Tilak and all of us were very happy. The well had now to be built. A stone-breaker contracted to do this for five hundred rupees. He was to be paid fifty a month. Tilak's salary from the Tract Society was a hundred rupees, so half of it was gone Of the fifty rupees left, twenty-two were required for servants' wages, and from the balance of twenty-eight Dattu had to be sent ten. Eighteen remained on which to run the house We had four house servants and a Bhil night watchman for a fifth It was necessary to keep on the Bhil. Even though he was never present, as long as he was paid his salary, we were free from the attention of thieves.

In addition to all these things two letters arrived, one from Houshi and the other from Sugandhrao Karmarkar. Houshi was coming back to us to have her first baby. Sugandhrao Karmarkar said he was coming for a change of air There was no need to press Tilak, he could never say 'no' to anyone. If any one said he was coming the reply was come' If any one said he was going the reply was 'go'

Tilak sent letters telling them both to come. They came, Houshi, her husband and her mother-in-law, Sugandhrao Karmarkar, his wife and four children Counting Mategaonkar, the new convert, Tilak and me, we were twelve in all, and all to be fed on less than twenty rupees! We had enough and to spare in our fields of onions, potatoes, mint, coriander, tomatoes and green chillies We also got milk, butter, clarified butter and buttermilk in plenty from our own cow. The water in the well was sweet, and sweet the temper of the whole company. At no time was there any sign of friction and all ate contentedly whatever *Bajri* or *Jowari* was provided. Except for cigarettes, oil, salt, tea and sugar, kerosene and matches, we needed to bring nothing from the market for ten whole months. With all this there was no lack of fun in our family life. One evening as we sat down to dinner there came a smell of something burning. In the outside room a lighted bicycle lamp had been

put on top of the bookcase. It had flared up and a conflagration was imminent. We all ran to see it. Dattu had arrived that day. 'Throw some ashes onto the lamp,' I said.

Tilak said, 'No, throw on water.'

A great deal of time was wasted over the argument while the flames continued to spread. Tilak was bellowing, 'I am ignored everywhere,' when Dattu knocked the lamp down with a stick, and heaped on ashes.

'Dattu, you flout me in everything. Do you never consider my value?'

'Of course I do, but this is not the time for that. There is a wild wind, and water would have spread the flames further.'

'Enough! What's that to you? It's my house that will burn. I am the owner.' However, the lamp went out the instant the ashes were thrown over it, and Tilak's anger died down too.

He went into his office, and in a short time came out with a poem. He had begun to admit his outstanding fault, and was making prodigious efforts to overcome it. This poem was wrung out of the depths of his heart He wrote a great many religious poems at Rahuri.

One day when he was out for a walk with some Christian friends, they passed a Hindu procession singing and dancing. and Tilak, feeling there was too much Western influence in the Christian services in singing and form of worship, composed some of his most famous hymns such as, *Oh Christ, if I leave Thee, whither shall I go?* and *Christ my tender teacher.* Here also between 1905 and 1906 he wrote many other hymns filled with a spirit of devotion. Out of six hundred and eighty-two in the Marathi hymn book two hundred and fifty-four are by him. Filled with the same spirit are two books, *The Lord's Prayer* and *Bhajanasangraha*, and from them the reader can judge the state of Tilak's mind in those days. Tilak used to say that he first became Christian intellectually, and not until some ten years later did he become Christian in spirit; it would not be wrong to say these were the days of his second conversion, and the disturbance of his spirit is reflected in his poems His natural pride vanished to be replaced by a spirit of dependence on God. His eyes would fill with tears when he sang the following hymn written in 1906, and we to this day are touched when we hear it.

At last my Lord and King, to Thy dear feet I cling.
All lost this life of mine without the light of Thine.
I saw my own self stand the first at Christ's right hand,
In pride of strength and grace. Ah, now before Thy face,
That pride is low as dust. No more myself I trust.
Myself was my own foe, that would not let me know
How far I strayed from God, how dark the path I trod.
The name I bore was Thine The will I served was mine.
I have no wisdom's light, no knowledge, power or might.
Oh Christ to Thee I bow. My all in all art Thou.

2 GOPAJI

How Tilak's guests enjoyed themselves

ONCE the barriers of thought were raised round Tilak's mind he had no more care for the outside world. He was wise, I was witty, yet his wisdom was no barrier to me, and my bantering no burden to him.

Houshi came to me for her first baby Sugandhrao Karmarkar and all his family were with us. His wife Virginiabai was from North India. She understood Marathi, but spoke Hindustani. All of which is to say, though we were living in the wilderness, there were easily eight to ten visitors added to our family of four.

One day Dr Bhaskarrao Gowande too turned up. He was big, heavy, fair, blue-eyed, well bearded and moustached, and altogether an impressive gentleman Sugandhrao's wife Virginiabai might have been taken for his sister

It was about eight or nine in the morning, and, having partaken plentifully of tea and other things, each was occupied in his own task; Tilak was writing, Houshi and Virginiabai were cooking, Dr Gowande and Sugandhrao Karmarkar were lying outside on the veranda gossiping, and I was leaning against the lattice work surveying all. We had a metal lattice on our veranda. Anyone sitting close up to it could see what was

going on, both inside the house and outside. For the most part I was never bound by any spirit of ceremony. I treated my guests as if they belonged to the family; and if I ever stayed anywhere else, in no time I made myself completely at home

I was sitting there close at hand, and Dr Gowande and Sugandhrao Karmarkar were lying at their ease. Their eyes were shut, but their ears were open. Down the road I saw a man coming in a great hurry. He had something on his back. I recognized him by his walk. Was it not our 'Gopa', whom Tilak had turned into something quite presentable? He was now a schoolmaster in a nearby village, and 'Gopa' had become 'Gopalrao' dignified by the addition of 'Rao'. We called him Gopaji, and treated him as one of ourselves. His eyesight was weak. As he approached, my natural tendencies began to assert themselves Seeing me, he quickened his pace, and at last, coming near, he laid down the bundle from his shoulders. With a motion of his hand towards the guests he asked who they were. I answered the question aloud in straightforward Marathi.

'What can one do, Gopaji? I am fed up. See for yourself the number of visitors There is one of them. He does not understand our speech, and we do not understand his. No use for anything but to eat and be a burden to the earth! Neither wholly mad, nor wholly sane!'

While I was expounding my case, Dr Gowande turned a half opened eye towards Karmarkar. Karmarkar winked back at him. I had spoken so loudly that Virginiabai, hearing me from inside, came out, and, gesticulating in front of me, began in Hindustani:

'What are you saying? Do you not know who he is? This gentleman is my brother and comes from Tanjawar beyond Delhi. He has a big eye hospital there.'

Having given vent to her feelings she returned to the kitchen, and Dr Gowande sat up on his mat. Tucking in his feet he regarded us with an unmoved countenance. Virginiabai came out again to give us a little more information about her 'brother'.

'My brother can do the most wonderful eye operations. His proficiency has reached such heights that he can take out both eye-balls and lay them on the table; then washing them well and removing all dust and dirt and ashes he replaces them in their sockets. I was a nurse in his eye hospital.'

'How should I know all this? Then let him examine my Gopaji's eyes.'

'All right, not now, but I shall ask him after lunch.'

The Doctor's new-found 'sister' that day out-sistered the closest of sisters. She monopolized all rights of bestowing hospitality upon him.

At the time of the midday meal they all sat in one row, with only Gopaji and me facing them. The serving was done by Virginiabai. No one spoke to anyone else. Tilak was deep in thought and the Doctor had taken a vow of silence. If he wanted anything, he said, 'Dattu', and pointed with his finger to it, if it was still visible on his plate. I gently nudged Gopaji with my left arm, and told him to look at the Doctor, who was staring at him in an extraordinary fashion. Gopaji then said to me:

'A great rolling fowl. A tumbler pigeon. Who knows where it was picked up! Bai, let me but lay my fingers on it. I shall show you how I can use a sling.'

Tilak woke up 'What nonsense are you talking, Gopaji? Are you daft? Eat your dinner in silence.'

Though Gopaji had said so much to provoke the Doctor, you could not tell from his face that he had understood a word. When everyone was finished and Tilak had retired to his room, the rest of us were free to run riot.

Again I introduced the subject of Gopaji's eyes, playing pleader for him.

'You will get no money, he is poor.'

Virginiabai and the Doctor consulted together for a little in a make-believe language of their own, and then she told us in Urdu that her brother was willing to give his services for nothing. Done! Preparations for the operation were made. The nurse gathered the things out of the house. Instead of a table three low stools were brought and laid out in order: a tub for water, an enormous round metal vessel, two towels, a new long shining knife and ladle.

'What do you want a ladle for?' I asked, when I saw it.

'It is to put water into the socket, to wash it out.'

'You mean you are going to take out the eye-balls and stir about in the cavities with a ladle!'

The Doctor now motioned the patient to come near. Kneeling down, like victor over his victim, he seized the knife in his

right hand. The nurse was behind the patient to support him. As the point of the knife approached the corner of his eye, the patient knocked away the Doctor's hand, leaped to his feet, and began to run, murder at his heals. The hunt was in full cry, Gopaji in front, the Doctor following, and the nurse behind him. We, too, of the audience joined the rout.

'Enough of your brother's surgery, Bai,' I said, 'instead of this, can you not give him a prescription or order glasses'

Virginiabai replied, 'My brother is such a good doctor that, once he has got a needy soul in his clutches, he will not let him go until he has cured him.'

The end came at last, and Sugandhrao clasping the Doctor round the waist made him sit down, while Houshi's husband calmed Gopaji. Everyone in the house was exhausted with laughter by the time they had subsided again into their places.

Once more I asked the nurse to ask the Doctor why he would not give a prescription or glasses. The make-believe language was employed again. The Doctor began to rock himself gently to and fro, then taking the spectacles off his own nose he put them onto Gopaji's. Gopaji saw perfectly and was delighted. He was given the number, the prescription was written down, and the patient's name entered 'Go, Paji'. (*Paji* means rascal) —the disillusionment was complete. There was a further explosion of laughter and Gopaji was furious. The Doctor proceeded to hug him.

'Gopalrao, are you really angry? It was all a joke. How did you not see through it?'

But the flames on Gopaji's tongue were fully alight now. He could not be silenced. The Doctor presented him with a rupee. Still he would not be quiet.

'I had brought pop-corn, and was going to roast it and give it to you piping hot.'

'Oh Gopaji! From the moment we saw you we began to roast another kind of corn, and it has been popping over since! Your pop-corn can't be compared to ours.'

We all laughed. Gopaji laughed too. Tilak came out of his room, and when he heard everything scolded us well.

3 CASTOR SEEDS

Three stories with little connexion but which may amuse the reader.

HERE is a tale of Rahuri. Tilak had gone to Jalna for some Christian conference. All the guests in the house had scattered, only Dattu who had come from Poona for his holidays, Nilkanthrao Mategaonkar, his wife and two children, Chimbaba the servant, Tara and myself were at home.

Before Tilak had left he had dismissed Shahaji the Bhil from his work, but the minute we lost him stones began to fly over our house again, and one day the thieves crept quite close up.

Nilkanthrao Mategaonkar went out to chase them away. The grain in the fields was shoulder high and he and they were hidden in a far-off corner, so the rest of the family sallied forth armed with lanterns, sticks and other weapons. From a distance could be heard a sound like the threshing of grain, and all armed we turned thither. We found one thief laid out after a merciless beating from Nilkanthrao—'Well done!' We imagined we would now be held in proper awe by the thieves, and we too picking up courage raised our sticks to strike the prostrate form. Nilkanthrao's voice amidst groans said, 'I am not the thief; the thief got away. I am Nilkanthrao, truly Nilkanthrao.'

We lifted him up, and carried him into the house. Nilkanthrao had always boasted that no thief would escape his clutches. This day, however, experience proved the opposite.

Once more the Bhil, Shahaji, was established as watchman and there was no more trouble.

After coming to Rahuri my health had improved immensely. I grew so fat I just bulged. The bangles on my wrists and the necklace on my neck began to burst. In short I became a fine buxom wife. Why not, with my own house and everything arranged to my liking?

There was a pretty garden in front of the door, and in it some castor-oil plants. When the seeds were gathered they filled an earthen pot, and my head also was filled with plans

for their use. I had ordained that everything must be made use of, everything must be done by oneself, and everything should be used to the full. Add to that my acquisition of Chimbaba who was exactly of my mind.

The two of us made ropes for the well and other things from the waste coir. The preparation of medicines was my special hobby, and seeing the pot of seeds I dreamed of putting them to a good use.

'Chimbaba,' I said, 'shell a cup of castor seeds' He removed the shells and I ground the kernels fine, adding cinnamon and ginger, and fried the mixture in butter. Next, making a syrup from sugar, we concocted a kind of toffee. It was delicious.

I never could eat anything all by myself, but before this experiment was ready everyone else had fallen asleep. Only Dattu was awake. He ate a few of the crumbs, and I finished the rest. Tara would not touch the stuff She was too sleepy. We then lay down.

At dawn Dattu was roused to do his lessons, but he would not sit down to them. I loosed a volley at him.

'You never do your lessons. Will you beg later? Chandekar always says you do not do your lessons.'

'Mother, I tell you truly. My head is spinning,' he said.

'Your head is always spinning when it is time for your lessons.'

After hearing this he was forced to sit down, and immediately collapsed. When I went to lift him I too began to feel as if everything was going round Therewith a deplorable condition manifested itself in both of us. Until the evening of the next day we were as ill as any one with cholera. Chimbaba took fright, and said we should send a wire to Tilak.

In the end I sent him for Dr Ballantine, and he told him everything. Dr Ballantine was very angry.

'Chimbaba, this woman is a plague. She is always making something or other and eating it, giving it to her husband, giving it to her children, sending it to me. It is she who has ruined her husband's eyes with unsuitable food.'

Dr Ballantine thought I had cooked and eaten some rich, expensive food. Only recently I had made *puran-poli* and *ladu* and sent him a sample, and from that day he imagined I daily prepared and served everyone with rich food. What does it matter? Although Dr Ballantine was so angry he was very tender-hearted, and gave us medicine at once, and ordered us

to eat nothing but oranges. Then only did we get relief. This happened on Friday. When I went to church on Sunday I was so changed that no one recognized me. They all asked me how I had managed to reduce my weight, but I told no one of my secret remedy, and allowed the sweets to fall into no one's hand. Chimbaba faithfully buried them deep.

Tilak returned from Jalna and was flabbergasted to see the difference in my appearance His only comment was 'You glutton!'

We having come to Rahuri, Sakharam also came to practise law On his way to Jalna Tilak had gone to see him, and Rakhmai had told him to buy a griddle, a frying pan and some other things. Tilak without forgetting one brought them and deposited them at her house himself. Rakhmai thereupon asked him the price of the things This made Tilak very angry with her and started a quarrel between them. Later he returned home and forgot all about the scene they had had.

That night after Tilak had dined he went to bed. Almost immediately afterwards a tonga drew up at the door and out of it Sakharam descended perspiring and puffing. He looked as if he had been ill for six months. I was shocked when I saw him, and said:

'What has happened? Is everyone well at home?'

'Yes, but how is Tilak?'

'What do you mean? He has just gone to bed now. He is all right'

'Look at his letter. I found this when I came home. He says this is his last letter to me, that I shall never see his face again.'

Now I understood all, explained everything to him, and he felt relieved and went back home.

A poet came to stay with us while we were in Rahuri. He had just newly resigned his police employment and had not decided what he would do next, but he had composed many poems and intended to write many more. One of his poems began, 'Police service I do not want'. He used to tell us many funny experiences in connexion with the work. He thought he would like to employ his future time writing plays and set to at once. His scribe was Dattu. He would compose and Dattu

promptly would write down to his dictation. He used to produce poetry as he spoke, just as if he had it off by heart.

This poet had brought his wife with him. How could the wife of a Brahman live in our house? She stayed in the nearby temple and did her cooking there. She was seldom seen by us. I used to say to the poet:

'She is the wife of a Brahman; how has she no black wedding beads to wear?'

To which he would reply, 'She was brought up among Marathas. I expect that is why she does not wear them.'

In order to show how much his wife had to suffer, and how much he persecuted her, he used to go into the little temple and pretend to beat her. She would pretend to cry but through the crying now and again would come the sound of laughter from both of them, from which I recognized it was all mere play acting. However, I never showed my suspicions. Let the truth about this poet at that time be what it may, he was later famed as a great saint.

Tilak received an invitation to return to Nagar. Dr Hume had a theological class there, and it used to be Tilak's duty to teach it till he left Mission work and took to living in Rahuri. Dr Hume now pressed him to return to Nagar and he agreed. We came back to our old home. The house, field, well and everything in Rahuri were handed over to the care of Shahaji the Bhil when we left.

4 A POETS' CONFERENCE

Tilak's literary activities. Lakshmi turns poet.

TILAK had a friend, Bhaskarrao Kotak, who was a great favourite. After Tilak joined the Christian Church the leaders for a long time could not stomach him. They felt he had come up from behind, and put their noses out of joint;

but Tilak was more than their match, ridiculing them in sarcastic songs. It was of one of them, who had undertaken to turn the people against him by spreading slander, that Tilak wrote his poem, *The Drummer,* the last line of which, 'Burn the rumour, or burn the tongue', was written with such vindictiveness that later Tilak repented of being so hasty.

Another poem, *He feared us,* was written about another critic, the theme being, that the moon rises, and all night long follows her path with a smile; at dawn, in the natural order of things, she sets; but the dogs, barking till their lungs burst, making the utmost effort all night are content that by morning the moon has fled before them. Yet another poem was *Daniel and the Lions.* This story was taken from the Bible. Daniel was a man devoted to God. His persecutors threw him into a den of lions, but, as the story says, the lions did not touch him. In Tilak's poem he says, to the dogs, 'There is no sense in barking at him, who is without fear even in a lion's den.'

Kotak understood poetry well, especially such as I have just described; he would read it with the closest attention, and on the whole believed that Tilak would bring these puffed up leaders into subjection. He was at this time Tilak's friend, but he worshipped him as a hero

Tilak once received a wire from Kotak, 'I am dying. Come at once'. On borrowed money Tilak went to Poona. Kotak welcomed him laughing, and Tilak was very annoyed. Kotak had had a sudden wanton desire to see and tease him.

'You, such a learned man and you could not interpret the wire!' he said, 'It means, I am dying to see you. If I were really dying how could I send you a wire? Someone else would have sent it.'

These two men were very different, but they were very fond of each other. Tilak had always wanted to have a newspaper to manage, so he started one called *Christi,* which provided articles on the Christian faith for non-Christians, and on Indian Culture for the Christians. This newspaper swallowed up a great deal of the money in our house and died, but in spite of that Tilak's thirst for a newspaper became no less. Finally, after we came back to Nagar the correspondence between Tilak and Kotak grew enormously. Their meetings too became very frequent. On the slighest provocation Tilak would rise and go to Poona, and on 15 December 1905 a paper called *Christi*

Nagarik first saw the light. Bhaskarrao Kotak became the managing director. The famous Marathi grammarian, Ganpatrao Navalkar was the editor of the English section and Tilak of the Marathi. Their minds were bold, and their hearts straightforward, and the result was that this paper caused a great sensation in the Christian community. It terminated its existence after running for three years, rudely awakening the Christian people, and depositing a heavy burden of debt on Bhaskarrao Kotak's shoulders.

The things which Tilak set out to do in this paper, and the aims which he formulated were given a permanent place in the *Dnyanodaya* when he took charge of it in 1912. Much astonishing information will be found by anyone going carefully over the numbers of *Christi Nagarik* and of the *Dnyanodaya* from 1912 to 1919.

The first Poet's Conference was held at Jalgaon. That the idea for it must have originated in Tilak's head is evident from the reference in the *Christi Nagarik* dated 16 February 1907. The fundamental aim of the meeting will also be found in that copy. It is as follows:

> By the will of God on March 2nd and 3rd it has been decided to hold a two days conference of modern poets in Jalgaon. There will be a discussion of and a decision upon the following important questions: The place of Poets and Poetry in the History of India. Have the Poets of today fallen from their place? If so, is it possible to re-instate them? Why is there no poet of importance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Will there not be one? Why should a magazine for Modern Poetry like the *Kavyaratnavali* which has been established for sixteen or seventeen years, be in such a calamitous position? Is it possible to acquire direct help for Modern Poetry from the British Government and Indian States? Lastly, if a Poets' Society were established would it be a likely source of direct aid? Between discussions all the Poets sitting at the feet of the goddess of literature should entertain and encourage one another, and they should allow themselves to be drawn together by the cords of friendship, for with this intent the meeting is called. It is to be hoped that you and your readers will give proper encouragement to the undertaking.
>
> For the Standing Committee,
> Your humble servant.
>
> Jalgaon 24-2-1907

Then follow four signatures the first of which is Tilak's. The wording was also evidently Tilak's. Under no circumstances would Mr Phadnis, the editor of *Kavyaratnavali*, have written about his own magazine in this strain.

From the commotion and upheaval caused in our house one would have thought the wedding of Tilak's own child was in hand. The Editor of the *Kavyaratnawali* for the most part had to clear up all the mess later, but it was Tilak who created it. This Poets' Conference saw the literary birth of Balkavi Thombre—the boy-poet, and heard also an illiterate woman like me beginning to lift up her voice with some show of strength and confidence.

Tilak urged me to go to Jalgaon, but I had stomach-ache and I had buffaloes to look after They needed quite half my attention, so how could I go? Nevertheless I composed and sent a poem instead. Tilak of course revised it, but the line which won it popularity was the only one untouched by his hand. Here is the line:

'You are poets, I a beggar at your door.'

In those days I knew only two rhythms; my poem *Karanjyatla Modak* is in the same metre It is entirely my own composition. So Mr Tiwari and the poet Anantatanaya expressed in poetry at the conference their appreciation of my effort. Anantatanaya's poem was printed in the issue of 15 March 1907 of the *Christi Nagarik*. It seems that someone in the gathering disparaged Tilak because he was a Christian, and Anantatanaya in a blaze of anger wrote another poem.

5 THE BOY-POET THOMBRE

How Thombre was discovered and came to live with the Tilaks.

TILAK had a poet friend called Colonel Kirtikar. He was Chairman of the Poets' Conference at Jalgaon. He was a doctor, and had seen much active service in the war. In his letters to Tilak he always referred to me as, 'That ever dying wife of yours', because there was always something the matter with me, and I was always in bed. Rather than saying 'in bed',

it would be more accurate to say on the floor, because all my writhings were done there. Given the ground for my bed, then my arm would serve for a pillow. There was no telling what I might or might not use for a pillow, a grain-measure, the handle of my flour-mill, the snuff-box, in short anything, ready to hand would do.

In the *Chitsn Nagarik* of 15 March 1907, Tilak wrote a very interesting article on the twenty-six poets of the Poets' Conference. About Thombre he says, 'The assembly had the opportunity of hearing the impromptu composition of Master Trimbak Bapuji Thombre, a thirteen-year old boy-poet. Is there anyone who will not agree on hearing his pure, simple, sweet verse that poetry is a gift of God? How many such boy-poets, boy-saints, boy-heroes have been born to India and then lost! Whose duty is it to seek them out, and bring them to maturity? Surely that duty lies upon us who are the sons of India! God grant this boy may serve our country to the full. We in the meantime are immersed in officious dictation and pen bravery.' 'In the end the following standing committee members were elected in order to give some regular help to the modern poets and poetry!' Then follows the list of the names of the committee.

This conference ended but it gave two great things to Marathi literature. It introduced to Marathi readers the boy-poet Thombre and the idea of printing an anthology of modern Marathi poetry.

Later Tilak went to Poona and founded a society with the help of the late Lakshman Shastri Lele and other prominent poets. Tilak had no peace of mind about Thombre. He must be sent to school somewhere, and he must be educated somehow. His poetical genius must not be allowed to be wasted. About this he carried on a furious correspondence with Colonel Kirtikar. The Colonel was wealthy and Tilak's friend. He promised to pay ten rupees a month for Thombre, with only one condition, that Thombre should go to Nagar and remain under Tilak's eye. So it was settled, and Thombre came to Nagar. He came alone; the previous day, following his invariable custom Tilak had departed to some outlying village. I, as I have already described, was as usual ill. As he was leaving, Tilak told me that the boy-poet was coming and that I must look after him well.

It was Christmas day, ten o'clock in the morning. I was

lying down. The children had gone to Church. There was no sign of anyone in the house; a clean sweep had been made of servants and neighbours and all. They were in Church to the last man And so Thombre arrived.

'Are you Thombre?' I asked.

'Yes,' he said.

'Sit down, the children have gone out. When they return, they will take you to a Hindu Hotel. If you will accept milk and bananas in our house, I shall give them to you.'

With no more ado he took the milk and bananas. Presently Dattu came back, accompanied by his friends Mulay and Parnaik. They carried Thombre off to a Hindu Restaurant where he became a regular customer for as long as he lived with us. In one or two days time Tilak returned, and going to the market bought a bottle of Cod Liver Oil, bent on improving Thombre's health.

Once only on his arrival, did I address Thombre with the respectful plural 'you', and then immediately we dropped all formality. I began to call him, 'thee' and 'thou', and in one day he also became quite at home. He had been most apprehensive of the place in which he was to find himself. He imagined Christians must be some kind of giants or goblins, and many a time later told us so. However, he was convinced in one or two days that not only were we human beings, but such human beings as he would like well. He at once struck up a close friendship with Dattu and his friends, and he began to behave like the other children in the house.

I was lying down when he arrived, and said to him, 'Child, open the cupboard, and get out the milk.' The 'child' having drunk his milk left his cup where it was. So I said to him again:

'Child, please put the cup away.' As a result of this, he always teased me saying:

'Lakshmibai, if King George V ever came to see you, you would say to him, "Child, please shut the gate as you come in".'

From my habit of familiar address, however, a positive catastrophe happened once. Sakharam like me began to call him 'thee' and 'thou'. Thombre was just Dattu's age. Poet he might be, but still a boy-poet, and Sakharam thought no harm in treating him as such. One day when he came to our house, Thombre was outside.

'Thombre, come here', he called, using the singular pronoun 'thou'. Thombre paying no attention to him turned on his heel, and came into the house to me. I was busy cooking, and he sat down in front of me.

'Lakshmibai, I do not like your brother-in-law's manners. Who does he think he is? Everyone respects me; even Tilak does not use, 'thee' and 'thou' to me, and why should he be so familiar? I am now going to teach him a lesson'

'Hush child! Do not say anything to him. Do I not call you "thee" and "thou"?'

'That's a different thing, you take the place of my mother. You have slaved for me. Did he come to do anything for me, when I was ill? Who is he'

'He is my brother-in-law. For my sake say nothing to him.' While we were still talking Sakharam came into the house, and up to me. He could not understand why Thombre appeared to be quarrelling with me, and I trying to pacify him, so he asked what had happened. Thombre's anger boiled over again.

'Thombre, I called you "thou" without thinking,' Sakharam explained, 'I shall never do it again It was my mistake. I never dreamt you would be so hurt.'

From that day he never failed to give him the desired respect, and I too began to call him, 'you'. I however could not keep it up, and neither did Thombre like it

One day he came and sat down beside me. 'Lakshmibai, how long is this to go on? Please address me once again as you used to.'

'Run away you fool,' I said, then he laughed and I laughed too. My greatest term of affection for him was, 'you fool', and hearing it once again he was content. Soon after he came to us, Thombre had intermittent fever. He lay tossing on his bed for forty days. He was saved by Tilak's money, the care taken by Rambhau Dharamadhikari and myself, by Dr Sorabji's medicines and by the mercy of God, to render great service to the Maharashtra. Night after night I got no sleep I had to do everything for him, which explains why he and his mother regarded me with peculiar affection. His mother used to say, 'Lakshmibai, he is not my son, he is yours. It was you who brought him back from the dead.'

In the house he behaved as one of us, just like Dattu. He followed me about more than he did Tilak. When he was

confronted with Tilak he used to put on a great show of gravity. I was the first audience for his poetry. I would be busy telling the maid servant something, or talking to someone, just when he was in a hurry to read out his poem to me. If I paid no attention he would tear it up in a rage, then Dattu and Tara would tease him:

> Thombre Thombre unlettered lout,
> Tears up his poem, and then goes out.

At that he would laugh again, and rewrite it. He had a bad habit of tearing up what he had written. Before coming to Nagar practically all his poems had gone that road. He used to recite some of them. One poem was called, *The Lute Player*, in another a fawn thirsting for milk was imagined licking the moon-light off a stone.

When Thombre came to Nagar he began to attend the High School. He was in the third standard or fourth, and here is a story of those days. Dattu too was in the High School then. As soon as Thombre came in from school he would beg me to tell him a story, I would be quite exhausted trying to satisfy him. It was a daily request: 'Lakshmibai, tell me a story.'

One day Houshi's mother-in-law turned up. She had a good knowledge of medicinal roots and cures, so she and I had a close bond. She also had a great many stories to tell and once she had begun a story it would easily last for four or five hours. When Thombre came in from school he said, 'Lakshmibai tell me a story.'

'Look here, Houshi's mother-in-law has come today. She knows great, big, long, beautiful stories. She will tell you one today.'

Thombre was delighted with the news Between the end of dinner and bed time he wandered in and out of the house a thousand and one times. Following our usual custom we were all sleeping in a row, Bhaskar, Dattu, Tara, myself, Houshi's mother-in-law, Thombre and the rest The children having had plenty of experience of the stories of Houshi's mother-in-law, were all lying laughing with their heads under their blankets. Thombre was lost in the joyful thought that today he was going to hear a really good story. He had snatched at the chance of having a place beside her. Sitting cross-legged on his mat he began to listen, all ears.

The story began. Here it is.

'See here, brother. There was a king of Ujjain. His queen had one daughter and one son. This first wife died, and he married again. The second wife did not want the first wife's brats. She pretended her eyes were very sore. "A magician has told me," she said, "that both children should go into the jungle, and bring back the liver of a henna, and give it to me to eat, then will my eyes get better. . ."

'Liver of henna! How can henna have a liver?' said Thombre.

'Not henna, brother, hyena. The king believed his wife, and sent the children into the jungle. They went. They passed through one jungle, two jungles, three jungles, four jungles, five jungles. . .'

'All right, they passed through a thousand jungles, then what happened next?' Thombre said.

'Wait brother,' she answered, 'do not be in such a hurry. Five jungles were passed through, seven jungles were passed through. They met a swan He welcomed them He sat them down under a tree and planned to build a house. He flew over a sea, he flew over two seas, over three seas. . .'

'Yes I agree, he flew over seven seas. But tell me, then what happened to the children?'

'Wait brother, do not be in such a hurry. That king of birds brought a stick, he brought two sticks, he brought three sticks, he brought four. . .'

'Yes, the bird brought a whole mountain of sticks, go on. What happened to the children?'

'Wait brother. Do not interrupt. Then the king of birds began to collect stones. He brought one stone, he brought two stones, he brought three stones. . .'

'He heaped stones like the mountains of Himalayas I agree. But go on. What happened to the children?'

'Why do you interrupt?' said she, 'let me tell the story.'

Thombre was wearied of her, he was growing sleepy. She however was bursting with her story, whereas she had begun to tell it lying down, she now sat up to it.

'Brother get up. It is just the end now. Sit up.' We were all doubled up with mirth. At last Thombre said, 'Bai, prostrate myself at your feet. Let me sleep.'

Nevertheless she kept him awake till three o'clock in the morning. If he lay down she would shake him till he got up

and so finished her story. We rose at dawn, but those two slept on. I went into the kitchen. As soon as Thombre got up he came through to me, and in truth prostrated himself full length at my feet.

'Lakshmibai, with clasped hands I do obeisance to you, to your Houshi's mother-in-law and to her stories. Your Houshi's mother-in-law was meant to be a great novelist, but who knows what fly sneezed in her way!' That night's free entertainment lasted us for a full month thereafter.

6 EXIT HOUSE ENTER BUFFALO

Tilak loses his temper. An ascetic comes to stay. Tilak's methods of saving money.

THE last two chapters have been about Thombre and the Poets' Conference. But while the current of these public events flowed on we had our own private fun.

When we left Rahuri for Nagar we came back to our old house in Fergusson Gate Compound, bringing our Chimbaba with us. He was a very good, simple, faithful man. Shahaji the Bhil was left sitting looking after our house in Rahuri for six rupees a month. The first thing Tilak did when he returned to Nagar was to set his office in order. He had brought with him nearly all the books that were, or were not, in Rahuri. Only a few were left behind. Having imported a cupboard as high as the ceiling, Tilak climbed up a ladder, and began to arrange his books. From below Dattu and Rambhaou Dharmadhikari passed them up to him. As he was putting in the books he remembered Webster's Dictionary. The whole office was turned up side down, but the dictionary could not be found. He remembered having seen it in Dattu's hands.

'Why Dattu, did you not take my dictionary one day?'

'No Papa. I didn't take it.'

'You are lying.'

'No, I never tell lies.'

'I saw it in your hand.'

'No, it was left in Rahuri.'

'Well Rambhaou, have you seen the dictionary here or not?'

Rambhaou grew nervous. If he said, 'Yes', there would be a scene. If he said 'No', there would be a scene. He did not know what to do. Tilak began to shout, and Rambhaou decided that he remembered seeing the book in Nagar.

'Dattu before whom are you standing? Tell the truth quickly.'

'But Papa, I saw it in Rahuri.'

'Tell the truth, I shall not thrash you Do not be afraid. Speak the truth.' 'It is in Rahuri.'

It was now no longer possible for Tilak to keep his temper. From the top of the ladder he began pelting Dattu with books, and raving, 'I saw . . . the . . . dictionary . . . in . . . your . . . hand. You make a liar of me. You have all conspired to insult me.'

Dattu was not to be moved. Here was a conflagration indeed and Manjulabai our servant came to tell me to rescue Dattu.

'I shall not interfere,' said I, and in a little while the flames from Tilak's tongue subsided of themselves.

Two months later Tilak paid a visit to Rahuri, and on his return called Dattu to him.

'Dattu forgive me.'

Dattu had forgotten everything.

'What have you done Papa?'

Clasping him to him he said·

'I punished you unjustly that day. The dictionary was at Rahuri as you said. I am utterly ashamed of my hot temper. Have you forgiven me? Had I a child-like mind like yours it would be a good thing!'

Never again after this did Tilak lift a finger at Dattu.

After we had settled down in Nagar an ascetic came to live with us. His conversation was always of unworldly matters. 'God is the only Being, the only Intellect and the only Happiness. He is the One. All else is false. Life is an illusion in which all mankind is drowning. They neither know whence they come, nor whither they go. Everything is mere seeming. Nonetheless with this unreal show men are infatuated, and

desert God. It is all an illusion that you have a wife, children, money, a house . . . everything must be given up once and for all. Guruji, let us do some service together. Let us not be distracted by worldly matters. We want no material burdens. I think you should sell your Rahuri house, and with the capital realized set up a shop, and spend the profit from it on social service. Then if any poor man turns up he will have no difficulty.'

Our ascetic was forever talking in this strain and I took it all in.

Tilak was in an unsettled state of mind about the house, in any case, and began to say if we sold it we should be able to do something worth while for other people with the money, and really achieve something.

One day we were very short of water. There was already a drought in the city. Tilak was lying down, and the ascetic sitting nearby. I came and placed a great, big empty water-pot in front of the latter.

'Here, take this You want to be of service, don't you? There is not a drop of water in the house today. Will you and Dattu and Tara fetch it? This is all a dream, an illusion, so there is no need to be upset about it.' He began to make a fuss about carrying water—it being a woman's or water-carrier's work and below the dignity of such as he; I loosed another gad-fly.

'Look here, my friend, when I sit down to bake the bread and blister my hand, I do not look on the blisters as illusion. I cannot endure the agony; but it does not matter to you because your pains are only imaginary. Why should you think there is anything to hinder you from helping?'

He could see that Tilak approved of what I was saying, so he rose to fetch the water. When with gasps and groans he had brought two pots of water, I told him openly that all his dearly-loved illusions were in connexion with our house at Rahuri, and nothing more. This was false love, and from the morrow he should quit the house. The next day he was gone.

That was not however the end of what the stars had in store for us. We knew a Christian who was completely bowed down by the weight of his debts. The American Mission had a rule that no man incurring debt could retain his employment in the Mission. If this man had lost his employment the poor

thing would have been in a terrible state. Tilak's heart was torn for him, but what is the use of a torn heart? And what was there in the house to give him? The Rahuri house began to dance before Tilak's eyes—but there was Lakshmi!

Finally Tilak announced that he was going to Rahuri. He returned within two days, and the following day he gave me six hundred rupees to keep for him, saying it belonged to Dr Hume and that the next day our friend would be coming to get it, and he would give a receipt. I became wide awake.

'What kind of transaction is this,' said I, 'when the money is Dr Hume's and we lend it out?'

'Look here, Dr Hume is lending this money without letting Mrs Hume know.'

I accepted the explanation. I believed that just as Tilak was afraid of me so would Dr Hume be afraid of Mrs Hume. The next day the man came. He was given some money, and a receipt made out. The balance left over was put aside.

Gradually I began to hear rumours of the house having been sold, lock, stock and barrel; the house, furniture, chairs, benches, shelves, frames, lamps, beds and cradle, and the well rope Chimbaba and I had made from the coir. 'The pattern round the edge had gone with the plate.' On the well alone five hundred rupees had been spent, and with the well the field was gone, with the field, the house itself was gone. The profit however consisted in a hundred rupees in hand after paying our friend's debts. A hundred rupees and a monthly payment of Rs 6 to Shahaji the watchman saved! This was no small benefit. I said to Tilak, 'Where is the money from the sale of the house?'

'It is quite safe. Dr Hume has it. Do not make a fuss about nothing.'

'All the furniture in the house?'

'If the house is gone where is the furniture to be kept?'

'Which means that cradle and lamp have met their turn to be sold! I do not care about the rest. I want the lamp and cradle. What an unlucky thing to have done!'

'What silly ideas you have!'

'But where was the necessity to sell everything?'

'You do not understand what I say. Did we not have to spend six rupees a month for nothing?'

In two or three days Mrs Hume came to see me.

'Mrs Hume,' I asked, 'are you not keeping six hundred rupees for us?'

'What six hundred?'

'From the house at Rahuri.'

'Not at all. Tilak gave that to a man to pay off his debts.'

My face was worth seeing. When Tilak came home I began to question him and he replied, 'Yes I gave it to the man. What have you to say about that?'

'But why did you not tell me before?'

'Yes, I would have; but then would you have allowed me to give the money away?'

The house was gone, the builder gone, the purchaser gone; gone now are the tears from our eyes, and only the tearful memory is left. Five hundred rupees were gone, but the receipt I kept for many a day The balance of a hundred rupees was put into the bank for some time, then twenty rupees were added and a buffalo bought. She was a beautiful buffalo to behold, but gave very little milk and every time she calved it was a male buffalo. This no doubt was the reason why her owner hung her round our necks Later however he repented because after we got her she produced female calves one after another in rapid succession, and began to give plenty of milk as well. Tilak used to do a great deal for the buffalo.

One day he was washing her down when some wealthy scholar came to see him. The exhibition of buffalo-washing was being held at the front door. The gentleman wished to meet Tilak, so he told 'the servant' to go in, and give his message. Tilak went in, washed his hands, and came out to welcome the visitor.

Every now and again, we used to quarrel over the buffalo. One day, I said, 'What shall I do? When I put the dung-cakes out to dry in the sun to make fuel to save wood, they are stolen.'

Tilak putting his mind to the matter evolved a superb plan, whereby the dung-cakes would not be stolen. Dattu and Tara were sitting nearby. Tilak said, 'Let us employ a man to bake dung-cakes. We shall make a fire-place, cover it in with iron sheets, and both bake and store the cakes on top of it, and that is all we need.'

The three of us began to laugh at Tilak's plan.

'Why do all you people consider me such a fool? Do you mean to say I have no knowledge of anything?'

'You have plenty of knowledge. I have no quarrel with that.

I only say that the expense of baking the dung-cakes will be three times the cost of the cakes themselves, to say nothing of them being reduced to ashes on top of the hot iron.'

'Look here, you make a fool of me on every occasion. Dattu, what do you think?'

'Truly, Papa, I agree with Mother; if we are going to spend so much we might as well burn wood.'

This made Tilak really angry. He sent for Manjulabai and told her to light the stove, heat one dung-cake on a griddle, and come and show it. Manjulabai said, 'Yes', and walked out by the other door. Tilak betook himself off to his work, and the smouldering fire of the dung-cakes was extinguished.

One day I told Thombre to give the calf some water. He did so, then instead of taking it back and tying it up in its place, he thought of some prank to play. He tied one end of the halter round his own waist The calf had plenty of milk to drink and was very strong It dragged Thombre along till gradually they began to whirl round the house, the calf in front and Thombre behind. I thought Thombre was chasing the calf, and then realized it was something very different. The calf was dragging him and he was laughing, but his laughter did not last long He fell across the path, the calf continued to drag him, and like a log of wood he was trailed bumping behind. Now he began to cry out in earnest. I ran and loosed the rope from the calf's neck, and set him free. He was half laughing, half-crying and ready to quarrel with me.

'You are to blame,' he said

'What have I done?' I said. 'Did I tie the calf to your waist? And why did you not call for me when it began to drag you off?' Turmeric and fomentations were applied to the wounds, and in two or three days the episode of the calf was forgotten.

7 NAGAR

Tilak's play and some other varieties of entertainment.

ONCE our buffalo Kalyani broke loose and ran away. Tilak was at the time taking a class in the Lecture Hall. Kalyani began her expedition from Fergusson Gate and continued it right past the Lecture Hall door. In the middle of his lecture, Tilak's attention was caught by the galloping buffalo. He left his class as it was, and started off in pursuit. Clad in coat and trousers, a European hat on his head and a long stick in his hand, this apparition of Tilak vanished from the eyes of his students. Kalyani gave a great deal of trouble. She would not obey no matter what he did. Somehow or other she was brought home in the end, whereupon Tilak said, 'Even the herding of a buffalo is not easy work What a hard time the herdsmen must have, poor things! Let us begin to give our man twice the pay from tomorrow. They are poor people, cannot speak for themselves.' And so we began to pay more for the herding of the buffaloes.

It was decided to hold a 'Gathering' in the Mission High School. A 'Gathering' involved the acting of a play. The boys were told they could do a play if there were no female parts; but no play could be found without women in it. Tilak consented to write one and to coach the boys for it. Not even a plot had been chosen, and Tilak had really no time to write plays, because all his energies were dissipated in doing things for every Tom, Dick and Harry that came to him. But these were boys he had to deal with. As soon as School was over they came and camped on us. On the first day the play was given a name. No plot was yet thought of. The name was 'Character is The Most Powerful Armament'. A time was fixed after five o'clock for rehearsals. But what kind of rehearsals? The boys would come and sit down, and simultaneously a visitor would come to call. Then Tilak would sit talking to the visitor. If there was no one, he would still sit reading or writing. Now and again he would introduce some deep subject to discuss with the boys. They on the other hand were longing

for him to write the play, and let them commit it to memory. In addition there would be the complicated process of making tea. Behold stove, kettle, cups and saucers, sugar and milk, inkpot, paper, pen, spoons, near them the parrot cage placed on the floor, the cat, the dog and everywhere the High School Boys! Tilak held the contract for making tea, because he believed that no one but himself could make it scientifically. Thus four or five days after finding a name for the play the boys were allotted their parts. You are 'Balasaheb, You there! You Pilya, you Devdatt, you Charudatt.'

'But Papa,' (all the boys called him Papa,) 'are you giving us anything to learn or not?'

'Will you let me take my tea or not?'

'Have your tea, but if anyone comes in, in the meantime, everything will be put off again.'

At last each of them got some of his part written out; the next day, after further pressure, a little more was dictated, so the play was gradually completed being written and rehearsed up to the very hour before the 'Gathering'. The boys had lost all confidence wondering whether it would be ready or not.

'Why do you worry?' said Tilak, 'it will be ready.'

They would say, 'You dictate, and we shall write it down.' But that he could not manage.

The play, when it was produced, was so beautiful that for some days it was the sole topic of conversation in Nagar.

In those days Tilak was a great *songtya* player, and quick in the wake of the games followed quarrels. Tilak insisted on arranging the dice and throwing them, so gradually every one refused to play with him, and he would sit playing by himself in a temper, taking one turn with the right hand and one turn with the left. This became a fixed procedure.

One day we all consented to play. He was delighted. The only condition was that the dice should be shaken in a tumbler before being thrown. We sat down to play. On one side were Tilak, Thombre and Tara, and on the other Dattu, Bhaskar Krishna Uzagare and myself. During the first round Tilak did well. Only one man remained to be got home, and that required the number two, which would have meant we were beaten in the first round. If however ten fell the man would have to be taken back to a square immediately behind, 'Danger'.

There would not be much fear of the result if the dice were thrown by hand, but it was no easy thing to throw from a tumbler. Tilak's turn came He threw, and one dice fell flat and one on its edge. So in one way it meant two, in another ten. Tilak roared out 'Two'. We shouted 'Ten'.

He said, 'How can that be ten?'

We said, 'How can it be two?'

Banging fiercely on the ground with his fist he glared in our faces, 'I, Narayan Waman Tilak say it is two.'

I likewise protested, 'How two? I, Lakshmi Narayan Tilak, say it is ten.'

He then turned to Thombre and Tara, 'What is it?'

Thombre said, 'It is neither two nor ten. It is one and half.'

Tilak said, 'Meaning two.'

We all had lost our tempers, but were still laughing. In the end we urged him to throw again, but Tilak did not want to do that, because he could not be sure a two would fall again. It ended in *Songtya* board, dice and all being flung into the compound in front of us. Tilak ran after them, and then told the people gathered at the nearby blacksmith's shop to pick them up and take them away Why not? With joy they collected the whole set and went off.

Tilak's belongings were always being lost. 'Lost' means he never put them in their proper places, never looked in the proper place, and would not allow anyone to hunt with him. Teeth, matchbox, hat, spectacles and belt, these four or five articles were for ever evading his hand. In particular when he was due at a class or was leaving to give a lecture in some village, his boots and stockings, hat, collar, belt, umbrella and sandals would all play hide and seek with him, and round him we would dance a jing-a-ring. Many a time he had to go without his hat, or in place of his belt the rope had to be loosed from the calf's neck and tied round his waist.

'No one looks after me. Everyone is taken up with their own affairs. No one cares for me', he used to say, and then we would run with one accord to wait upon him. Once in this way his teeth were lost What a fuss!

'The dog has gone off with my teeth,' he said. 'Or else the mice have hidden them under the stack of wood you have built up here. Take it all away, and fling it outside. What a toil she makes of housekeeping!'

No sooner said than done! All the logs for firewood began to chase each other round the compound.

Another day, his hat was lost. It was on the peg, and a coat had been hung on top of it. Tilak had to go out. In his flurry he put on another coat, and began to search for his hat. To begin with he flung the first coat down on the floor, and with it, hidden underneath, went the hat. Then, as in that sacrifice of snakes in olden days when coil upon coil fell into the pot of fire, so now all the clothes in the cupboards in the house began to fall one upon another into the heap. Bedding, mats, blankets were all swept up in company, and added to the rising pile.

'Go, go and call Manjulabai. What is she doing? Look for my hat.' Manjulabai came. She was dumbfounded when she saw the heap of clothes.

'Manjulabai, what is the use of you people. Can you be turned into a vegetable? Find my hat for me at once.'

'But, Papa,' (servants also called him Papa,) 'may it not be under this pile . . . !' After this it was not possible to say a word more, and Manjulabai going into his office ostensibly to look for his hat, sat down, and came out only when she saw him departing bareheaded.

When Tilak was out of the way we lifted up the clothes, and at the bottom of everything found his hat hidden inside his coat. He heard this later and said, 'That is right! I hung it under the coat yesterday.'

Now and again Tilak would send me to teach his class. I remember a funny incident that occurred the very first time I went.

'You go and take my class,' he said.

I said, 'What shall I teach them? How much spice to use and how to make a sauce?'

'No, no tell them something about Hindu ways and customs. That is all.'

There were thirty or forty students in the class. These were no small children, but people as old as myself. On seeing me the students bid me welcome.

'Why, lady professor! Are you going to teach us today?'

'Yes, I have come in place of your own master today.'

Babbling like a parrot, I taught them something, then my

lecture being over, one of them said, 'Lady Professor, may I ask you a question?'

'Yes, of course.'

'Is it true, as he says, that you beat our Professor?'

'How could that be? He has probably let his tongue run away with him while talking to you. Would a wife ever beat her husband? It might be said, though, that I beat him sometimes with the rod of my mouth'.

Having thus passed the time I returned home. Tilak was immersed in his rite of making tea.

'Well, how did your lecture go? What subject did you take?'

'Oh, today's was a wonderful subject!'

'What?'

'Why do wives beat their husbands, is it a good thing or not?'

'Do you mean you are raving?'

'Not raving. That was really my subject today.'

'Then what did they say?'

'They said, "All the same our teacher says his wife beats him,—and so!" '

'Then what did you say?'

'I? I said you told the truth.'

'What?'

'I told them that when you did not do as you were told, wasted money, lost your temper over nothing, never came home in time, then I belaboured you well'

Tilak believed every word I had spoken and said, 'I used to think you were very wise. Now I am convinced that you are a perfect fool. Some day you will disgrace me.'

8 MY 'SONS-IN-LAW'

A description of some of Tilak's disciples.

To give a helping hand to anyone we found by the way had become a habit with us, of which I now give some instances. Needless to say the two of us never tired of doing this: on the contrary, we felt there was something wrong when we had our hands empty.

One evening a man paralysed all down one side came to us, and we took him in. Rambhaou and I expended a great deal of labour on him. We warmed him, fed him, gave him to drink and kept him clean. I had to feed him myself. Rambhaou was a very saintly man. He came to us before he became a Christian, and for many years lived under our wing, but he was an inveterate boaster, and was for ever getting into debt. He was converted and married, then his wife died, and her nine-month old baby was brought up by us. Rambhaou worked well wherever he was employed, but his two great failings deprived him of each post in turn. Having, however, an ever-ready charity like ours, he was always delighted to help in such service as that of this lame man.

Rambhaou and we, with great pain and labour wrought considerable improvement in 'Timur the Lame'. He needed a couple of hundred cigarettes a day, and tea three times, all of which he received with due regularity. After he began to feel better he stuck to us like a limpet and presently became Christian too. Only then did he begin to show his true colours. He imagined his hand was within reach of heaven. Yesterday 'The tea was not properly made.' Today—'I have not been given my cigarettes in time.' Tomorrow—'My dinner was cold.' The next day—'Tara makes far too much noise. Her mother has not trained her up at all.' He grumbled every day about Tara. Tilak would try to reason with him, but to no purpose. He was only content if Tilak scolded the child.

One day, Tilak having gone away somewhere, Gopaji, the Schoolmaster, turned up in his absence. He was an expert in home remedies, and knew a cure for paralysis!

'Gopaji,' I said, 'you take this man home with you. It is better to have the Doctor, medicine and patient all in the same place.'

I gave him five rupees for expenses, and the two of them left. By the same train that brought Tilak home came a letter from Gopaji, 'Our patient has run away'. Tilak was very upset.

This character having made his exit another made his entrance As usual Tilak had made the morning tea himself, and having roused all the tea addicts out of their beds and supplied them too, had gone and stood outside. There before him like a gift from heaven was a tall, broad object. It was fair of face, flat featured, had blue eyes and a round countenance crowned with a mat of hair. Mouth and chin were clean-shaven like an ascetic's. He stood before Tilak arrayed in an ascetic's saffron robe from neck to foot, and in his hand he had a little bundle tied up in a yellow scarf

'Are you Tilak?' he asked.

'Yes, I am Tilak.'

The instant he heard these words he loosened the bundle in his hand, and drawing out an enormous garland of flowers threw it round Tilak's neck.

'Today I am blessed. I have attained the end for which I was born'

Tilak removed the garland. 'Bawaji, you must not worship me. All the glory is Christ's I am only a creature.' Bawaji took up his abode in our house, watching for every word from Tilak's lips, like the rain bird in a draught Tilak developed a great affection for him, and they became inseparable. Tilak would expound the Christian religion, and he would be all attention. A lump would rise in his throat as he listened; tears would flow copiously from his eyes.

'This is no ordinary man,' Tilak would say to me. 'He will become a disciple of Christ worthy of a place with Paul and Peter. He has the mark of true devotion and love, the tears falling from his eyes rise in the outside corners.'

Tara added, 'It is true, Mother. His eyes water from the outer corner, and I too have read somewhere what Papa says.' I however could not agree with them. I could not help remembering a tale of the Ancients, and the shepherd who wept over a lost goat. Bawaji did not stop there. By degrees he

took upon himself some of the housework like ourselves. Never an unseemly word, no quarrels, the simplest, quietest, most loving of men was he. He would help Tilak to wash the buffaloes, and take them out to graze just like any other member of the household. Anything he did for Tilak he did with heart and soul as an old disciple might serve in his master's house.

Many people thought that they could earn a large sum of money by becoming Christian, but I do not know of a single instance of anyone receiving anything for such a reason. Help from missionaries and Christian people to the poor may be given a sordid interpretation; but the giving of help is an important part of the Christian religion. This is what was in our Bawaji's mind. One day, after evening prayers were over, he cautiously began to make inquiries.

'How many children have you?'

'You know yourself.'

'How far are you going to educate them?'

'As far as they can go.'

'But you must have some plan, haven't you?'

'Up to B.A., or if they like they can go to England and America.'

Bawaji's mouth began to water He let out a test chicken. 'See here, Sir. I know of a poor woman with two daughters, who have a great desire to be educated. Up till now I have helped her a great deal. For the present I have put them into an institution. The girls are very clever At least fifty rupees a month have to be spent on them. I have agreed to give them ten rupees, and you can now add forty rupees a month. If you can bear the travelling and other expenses of two children in America and England, then just calculate for one more.'

'Bawaji,' said Tilak, 'if I can hardly educate two children, how am I to take on any more. If you like, bring the girls here, and we may be able to do something for them; but I have no money to hand over like that.'

'But I *do not want anything for myself.* I shall give you the girls' address, and you can send the money to them regularly. If you can provide for two children, what is to hinder you taking on a third? Another way would be to make over to them sufficient capital to earn interest of forty rupees a month.'

Eventually Bawaji went away in despair; but after Tilak's death in 1920 he came on purpose to see me, having married one of the two girls, and having become the father of three or four children Lokamanya Tilak, the Hindu patriot, had arranged the marriage, so he said. Who knows whether it was true or false.

One day at Bombay station Tilak found a young Brahman who was alone in the world. He was quick-witted, but as for his appearance, it would have put a parcher of grain to shame. Tilak brought the boy home and handed him over to me His sacred thread looked like dirty string charm of Shiva His teeth were black and rotting from tobacco smoke. His whole body was covered with itch. Heating some water I got the servant to scrub and polish this apparition till it shone, then providing him with some of Tilak's clothes turned him into something like a man.

Tilak used to spoil him terribly. He called Tilak 'Papa' and me 'Mama'. He was a Brahman and we Christians. He used to imagine all sorts of things at dinner time If we had egg-plant for a vegetable he would call it mutton, and rise and leave his dinner. If he was served with linseed chutney he would call it salt fish, and push away his plate; whereupon Tilak would give him four or five annas, and he would go into the town for his dinner Later Tilak told me to serve our new 'son's' meals in his office in front of him I agreed and did it.

At the very least he required tea five or six times in the day, and I used to give it to him. It was another matter that he got money from Tilak to go out for cups of tea as well. Tilak used to obtain money from his salary's treasure-house,—that is Dr Hume, for such expenses. Sometimes Dr Hume would not give an advance, because Tilak had nearly always drawn his whole salary already. Tilak would then sell some old newspapers secretly, and spend the money in such causes. The sale of a week's paper would bring in easily four or six annas.

Well! well! This new 'son' was a hopeless coward. Our whole house was rent-free. It was really composed of three houses in a row. The backroom of one of these houses was given to this gentleman. Beyond it, in another room, the wood

was stored. Presently, the servant reported that he could not endure to go in to fetch the wood because of the mire and muck that had accumulated there. The minute he entered his feet sank in it.

Our 'son' had made a drain at the very door for his own use and the water ran off into the wood-house. When Tilak was told he replied. 'You do not like to put up with people.'

What could be done now? Here was an insuperable difficulty. In the end, one day I said to him:

'Sir, if you are afraid of the dark, rouse Ranu to go out with you at night. He sleeps beside you. Take the lantern that is always lighted there, but do not be so lazy. You are always ready enough to tell tales about others over the least little thing.'

My words made him very angry indeed, and that next day he put a padlock on the wood-house door. Tilak was out. There was no wood, and our 'son' was sitting at the door ready to show fight. He would not undo the padlock.

'You call me your son,' he said, 'and then show favouritism. Look at all the clothes and shoes Dattu has I have nothing.'

'But he has to go to school. You go too, and you will get clothes like him.'

'Nothing of the sort. You must give me new shoes the same as his. Where will you find any such father and mother?'

'Not a bit of it. Fathers and mothers are never like that, and there are no sons like you either. If I were to strike Dattu in the face tomorrow he would not say a word, and you will not allow me to get a word in edgeways. You are offended if anyone so much as grunts. You say you have passed Standard VII English, so how do you not know that much. Come, give me the key.'

'I won't give you the key. I do not know you.'

'Very well then. I do not know you. You need not come to dinner.'

'I am not coming. I shall get my dinner brought to me.'

'Very well I shall see what kind of a dinner you get here.'

'All right. See.'

When Tilak came home the complaints were poured into his ears.

'I overlooked it for your sake,' his 'son' said, 'I would not have endured such insults from anyone. I would have thrashed my own mother with my slipper. What then of this woman!'

Tilak had to go to Bombay that day. He told his 'son' to prepare to accompany him, as he had decided to find him work in Bombay. Our 'son' distributed all his clothes and bedding —all of which had been given by us of course—to the people round about. They were to leave by the midnight train, but there were no funds and the 'advance bank' was closed. Every likely spot having been turned out only enough money was gathered to take one man to Bombay.

Tilak, however, was an incurable optimist. He had perfect confidence that he would find the money at the station. There he met his friend, Rao Sahib Sathe. He too was on his way to Bombay. It was twelve or half-past twelve at night. Tilak begged from Rao Sahib. He replied that he had only enough for himself. He was a great devotee of poetry, but poetry does not beget money.

At last the train came in, and Tilak and Rao Sahib took their seats. Our 'son' was left standing on the platform. The train began to move off. Tilak told his 'son' to go back, but in the hurry of the moment his 'son' forgot to ask for money for a tonga. It was the cold weather and the middle of a pitch-black night and he had no companion. Tongas came up and promptly drove off again. Under the bridge, by the river, a funeral pyre could be seen burning From the first our young gentleman was a coward; he now had bad palpitation of the heart. When somehow or other he succeeded in reaching the entrance to Fergusson Gate Compound the dog rushed out at him. Ranu, who was sleeping on the veranda, thought it must be a thief, and ran up armed with a stick, only to find our 'son'.

'Where have you come from?'

'I have come back. Do not waken Mama.'

The next day Ranu informed me the guest had returned. I replied, 'Let him come! No one is to speak to him.' My command was obeyed by everyone. They finished their work, and ate their breakfast. No one called him so he came himself.

'Mama, I have come back'

'You have come! Very good. I am now mistress in the house. Tilak is not here. You are no son or son-in-law of mine. I am not going to pander to your whims!'

He accepted this volley from my guns in silence.

'Here is the boiler, there is the tea canister and sugar bowl.

Put them all beside your bed. Light the boiler, and drop everything in. Then when the desire for tea comes upon you, lie where you are, and turn the tap on above your mouth. I am kow-towing to you no more. From now on you will have to help with all the work in the house. I shall play the guest now, because you never appreciate it when things are done for you. You see pieces of mutton in the vegetable cutlets, and smell salt fish in the linseed chutney. I do not believe you are a Brahman at all, because no Brahman would have such suspicions. You must be someone who knows the taste of mutton and fish already! It appears that you think we eat anything—and also that Tilak will believe any tales you tell him. But you do not know Tilak. If he is once enraged he will tear you limb from limb.'

The fusillade struck my adopted 'son' with unusual force. He bowed himself at my feet.

'Lakshmibai, I clasp your feet. Forgive me this time.' And from that day he truly began to behave as one of the household. He got good work, Tilak baptized him, and then married him. I nursed his wife when she had her first baby. She was a sweet-tempered woman, and all his children turned out well.

9 'A MODAK AMONG THE KARANJIES'

How Lakshmi attained fame as a poet, and how she dealt with Thombre.

IN the Diwali number of the magazine *Manoranjan*, a poem of mine entitled 'A Modak among the Karanjies', proved very popular. In fact, it became quite famous. In it I expounded the meaning of the Hindu saying, 'If you bake a bevy of beautiful Karanjies you must make a gallant Modak to escort them'. I had been rolling out some pasties and Dattu had been making off with some of them as he ran in and out

of the kitchen. There was one left to be done and he had his eye upon it. I would not let him have it, and promptly produced this precept, and composed the poem. Tilak of course passed a smoothing hand over it. Some time after it had become well known, I received a letter from a woman in Pandharpur, in which the following question was asked:

The Modak is sweet and
The shape pretty, Bai,
Who helped but your husband?
Now tell the truth, *Tai*!

When I first read this rhyme I was furious with Tilak. He had raised me to a fame I did not deserve, and now I was a laughing-stock! But where was Tilak for me to scorch him with my anger? He was sitting somewhere far away. He had decided to write an epic, and had taken himself off to Bhuini, near Wai, to begin the *Christayan*, a life of Christ in poetry. I had been ridiculed in a poem, so naturally I desired to reply with a poem to the Pandharpur letter, and I now wrote my most famous one, *Husband and Wife*. For the most part it came to me at night in the dark. Line after line rushed into my mind, and I wrote them on the floor with a piece of chalk. Whenever there was no pen at hand I would dip a match into the ink, and with it supply my need. In the morning Thombre would write down on paper this labour of the night. In this manner a poem of two hundred and seventy-five lines was composed. The poem and a pungent letter were sent to Tilak. Dattu still has those letters in his possession.

Rao Sahib Sathe used to come to us every day, and every day he held a session of poetry and songs. As I served as audience for Thombre, so also for him.

One day, while Tilak was still away at Bhuini, Rao Sahib came in. He had an important letter to write to Tilak. Dattu brought him pen and ink, then sat down beside him and Thombre. Rao Sahib began to write. As he wrote he read out aloud what he had written, with a note of interrogation at the end of each sentence. I perforce had to grunt an affirmative. It was a very long letter. Dattu and Thombre were laughing at us. In the end they could restrain themselves no more, and rose and went out. Rao Sahib did not notice anything but I did. When he said, 'Uh?' I had to say, 'Um!' and with the departure of the boys I too felt like laughing. Now the address! I called Dattu and Thombre in.

'You boys write the address.'
They sat down, and one began to write:
'Reverend, Uh?'
From the other, came 'Um!'
'Narayan, Uh?'
'Um!'
'Waman, Uh?'
'Um!'
'Tilak, Uh?'
'Um!'
'American Mission, Uh?'
'Um!'
'Bhuinj, Uh?'
'Um!'
'Satara District, Uh?'
'Um!'

The letter was written. Rao Sahib put it in his pocket and went out.

At night, remembering the fun over 'Uh' and 'Um', I myself could not help laughing Presently, however, I felt ashamed because Rao Sahib was so much greater than we were in learning and in years, and it was not right to make a mock of him.

This is what happened the next day. Thombre and Dattu had climbed up onto the roof, and sat down there. Bhaskar and Tara were below. Rao Sahib came along, and began to scold the two of them for climbing the roof. Thombre began to tease him; the other children encouraged him, and Rao Sahib became very angry. He came in and told me all about it. I went out and told Thombre to come down, with no effect. I then went in again, and sat down to hear Rao Sahib's poem for the day. Thombre for his part went off to a hotel for something to eat. I scolded Dattu and Tara well.

'I shall not put up with your mockery of Rao Sahib. If it happens again you will be thrashed. When Thombre comes in after his dinner I shall tell him too. No one is to speak to him.'

That night everyone went to bed in silence. Thombre came in at nine o'clock. We were all so subdued, he sensed something in the atmosphere. He went to each bed in turn and tried to start a conversation; he tried laughing out loud; but no one would so much as look at him. He was distressed, and could not understand what it was all about, so he came and sat down beside me.

'Lakshmibai, what is this? I do not understand at all.'

'Thombre, we have all agreed not to speak to you until you confess your fault.'

'What fault?'

'Making a mock of people older than yourself. If you are going to tease anyone, tease your equals. We are so fond of you! You may not know how hurt we are if anyone disparages you. Will Rao Sahib say you are a nice boy after you have jeered at him? And can I like it if he calls you bad? And we are just as fond of Rao Sahib as we are of you. So long as you do not promise not to tease older people we shall not speak to you.'

Thombre was a boy-poet, but more of a boy than a poet. He was so grieved by what I had said, a shadow fell across his face and darkened his eyes Tears began to trickle down.

'Lakshmibai, I vow by your feet that from this day I shall never be disrespectful to any older person ever again.'

I clasped him to me with a sob, and the child-like Thombre began to laugh and play again. But from that day forward he never showed disrespect to anyone.

10 I WAIT EIGHT YEARS

Dattu is sent to college, and his engagement arranged.

DATTU passed his examinations. He had had to work very hard, because he sat for both the Drawing Teachers' and the School Final examination at the same time. After he had passed the third grade drawing I asked Rajaramji Chandekar's advice about it.

He said, 'Let him take the Teachers' examination and School Final together, so that if Tilak gives up his work tomorrow, Dattu will be able to find some kind of employment.'

I adopted Rajaramji's programme of education, and the matter was settled.

From Nagar a dozen students went to Bombay to sit for the Drawing examination. All of them, having passed in the first part but failed in the second, returned home. Dattu had now no more hope of being a drawing-teacher, and I more or less made up my mind that after his School Final he would get Government employment somewhere. He had to go to Poona for his examination so we had to consider to whom we should send him. In the end it was settled that he should go and stay with Gharu.

Gharu's husband Barve was a happy-go-lucky creature, bred in pleasure. A letter came from him saying that Lakshmi should be sent with Dattu, so with Dattu I went.

Once we were there Barve monopolized the duty of providing Dattu with hot bath-water every day; not that there were no servants in the house, but to show his affection for Dattu.

As he produced the water, he would say, 'Dattu, when you have passed your examination, we can say the horse we backed was washed in the sacred River Ganga for luck.'

Dattu would reply:

'First of all let me bathe, then the horses can bathe if they like!'

Overhearing this conversation Gharu said to me quietly, 'Just as if Barve had spent his own money on Dattu's education!'

Dattu passed his School Final examination, and Tilak was very angry when he heard it.

'This is how you employ yourself without asking me! How can he go to college now? You always go your own way. I wanted to send him to college. He will now need another year to sit for his Matriculation, and if he fails, or anything, still another year will be lost.'

I felt as guilty as a thief. Again I sent for Chandekar.

'I can suggest a remedy,' he said. 'Send him to Nagpur. In Allahabad University they accept students who have only a School Final certificate.'

Tilak wrote to Dr Robertson and he agreed to take Dattu in at once. The fees were well within our means. And so, as it were by chance, the path to higher education opened out before him.

The day he was leaving, we all went to the station to see him off. Tilak was very downcast to see his son going so far away for the first time. The next two days Tara and I missed him badly.

Dattu was about eighteen years old. I began to enjoy happy visions. I imagined my son the most learned man in all the world. He was such a good boy, and had now gone to college! I was his mother. I never saw any fault in him. I used to wonder why, since he was so good, no offer of marriage came for him. Unlike high-caste Hindus, among Christians the girl's parents do not look for a husband. The boy's people ask for the girl. Having no personal experience of this custom I forgot all about it.

In Nagar there was a matron called Rakhmabai Kukas, and between the two of us there was much coming and going. I used to unburden my mind to her, and she used to comfort me.

'Lakshmibai, you have to ask for the girl here. The bridegroom's people have to look for the bride. Besides, your son is not so very old yet.'

I, however, did not agree to this.

'What does it matter if the boy is not old enough?' said I. 'He will continue his studies in college, and the girl stay with us.'

We had decided to go to Nasik that year in the hot weather. Rakhmabai's brother Krishnarao Sarode, from Bombay, was there also for a change of air. We stayed nearby and shared a woman who cooked for both of us, which meant that for two months we did not need to bother ourselves with either cooking or shopping. We met the Sarodes twice a day at meal times because the woman did the serving in our house. Sarode's party took a great pride in the Marathi tongue, so they got on well with Tilak. They were very good people and sociable, and in no time we were fast friends.

I was extremely anxious that Dattu should be married, or at least that his marriage should be arranged. Had we been Hindus I should already have had a little daughter-in-law at my right hand, but among Christians this seemed impossible. If no offer could come from some girl's parents, then that could not be helped; but there was no reason why one should not put out a feeler oneself, and see what would happen.

Without telling Tilak I dropped a hint or two, only to get the answer:

'But, Bai, the boy is still only studying. Why are you so bent on marrying him off now?'

I, however, could not agree.

Sarode's daughter Ruth and Dattu had become good friends

in Nasik, and I began to think I would like her for a daughter-in-law. She was good, virtuous and clever, so all was well, and it was easy to see they liked each other.

Ruth at this time was in the fifth standard English, and she was only fourteen years old. Among Christians this is by no means the age for marrying: there is no thought even of marriage, and now among Hindus too this age is considered too young. Nothing daunted, I took Ruth aside, and when we were alone asked her if she would be my daughter-in-law.

'What can I say?' she replied. 'If you like, ask my father.'

I set about goading Tilak on. It was not possible to have a wedding, but what was there to prevent an engagement? In the end he gave in, and asked Krishnarao Sarode. He said he would ask his sister before replying. Naturally my mind was in a ferment again. Now they will go to Bombay! Then ask the sister! Then write to us! How could I have so much patience?

It was the end of the hot weather by now. We returned to Nagar, Dattu went to college, but no letter came from Sarode After waiting one or two months Tilak wrote to him; needless to say, because I told him to. He was in no hurry, though I was. I was consumed with the desire to see my son married. At long last, Sarode's letter came saying they would agree to give their daughter, but only after a certain time. There was to be no mention of marriage until she had passed her Matriculation examination. Tilak replied that he would be in no hurry till his son had passed his B.A. And so, though there was no wedding and no little daughter-in-law to keep me company, at least I knew who would be my daughter-in-law four years hence, and I was completely satisfied.

They say thoughts of marriage upset a boy's studies. What did I know? So people say, but it was not the case with these two. Ruth passed her Matriculation and in the whole University examination stood first in English, and took a prize.

On the other hand, when Dattu got his B.A., the agreement that they should be married immediately was shelved, and not until the education of both of them was complete, that is, till she had her B.A. too, were they married. I, who was not willing to put off my son's wedding for eight months, had to wait through an eight years' engagement.

11 SETTING UP HOUSE ANEW

How Tilak overcame evil with good. Gharu falls ill. Buffaloes, hens and dogs.

DATTU was now in the B.A. class. Here is an incident that occurred four days before he was due to return to Nagpur, after his holidays. It was the first night of the new moon. Having had evening prayers we were sitting talking. It was about 10 o'clock when Rangubai, the wife of the blacksmith who lived opposite, called out to warn us that someone had been prowling round the house, and we should keep a watch.

We occupied three Mission houses in a row. In one of the houses Dattu slept. In the inner room of the middle house Rambhaou's daughter Chiki, a woman servant and I slept. Tilak slept in the outside room, and Rambhaou on the veranda. The end house was used as our kitchen, store-room and dining-room. Since his wife had died, that is from the time Chiki was nine months old, Rambhaou and she had stayed with us. I had not only my own house to manage; I had the care of three households thrown upon me.

'Oh God,' I used to pray, 'let my things be lost, stolen or broken, but keep the other peoples' safe.'

Tilak used to scold me, saying, 'Why encumber yourself with other peoples' stuff?'

So, we were awake till twelve o'clock that night.

When I got up at dawn the next day, I went straight out by the front door and round to the back. The ground looked damp by the back door, and I said to myself:

'See how the women just waste the water, and then of course there is a shortage!'

When I went a little farther I came upon an overturned cradle. It gave me a shock to see it. I took it as a very bad omen. Thinking someone had put it in front of my door on purpose, I approached, only to discover that it was no cradle, but the whole frame of the window, wrenched out and flung down.

Peering beyond it I saw the back door thrown wide open,

and the house gutted. All the water-pots had been removed, and the water emptied out. Every brass and copper vessel, from the ladle to the tin can in the bathroom, was gone. I went to Rambhaou to rouse him.

'Rambhaou, get up, get up. There has been a burglary. There is not even a butter-dish left in the house.'

Rambhaou had been awake a good part of the night, and was beyond heeding now. I had to shake him.

'What! The house has been broken into! And who has done it?'

'Thieves.'

'Where are they?'

'Wake up properly and I shall show you.'

As soon as Rambhaou was well awake he turned the battery onto Tilak.

'Papa, get up, get up. There has been a theft. The thieves have emptied the whole house.'

'What? Theft? A good thing if for some days now we have not the trouble of locking up everything!'

The outcome was as Tilak wished—and as I had prayed too, because all the things that had been taken were our own. The thieves had not laid a finger on anything of anyone else's; they were all in the other room. I had even left the keys in the room by mistake that night, and the thieves had removed them too. The milk had gone with the milk-jug and we had not even anything left to eat, so the neighbours had to make tea for us.

In a little while Dr Hume got word of what had happened and came to comfort us. In spite of everything, neither Dattu, Tilak nor I was in the least upset. The only thing that had given me a shock was the sight of the unexpected, overturned cradle.

'Do not let this disturb you, Bai,' said Dr Hume, 'I shall give you a present of a brass pot.'

Naturally we refused this overwhelming offer

After the purchase of our buffalo Kalyani, I had embarked on the sale of milk, and I reaped a good profit from it. On this I based my hopes of refurnishing our home. A lunch-box had been made ready to send with Dattu, and packed among his other things. That had escaped the hands of the robbers. Every other eatable had been removed from the house.

The following day for one rupee sufficient earthenware pots were purchased to carry on with. There was no fear of their being stolen.

Dattu went off to college. He was hardly out of the house when letters came from Barve and Pendse to say Gharu was very ill and I should be sent to see her. Gharu was like my own daughter to me. I felt it my duty to go to her, but I was entangled in my household affairs on the spot. Over and above this, the Police were investigating the case of theft. Tilak kept saying, 'Let the things go, I do not need them,' but the Police would not hear of it. They laid great stress on investigations and questionings, and in the end as result of their labours one tea-spoon was recovered. We identified it as ours, and this brought the investigation to a close. There was no more heard of anything else and our necks were free from the noose.

Tilak wrote a prayer for the thief, and later it was printed in the *Dnyanodaya*.

Now letter after letter began to come from Gharu. Tilak told me to go and promised to take me there himself. He said he would look after the house, but I could not free my heart from the web of my housekeeping At last it was decided that I should go. I put away all my belongings under lock and key; the thieves had taken practically everything, but the remaining collection of rags, tins, etc, were locked up, paper gummed over the lock, and then I was ready. The livestock caused me some anxiety, but one could hardly seal them too, so leaving the treasure of the open fields free to roam, I started for Poona and Tilak came with me. Rambhaou, Thombre and Co., were at home, Dattu was at college, and Tara at school in Poona.

When I arrived in Poona I found a terrible state of affairs. Both husband and wife were stretched on their beds, Gharu with cancer and Barve with a carbuncle on the backbone. Tilak told me not to leave them.

'I shall look after everything at home properly,' he said. 'Do not worry about us.'

Even Tilak could hardly bring himself to leave us. 'Let the mother die, but may her sister live,' this saying fitted the situation perfectly. I stayed with my niece for two months, and then when they were both better, I set off for Nagar again. Gharu was very sorry to see me go.

During these two months paper messengers on paper horses had galloped from Poona to Nagar. They inquired how the King's affairs were progressing. A return messenger from Nagar to Poona would say the King's state was prospering in every way. My suspicious mind, however, could put little faith in them. When I came home I found my things under seal untouched, it is true, but the livestock, their fodder and the instruments for cutting the fodder had all vanished. I felt as if I were in a dream, but shortly, having come to my senses, I realized that the buffaloes had been sold. The only thing left by mistake was one of Kalyani's calves which had been out grazing. Even the hens I had kept were sold. The sale of milk and eggs had been a great help to me in my housekeeping, but all was lost, like the glassware of Sheikh Chahlli in the basket at his feet when he dreamed of kicking his wife.

I was an adept at taking accounts and demanded one now from Tilak to the very last farthing. He rendered it to the last bean. All the money that was owing had been paid up, so he said. I was relieved to hear it. Now there was only the question of Dattu's wedding expenses I comforted myself with the happy thought that at least there were no debts.

The buffaloes were gone, the hens were gone, the parrot too had flown away, all that was left was our old Blackie and his wife. Blackie had been with us thirteen years, and a bitch had kept him company for four years. When at last he died she too refused her food and followed him. She stayed in and about the house day and night.

As Blackie grew older he became very diseased, but Champie would never leave him. A bed and charcoal brazier were brought in for Blackie, and I used to rub him with ointments. People laughed at us but that dog accepted everything like a human being, drops in his eyes, medicines for his stomach and all the palaver of lying down on his bed. When anything hurt very much he would grunt, then Champie would run into the house, and, tugging at the end of my sari, take me to him.

One day about two in the afternoon Champie came to fetch me. When I went outside Blackie was groaning loudly. As soon as he saw me he got down off his bed, licked my feet, and then let go his hold on life. His four puppies began leaping over his body. Champie lifted up her voice and howled.

Tilak and I could not bear to see such sorrow. We shut

her up in an inside room, and buried Blackie out in the compound, but the moment she was free she found the spot, and for a whole month lay there and mourned. Refusing all food and drink she finally died of grief, poor, blessed creature.

12 MY NOVEL

Needs no explanation

I TOOK in hand the writing of a social novel. As I was writing I would be held up every now and again by a compound letter, then having turned all our books inside out and outside in and found the word, my cart would rumble along the road again.

One day, my novel was thus galloping along merrily when my horse stopped I could not write the Marathi word for 'man', I turned topsyturvy all the books on which I could lay my hands, but I could find 'man' nowhere. I was sitting lost in thought, before me the books all tumbled down, the unfinished work of the house crying out to be done.

At that moment Thombre came in. Seeing the picture I presented, he said:

'Why are you sitting like this, Lakshmibai? Do you want anything?'

'What shall I do? I want "a man". I have turned everything upside down and can find "a man" nowhere!'

Thombre stepped before me, and laid his hand upon his chest.

'Why all this turn-up? See, here stands a man! If you want any more just come outside, I shall show you as many men as you want. There is no lack of them. The whole world is full of men. No lack of men!'

'Tush, I do not want a human man. I want "a man" as written in a book.' We both laughed then, and Thombre wrote out the word for me.

Another day I asked Thombre to read my novel. He read it and wrote the review given below:

Review:

The hole of this novl i hav red. Such
an other novl in the sweat Marathi tung
will not be scene.

Tri-bunk Bomb-poji Htombre
Aha Mud Nagre

Adver tis ne ment

Uncompirabl Buk-Uncompirabl Buk-Uncompirabl Buk
Tak noat . . Tak noat . . Tak noat
No Sekund Chans.

I still have the above page with this review. No name was given to the novel, but Thombre wrote at the top in big letters,

LUX-UMM-BOY'S NOVL

This page has been engulfed in the maw of time. It is twenty years since it all happened. I can now write much better, but in those days my spelling was the butt of all the boys.

13 A COWARD

Wherein are collected together a few stories of snakes and other things.

I WAS a coward, yet not altogether abject, and taken on the whole I was no coward, but only if I were compared to Tilak did I seem so. Tilak never found the word in his dictionary. Be it meeting a snake or sahib, he feared none of them.

In Nagar one time we gave a big feast. Two women teachers came to dine with us. They were both under the care of a missionary—that is, in her boarding school and under her authority. The missionary was a good woman, poor thing, but very strict and a slave to discipline. She judged discipline like

clothes from the wash. If there was one wrinkle it was as good as a Brahman murdered.

These teachers had permission to stay with us till eight o'clock at night, but they had been invited by us to dinner, and when was our dinner at any fixed hour? I had also asked the teachers to help with the serving, which meant they could leave only after the second sitting, which was much more likely to be at eleven o'clock than eight.

At half-past eight or a quarter to nine the slave of discipline turned up and began to rate Tilak for not having sent her teachers back At first Tilak replied quietly that dinner was not over yet. As soon as it was over he would escort them home. This roused her ire.

'You do not understand! How can school discipline be upheld like this? Send them this very moment. They must not stay here a minute longer.'

Tilak said, 'Will you this very instant get out of my house? This is no police station to which you may come and quarrel. And if you do not go, then I shall have to take you by the hand and put you out. I shall not send your teachers home without their dinner. Anything you want to do about it you can do from your own house.'

She left, and the matter went no further, but all the guests were astounded at Tilak's temerity.

This missionary on her way from America through Japan had acquired a rickshaw, in which she used to ride about, and which was drawn by the poor children in her school. Tilak could not bear this, and he used to say, 'This is not our custom. Formerly simple people used to drag their gods in a chariot, or the king's chariot would be drawn by the people as a mark of honour. You are neither a god nor a king. It is not becoming for you to come here and practise such tyranny. Even though these children are poor and you are helping them, they are not your slaves Give up this rickshaw at once or . . . wait and see.'

She would reply, 'What shall I see? I have a sore foot. I cannot walk. I won't give up the rickshaw.'

'If you cannot walk, are there no tongas?'

At that time motor cars were not common. She paid no attention to what Tilak said, and he grew very angry with her.

He wrote a poem entitled *Jinrickshaw* and taught it to

some boys. What a torch for the devils to dance with! Before you could say 'Jack Robinson', the song was in everyone's mouth. When the rickshaw emerged from the school it was a signal for all the boys to flood the streets yelling the song behind her. In the end a complaint was made to Dr Hume. Dr Hume summoned Tilak to see him. After a great argument the rickshaw was consigned to the ash-pit, and thenceforth no more such fads were introduced.

The Bissell family was famous among the missionaries of Nagar. The Rev. H. G. Bissell and his two sisters, Dr Julia and Dr Emily, were particularly well known. They had such a command of the Marathi language that, if they were overheard from behind a curtain, anyone would think some Poona Brahmans were speaking.

Once Mr Bissell and Tilak had a quarrel, because Tilak in writing him a letter ended it with great formality. That quarrel however was soon buried, and Tilak answered him in a poem. On another occasion Dr Emily could not fit a poem of Tilak's to a certain tune and altered one beat. This inflamed Tilak and he wrote the poem *A Poet's Plaint*, threatening the poor thing with, 'Be your hand never so gentle and cunning, I cannot bear that it should touch even one of my poems Death were better than that'. But Dr Emily for her part never took offence over what he said, and she got an immense amount of work out of Tilak. She sat with him every day until the whole of the hymn-book *Upasanasangit* was revised.

All the credit for bringing to fame Tilak's poetry on and about children, printed in the *Balbodhmewa*, must go to Miss Hatty Bruce now Mrs Cooper, and Dr Emily Bissell; the collection never having been presented to the public in book form, no one knows of these poems now.

Tilak used to be filled with valour at the mere mention of a snake or rat. He killed many a big snake, but for the most part rats just played round his hand.

Once a snake that had swallowed a mouse was lying coiled up. Tilak cautiously turned a big pot upside down on top of it, then heaped cow-dung cakes all round and set fire to them.

When we were at Wani, a big snake climbed upstairs, and came in at the back window where Tilak was sitting. A

student who was seated in front of him said, 'A great big snake has just come in!'

It slipped behind two boxes. Tilak placed a lamp at either end and then standing on top of one box pinned it down with a large pestle and killed it. That snake was one and a quarter times the size of a man. He and Dattu many and many a time killed others like it.

It was only rats he could not catch. At night, whenever the sound of something moving was heard, Tilak would wake up, and then sleep for the rest of us would become impossible. The noises were nearly always caused by rats, and then what an uproar there would be in the house! The lamps were lit, sticks collected, all the people still asleep were roused; doors and windows were shut, at one door a son, at another a daughter, Thombre at the window, wife somewhere else, and Tilak in the middle threshing about with a stick. I would be nervous:

'Be careful, you will strike someone's head.'

He would reply, 'Am I mad?'

When the hunt was at its height and the rat at a door the children would open the door a little to make a way of escape. Then would Tilak be like a hunter whose prey has slipped out of his hand.

'Dattu, you let the rat get away!'

'No, Papa, it was at the door just now.'

After some more argument and stampeding about, the rest of the night would be spent in well-earned sleep.

At the back of our Fergusson Gate compound, immediately behind our house, was the city wall, whose ancient stones had known Chandbibi the courageous queen, and from between these stones would crawl snakes that had seen the long dynasty of the Nizam.

One night I thought I felt something moving under my pillow. I kept telling Tilak that something was lifting my head up. I asked for a box of matches. Tilak always had possession of the store of matches. He told me to lie quiet, that it was just imagination, that it was I myself who was lifting my head. Still arguing we fell asleep.

The next day Tilak took his students and Dattu for a picnic to Happy Valley. Tara and I were left alone in the house. Someone had given Tara a dog-whip shaped like a snake to play with, and she was completely absorbed in her game with it.

As I had nothing else to do I began to clean out the house. Where we slept there was a big box at our feet and a book case near our heads. We slept on the floor.

When I began to turn out that room I found an enormous snake behind the box. Its head almost touched my toe. I pushed the box back, and went and sat down by Manjulabai our servant near the stove. I could not speak, but sat holding my head in my hands. Presently I managed to tell Manjulabai that there was a huge snake in the other room. She thought I was telling her a story, and placidly grunted encouragement.

In a little while Tilak, Dattu and Bhaskar returned from the Happy Valley. I told them about the snake. They showed me Tara's whip, laughing over it, while I was straining every nerve to make them understand. Then Tilak got up and said, 'Well, show me your snake. Where is it?'

Dattu followed Tilak, and the two of them went to investigate. There, behind the bookcase, Dattu saw it

'Look Papa, what an enormous snake!' he cried, whereupon great activity ensued. Grasping sticks, umbrellas, lamp or whatever they could find, the whole household came together; Bhaskar protecting his eye-glasses was advising everyone over their shoulders. This snake, which was as long as a man, must have been under my pillow the night before.

In our home, happiness and amusement had the first place. Add to that the efforts of Thombre, Dattu and their friends, and what more can you ask? During the holidays when Dattu and Tara were at home, their friends would gather about them There was a continuous wild tramping backwards and forwards through the house all day long In the evening there were lectures, and the afternoons were given over to conjuring, for which there was no lack of audience, Tilak and all the men who came to see him, myself and all the women who came to see me.

The chief parts were taken by Dattu, Thombre and Tara, who used to decide what they would do before the audience arrived. Thombre and Dattu were the magicians and they practised their arts on Tara. Our adopted 'son', of whom I have already told you, was associated in all this, but no one outside knew. He would sit among the opposition showering sceptical remarks.

Once the play was well started he would light one cigarette from the end of another. The company had sewn a bag with a false lining in it. Anything thrown into this bag fell through the lining and disappeared, whereupon the magicians were applauded. Another of their acts was juggling with balls.

The stage was a sloping roof, from which two ends of cane projected quite naturally, but could not be seen from below. They acted as springs. The boys would place balls in front of them, and from behind a fine string would be attached to one of the pieces of cane, and then led down into an adjoining room. When the string was loosened, as from a flick of the finger the ball was struck from behind, and it would fall down. The ball never left its place at the command of anyone of the audience, but at a word from Thombre it would shoot off, and come down obediently The onlookers would be filled with wonder. Bhaskarrao Uzgare said it was all deception, there must be a catch in it somewhere. Thombre would reply, 'Bhaskarrao, you yourself come forward. I shall crack the glasses of your spectacles exactly down the middle without touching them at all. I shall only say the word, and the two cracks will appear.'

Of course this was only a threat, but Bhaskarrao would say, 'The tricks of a magician should not cause loss to anyone Whatever you want to do, do with your balls and bags.'

Another amusing act was to make Tara pick out an object thought of. Dattu and Thombre would have an arranged signal with her. Once the audience put both of the boys out, and still Tara was able to tell them the object they had selected. This was with the help of our adopted 'son'. The moment her hand touched the right thing he struck a match to light a cigarette. Then the audience began to suspect the match and someone removed the matchbox Still she recognized the object. As soon as her hand touched it, our 'son' let out a puff of smoke from his cigarette, and no one noticed it except Tara.

Thombre always said to me, 'Lakshmibai, my magic is no light thing I can produce what I like by means of it. If you say the word I shall produce Dattu before you now from Nagpur.'

I would say, 'I know nothing about your magic. Do not indulge in idle exaggeration.'

Once, eight or ten days after Dattu had returned to college, people were gathered round Tilak as usual to talk in the even-

ing. Mulay, Parnaik and Thombre were amongst them. First Thombre's younger brother Bapu stuttered out something, then Mulay's sister came in, and went out again. Thombre got up in a hurry, went out too, and came back in a fright. He was all of a tremble and perspiration was standing in beads on his forehead.

'A – a – a – great b–big snake h–h–hissed at me,' he said.

'Why did you not take a lamp with you?' said I. 'You are always heedless.'

Seeing Thombre in such a state Tilak took up his gun. It had been bought for our house at Rahuri, and had never been used. We were always finding snakes about the house, but today's quarry seemed likely to be unusually large. Armed with lamps, sticks, umbrellas and brooms we all went out after Thombre, and seeing the commotion the neighbours too ran up

Stepping very carefully a bunch of twenty or twenty-five people moved towards the bathrooms outside.

'Where is the snake?' said Tilak.

'In the middle one,' said Thombre.

The bathrooms were built of corrugated iron, and a rattling noise was coming from one of them As he watched the iron walls shaking with the movement of the snake each one clutched his neighbour. Some began to retreat. Tilak lifted up his gun. With a bang the door flew open; out stepped Dattu.

'Well, Lakshmibai, has my magic not produced Dattu?' said Thombre.

'Get out, chatterbox! What would have happened if the gun had gone off just now?'

'How could we have let anything like that happen, Lakshmibai?'

There were roars of laughter, and the people did not go home till twelve o'clock at night.

It was true that Dattu had gone to college, but owing to an outbreak of plague the college had been closed at once. He had told his friends, and they had arranged between them to have some fun. When he arrived in the evening Dattu went straight to Mulay's with his luggage, and it was decided he should come home after dinner, and be produced by magic

Babu, however, could not keep the secret, and coming to us had stammered out, 'Cook something specially nice today. Dattu is coming.'

'How do you know?' said I.

'I do not know but I think so.'

Having exploded his bomb amongst us he returned to the boys, but Thombre divined what he had done.

'You went to Tilak's house, did you not? Why did you go?'

Mulay's sister was then sent to find out. She reported that there seemed to be no suspicion of Dattu's arrival. However, as a result of Mr Babu's cleverness the full joke could not be played, and the plan of producing Dattu by magic was abandoned at a moment's notice, and the snake scene staged instead.

14 MEMORIES OF THOMBRE THE BOY-POET

AS long as Thombre stayed with us he was happy and full of fun and optimism, but elsewhere his character seemed to change. Not till he went to Mahabaleshwar in the summer to work each year as a teacher did he become more stable.

One day as soon as he had returned from Khandesh, he began to quarrel with me.

'Tell me why all you people love me.'

'I do not understand what you are saying.'

'And you have no intention of understanding—because there is nothing obscure about it.'

'Thombre, I cannot follow your obscurities. No one loves because they are told to, or stops loving because they are told to.'

'No, the motive behind this show of love is quite different.'

'What show, Thombre? I see none at all!'

'Do you not? Do you not? Then why do you give me milk to drink?'

'Thombre, I don't understand a word you say.'

'Yes, you do understand. It is all done in order to make me a Christian.'

'Thombre! I should be happy if you become a Christian,

because I am a Christian, and I believe that thereby great spiritual heights are attained; but it is a great mistake to say that Tilak or I love you for that, for if one loves for any reason then it is not love, it is a mere show. It is another matter if you consider all we have done for you, and are doing for you, is mere play-acting. Do you think all this is just hypocrisy? Who has filled your head with such nonsense?'

Thombre was quieted, and began to behave like himself again. His younger brother Babu had come with him this time, and he too began to go to school. They lived with us, and had their meals in a restaurant When they arrived Tilak was not in, and my back was aching so badly I had put on a poultice. It began to smart and to be very painful. At dawn the next day I called Manjulabai, saying to her, 'See what a lot of extra trouble I have been given! Put on some water to heat.' She went away.

In the next room Thombre and Babu had been asleep. Thombre came to my door, and began to batter it violently. I opened it and he stood before me with his hands on his hips

'Tell me how I have given you extra trouble.'

'What trouble? Who says I have been troubled?'

'You say so.'

'I? To whom did I say it?'

'To whom? To Manjulabai.'

'Did she tell you that?'

'What was the need of telling me? I heard it with my own ears.'

'What did you hear?'

'What a lot of extra trouble I have been given!'

'Look here, Thombre! Hear things properly and then begin a quarrel. Look at the poultice on my back. I said to Manjulabai, "What a lot of extra trouble I have been given. Put on some water to heat". I am here, Manjulabai knows what was said Go straight out of the back door and ask her.'

He went off to her at once and heard again what I had told her. His fiery temper cooled down immediately.

Once when Thombre had returned from Poona he came and sat on the swing suspended in our centre room I was there telling the cook something. Thombre as he sat was twisting the swing round and round. When it was tightly twisted up one way he would let go and come spinning back

to the beginning again. With a corresponding twisting and untwisting he carried on his conversation.

'The handle of the axe delivers the blow to the root.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that the handle is made of wood from the tree, but once it is set in the axe-head, it can sever the very roots of the tree.'

'Which means?'

'You.'

Thombre's mind was as twisted as his swinging.

'Thombre,' I said, 'are we not, in your opinion, the handle?'

'Yes, of course.'

'And you are the root. Then what of the axe-head? It is your caste and customs which we have broken, and you cannot endure that!'

All this I said smilingly as was my way, but his anger only mounted higher and higher.

'You see how angry I am,' he said, 'and you think nothing of it. You can still laugh!'

'Oh Thombre, just look at that swing. It will twist up just as much as you like to twist it. It is equally in your power to unwind it. I laughed because there is no twist in my mind. Take the twist out of yours and you will begin to laugh yourself'

Thombre was as dear to us as our own son, and he regarded us with an equal affection.

When he left school he undertook work as a Pandit teaching Europeans Marathi. Consequently he had to live sometimes in Poona, sometimes in Nagar, and he began to go regularly to Mahabaleshwar in the hot weather.

One hot season on his first visit Dattu and Tara went with him. The three of them took a house and lived together doing their own cooking. In three months time they had seen every nook and corner of Mahabaleshwar. They went to the fort at Pratapgad by a foot-path, and resting in ravines and valleys recited poetry by the way Thombre's poem *A Sigh* was written there in the year 1913 and as they sat singing it in the valley it took on a surpassing beauty, so the children said.

Thombre used to bring all the money he earned to me. At one time in Nagar, putting aside little by little I gathered fifty rupees for him, but in the meantime Tilak's propensity for

getting into debt had created a hole in our own finances which I desired to fill. Tilak was always anxious to incur debt and I to pay it off.

I said to Thombre:

'Thombre, I have saved fifty rupees of your money. May I use it? I want to pay off a debt.'

'Most certainly use it.'

'I cannot say when I shall be able to pay it back, but pay I shall, and if I should die or anything happens to me, you can get it from Dattu. And if you have any very urgent need of it, at least give me one month's warning and I shall arrange something.'

'Take it for the present and we shall see later how it is to be recovered.'

After this Thombre went away to Poona. But a few days later Babu arrived back to ask for his money, saying Thombre had to go to Khandesh and he wanted it immediately. I explained that Tilak was not at home, he had not got his salary, and that I would send the money as soon as it came. Babu would not hear of it. He said Thombre had sent him with instructions to bring back the money quickly.

'Babu,' I said, 'if I had the money, do you think I would keep it back?'

Upon this he went away in a temper. Babu came in the morning and left in the afternoon.

By the evening train Thombre arrived. He had been weeping the whole way. Dattu was out for a walk when he saw him on the road from the station, walking with his head down. Dattu turned about and came back with him. The minute I saw Thombre I told him I would send his money as soon as Tilak returned.

Still sobbing Thombre said:

'Lakshmibai, I never sent Babu to fetch the money. He has done all this without asking me. I have come to give you an explanation. When I heard about it, I could not stay in Poona a second longer. I have no need of the money whatsoever.'

Thombre was very upset over Babu's behaviour. When Tilak came home later we sent the money by Money Order.

Thombre's mother was a very sweet-natured woman, and Thombre was like her. When one saw her simple, frank, open ways one was reminded of Thombre, and the sight of Thombre

reminded one of his mother. She used to regard our house as her own, just as he did.

'Lakshmibai,' she would say to me, 'if it had not been for you we would not see Thombre today. You are his mother.' When they went to Poona they left all their goods and chattels and jewellery with me, because from there they had to go to Mahabaleshwar and then come back to Nagar; but in the hurry and scurry no one knew where a certain necklace had been put. I learned later that it had gone with Thombre's sister-in-law, but no one told me at the time, and I was full of anxiety.

Thombre was very lazy about writing letters. Though I wrote four times about the necklace I could get no reply. In the end Dattu sent a reply postcard. On the card for Thombre in big letters he wrote the one word 'Necklace' with a question mark and on the return card, one below the other, the two words 'Found' and 'Lost', followed by a note underneath instructing him to score out one word and post. This at least went home, and we received a long, long letter from Thombre at once. Dattu's postcard came back the day before with the word 'Lost' scored out, and bearing the news that the necklace was found.

Thombre recited other people's poetry as happily as his own. If he once took a liking for a poem, he never considered whether it was his own or someone else's and this was the source of the strength of his poetic genius. To some poets other people's poems are like a nose out of joint. Thombre was very fond of Tilak's poetry, and he would expound Tilak's *Hermit Flower* so beautifully that only they, who themselves had heard it from his lips, could describe its full flavour. At one time he taught this poem to a class of Tilak's, with Tilak himself sitting among the students. Tilak was so delighted with his comments on the active and passive ways of life that at the end of the address, he immediately embraced him.

Once when Tilak was away, Dattu in college and Tara in Poona, Thombre met an astrologer, who told him he would meet with a fatal accident that very day. He came straight home and sat down by the hearth.

'Lakshmibai, an astrologer has told me I shall die in an accident today.'

'Tush! Astrologers are all liars. They say anything. Do not go anywhere now, and that will be an end of it.'

'But I must go. How can the prophecy be false?'

When it became evident that he intended to make the prophecy come true, I dropped the work I had in hand, and sat down beside him. Dattu's friends were sent for, and invited to stay the night with us. Two rupees worth of sweets were brought in and the night passed in fun, song and chattering. Not until that day and that night were over was Thombre allowed out of our sight. The prophecy proved false then, but came true five years later.

All sorts and conditions of people came and went in our house, but there was never another like Thombre. He would quarrel now and again, but there was never anything underhand in it, no hatred and no selfishness. He was loving, winning, happy, a tease, and somewhat mischievous. In our house at least, he remained child-like to the end There was always some fun when he was about. His riotous games, climbing of trees and leaping about the house; his quarrels; the house strewn with papers, his writing of poems and the reading of them, and if no one listened to them with full attention the tearing of them up in anger, laughter again; the writing of stories and the reading of them, his recitations of others' poems with as much enthusiasm as his own; the funny poems that were ridiculed; meetings held in the house, demonstrations of magic, evil designs on Bhaskarrao's spectacles, the mockery of my spelling; if we slept in the courtyard at night the counting and distribution of the stars and a quarrel if they were not divided properly; the whole house cluttered up with rubbish, and if I scolded, an attempt at tidying up; sitting in Tilak's presence with a solemn face—these, and how many more, little things rise up before one's eyes and fill the mind with sorrow!

Take thou these two last tears to sip. Farewell
Oh bird, wilt thou never return again?

15 SATARA

Tilak is given every opportunity and encouragement to write his great epic, a Life of Christ, called Christayan.

IN the year 1916 Ruth passed her Intermediate examination. Eight days after she got her results a wire came for Dattu saying he had passed his B A. As soon as it was known that he had passed Dattu was given work as a teacher in the Mission High School, Nagar. I too was pleased that my son was now earning, but he only stayed there for three or four months. His thoughts were filled with a desire to get his M.A. Consequently, as soon as he had saved enough to cover his board, fees and books, he began agitating to be allowed to go back to Nagpur, and having gained the victory he set off. There he was given a free room in which to live in the hostel, and over and above, fifteen rupees a month for supervision of the hostel, which was just sufficient for his needs. He now entered his name for the M A. and LL.B. classes

Tilak's nature now began to undergo increasing change with great rapidity. From earliest childhood there had been a constant ferment in his mind. He felt there was no use in remaining as one was. To the last moment he desired to be something better, and at last gained the victory over the very great faults within himself. It is said that a man's character is fully formed in his youth, but this did not prove true in Tilak's case at least, because his growth continued to the very end. A little while after Dattu went to Nagpur, Tilak went to stay in Satara.

The desire to sit down and finish his epic *Christayan*, begun so many years before, had taken hold of his mind. His fundamental nature had so far never permitted him to sit down quietly and bring it to completion. He knew so many people in Nagar, and so many people knew him to be in Nagar, that the numbers coming to call upon him began to increase enormously, and once a discussion was started with them on some favourite topic, hours would go by without consideration, so it was decided to go to some quiet place to finish the Life of Christ.

Dr Hume used to do everything possible for Tilak and he wrote at once to his daughter in Satara telling her to make arrangements for us. We were given a big bungalow to live in, to which Tilak gave the name of Christayan Ashram, and as soon as we got there he had a name-plate made and put up.

Mrs Lee, Dr Hume's daughter, welcomed us when we arrived, and we stayed with her for that day. Her husband Mr Lee had died. She and her two lovely children were the only people in the house.

The next day we went to our own bungalow. Our living was of the poorest as before but now it was in a large and handsome building! There was no furniture or furnishings anywhere; everything was bare, and all doors stood open as in an ascetic's monastery. People could come and go as they liked. Ruth's cousin Benjie was with us, and so was Rambhaou Dharmadhikari's Chiki. She had been brought up by us from the time her mother died.

'Why live in a bungalow?' said I. 'There is always lack of company in a bungalow. Benjie will not stay for ever, and the house is in a lonely spot.'

'What do you want with company?' said Tilak. 'You have Chiki and Tommy.'

Poor Chiki was eight or nine years old, and Tommy was a dog.

Tilak's prestige, however, was great. After our arrival, Dr Hume sent a clerk who was specially appointed to relieve Tilak of some of the weight of his work, to assist substantially with the *Dnyanodaya* and to copy out the *Christayan*. His family were very nice, and Tilak asked one of them who had a good voice to teach me 'Do, Re, Me'. Sometimes he himself would sit down and practise with me, because we proposed to go on tour later singing *kirtans*. To help us in the singing, Tilak sent for a young blind man called Limbaji from Miss Millard's Blind School in Bombay. He was blind, and his wife had one eye, but love enabled them to subsist quite happily on one in place of four. We gave them ten rupees and a house, but only yesterday I heard that instead of ten rupees he now receives a salary of forty, and instead of one eye in the house there are now nine.

At Wambori near Nagar, there was a poor Christian. His name was Rambhaou Sasane. For many years Tilak had sent him two rupees a month to help him, but in the bustle of going

to Satara two months had passed by without the money being sent. One might as well also confess that we had no money. About two weeks after we reached Satara a bundle and stick mounted on Sasane's shoulder pushed themselves into the house.

'Salaam, Sahib.'

'Sasane? How have you come?'

'By train!'

'I understand that. Why have you come?'

'For my money.'

'But Sasane! Could you not have sent me a postcard for two farthings?'

'I thought you might not remember me. I just thought I would come.'

'That's all very well. But did you not consider the expense?'

'No! You will give it. I borrowed the money and came.'

'Well done, Sasane; you have behaved with great circumspection. Another time if the money is late, do not come for it. If you do, I shall stop it altogether.'

And so saying he gave ten rupees for the fare both ways and four rupees for the past two months, making fourteen in all, and sent the old man on his way Having received a lesson to the tune of ten rupees, Tilak in all his life never forgot again to send Sasane his pittance.

After Tilak came to Satara he began to plant a garden in the compound, and was always scolding me because I took no interest in it.

'Up to now,' I said, 'of all the gardens we ever laid out you have never let one grow. I am not planting any more.'

So he watered it, and cared for it himself. Be that as it may, I had no heart left to make a garden. Formerly I was a great enthusiast, but here I had no mind for it.

Tilak had come to Satara to write the *Christayan*, but once more his epic was left in the lurch.

'You have come to Satara on purpose to write the *Christayan*,' I said, 'and now you are here, you write nothing.'

'How much do you understand about it?' he said. 'It is a work of inspiration. Is poetry ever written to order?'

Of his other occupations there was no lack! There were both a Christian society, Christ's *Darbar*, and its companion the Deccan *Rayat Samaj*, which he and Mr Kothari and others had recently started. His name was first in the Provincial

Workers' Committee, and with the Deccan *Rayat Samaj* as an excuse he began a continuous coming and going to Poona. Christ's *Darbar* among the Christian Community and the Deccan *Rayat Samaj* among the non-Christians of the lower castes were chiefly responsible for the neglect of the *Christayan*.

Though we had come to Satara, Tilak's peregrinations became no less. On the contrary they now embraced a wider field and events of still vaster importance.

Having received an invitation from Dindigal in Madras Presidency, he went to lecture to the Christians there, and saw one astounding thing which was completely unknown among the Christians of the Maharashtra. These people of Madras, though they had become Christians, had not immediately thrown off the burden of untouchability, but clutched it to their bosoms and carried it along with them. Some people sat inside the Church and some, the untouchable Christians, sat outside.

It was not in Tilak's nature to put up with this, and one day when he arrived he sat down among the people outside. He would not even turn his head to look at those inside, and from where he sat he began his address. Thereupon the people inside, being shamed, began to come out one by one and sit down. After this Tilak made it a rule that he would not speak in any place where such distinctions were made. This had such a salutary effect that during the rest of that tour he saw no more caste discrimination.

In those days there was a Christian Endeavour Conference in Rahuri to which Tilak received an invitation. He went there also.

He had felt, practically from the time he had become a Christian, that he did not want to be a paid mission agent. Once or twice he had ceased to accept the salary and continued the same work without any pay. Now, however, he was about to undertake a very great and different task, the preparation for which meant the complete renunciation of mission employment. From Rahuri on 1 September 1917 he published this letter:

A Humble Statement

For the sake of my country and for the sake of Christ's *Darbar* I can no more be bound to any human institution in any way, except by the ties of love and service. From now on all my desire must be towards and all my profit in Christ and His Gospel. Therefore I obey

the voice of God and from henceforth I am no servant, doing the work of a mission or any other human institution, for pay. I am become a Christian ascetic, which means, not one devoid of all desire and passion, but an ascetic following the path of love. From henceforth I must endeavour to be and do what God, who is Spirit, tells me. Those who love Christ, India and me should intercede for me before the Mercy-seat of God, the Father of us all. This is the help I ask.

Narayan Waman Tilak

Tilak renounced his salary and adopted a form of asceticism. He began to wear a beggar's robe. He possessed only two which he washed himself. Now there were no servants in the house. He himself did everything, from lighting the fire to plastering the floor with cow-dung.

One Christian gentleman asked if his adoption of an ascetic's life meant the renouncing of family ties. Below is given Tilak's published opinion about his mendicant's profession.

'To live dependent on a beggar's bowl! Perish the life of shame!

'No Christian ascetic will ever do that. I have become a mendicant because I am prepared to serve India. I want the wages for that service, but just enough for that service. If anyone should lay down before me one million rupees out of pity for my family, I would not take it. If the world gives me for the price of my service only enough to fill my own stomach then I shall remain hungry, and lay the food before my family. If the world decides to give me enough to support ten, I shall sit down with my family and eat a bite, and return to the world what is left over of the world's. We consider the plague that has scourged our country for twenty-one years now a terrible thing, but there is a more terrible plague for ever at our heels The name of that plague is *Begging*, either at home or abroad. There is no need for the Christian ascetic to add to the already innumerable beggars.'

16 DATTU'S PRIZE STORY

Chiefly concerning Dattu and Ruth, with a digression to include Namya.

NOT ten months after he had gone to Satara, Tilak gave up his work. Dattu was informed of this decision by the same post that bore the announcement to the *Dnyanodaya,* and had to face this blow when his whole mind should have been on his first M.A. examination. He immediately wrote a letter to his father saying, 'I do not ask you to refrain from giving up your work, but only that you should not make it public till I come' He got a wire from his father telling him to come and see him in Poona. When Dattu went, he found the news already known all over. Consequently the wind was completely taken out of his sails.

He had only been going to say that his father should give up his work only after a due consideration of Tara's future; but now there was no question of that, nor of his own M.A., for he recognized the time had come for him to look after the family, and he had to decide on what he would do. He wanted to go to Bombay to enrol for the L.L.B. course. Tilak however would not hear of it. 'I do not want my son to dabble in law at all,' he said. 'Follow some other profession.'

What other was there to follow? It was not possible to become a doctor now; there was left the teaching profession.

'I will do that if you like.'

It was finally settled that he should go and get a post as a teacher in Bombay, and in his spare time study for his L.L.B., so away he went to look for work. He found it at once, and became a master in the Byculla Mission High School. With all these distractions Dattu failed in his first year M.A., and later, having tried two or three times to get permission to sit again in Bombay University and having been refused, he had to abandon the hope altogether.

From Poona Tilak went to Nagar, and then came home to Satara. Kalyani had one calf left called Soni, which Tilak sold

en route. He said he had sold it for fifty rupees. I only knew that Soni was gone. Sold or given away, at all events I never set eyes on the money. The only thing Tilak brought with him was a bull-calf in the shape of a boy called Namya.

Namya was defective in speech and exceedingly simple but hardworking. He never tired of work. We agreed to give him his food, his clothes and a salary of one rupee. Tilak began to spend his time over Namya. He took the Lord's Prayer with him every day. Tilak would say, 'Our Father which art in Heaven,' and he would repeat, 'Our Father which art our mother,' but Tilak never lost his patience, and did not give up teaching him.

One time the barrister, Athavale, and his wife Minabai came to be our guests. Namya asked me who they were. I told him in fun that Minabai was my daughter and Athavale my son-in-law.

'Who are your son-in-law's relations?' asked Namya again.

'He has one brother,' I said.

'What does he do?' Namya lisped.

'Go and ask him,' I said.

Broom in hand Namya went off to the son-in-law, 'Hallo son-in-law, what kind of work do you do?'

'A barber.'

'And your brother?'

'A butler.'

On hearing this Namya was thunderstruck. How Tilak could ever give his daughter to a barber was an insoluble problem. He returned to me and in a voice of protest said, 'Oh dear, Oh dear! What a son-in-law to have adopted. He a barber and his brother a butler! They picked a bride for Dattu from Bombay. How much better would my uncle Shrawan's daughter have been! Why did you not choose her?' This bundle of foolishness created much amusement in our house.

Once I sent Namya to sleep in a house where a woman was ill. She died the next day at dawn, and at dawn Namya came back, and lay down. Tilak made his own tea. He set one cup beside Tara, and ordered another to be given to Namya.

When Tara went to him he was lying prostrate rolling his eyes, and could neither move nor speak.

'Namya, Namya, what are you doing? Take this tea.' But

Namya gave neither grunt nor groan. At last when we were all gathered round him, he said, 'How can I speak? Haven't I got lock-jaw like that woman?'

It was now about a year or a year and a half since Dattu got his B.A. Ruth was about to sit for hers. Dattu had enough work to support himself. The thought of his wedding began to torment us. How could you have a wedding without money? You must have a little.

I was teaching Mrs Hazen Marathi, and banking the money with her so that there would be at least a hundred rupees; but more was necessary, and now we began to feel the biting need of it.

Tilak began his triumphal preparations for the wedding, that is, he made up an order of marriage service, and proposed to have it ready for the occasion The work of copying out the wedding ritual became our unceasing employment in the house. There had been no need for Tilak to add his cares and preparations to ours. We had enough of our own!

As I said above, I was teaching Mrs Hazen Marathi. I knew no English but taught her Marathi through Marathi. We were reading a book called *Emperor Ashok*. We had much fun over it. Once in our reading we came across the word *Ang-Wang-Kaling-Magdhadi*. Mrs Hazen was so taken with the sound of it that she was pleased out of measure, saying she would give it to Mr Hazen as a nickname, and address him as *Ang-Wang-Kaling-Magdhadi*. I could not help laughing even while I protested, and she herself laughed when I told her they were names of countries.

It was announced in the June and July numbers of the *Dnyanodaya* of 1917 that two prizes, of a hundred and fifty rupees and fifty rupees, were being offered for an original novel describing the life of the Indian Christian community. After this announcement was made by the Literature Committee, Tilak, in the following number of the *Dnyanodaya*, made this declaration: 'It being my wish that the prize offered by the Literature Committee for the writing of a novel should encourage others, and someone having asked my intentions in the matter, I hereby publicly announce to all my coming fellow-authors that I do not intend to compete.'

The man who had asked him was Dattu. He was thinking of trying to write a novel himself. Up to that time he had written some short stories and poems, but had never attempted to write a big book. Tilak had given his son and heir a proper printed reply, so Dattu set about writing his novel, and completed it in ten or twelve days.

Later, during the Diwali holidays, he came to Satara with his manuscript. His great desire was that his father should run his eye over it, but that proved impossible. Tilak was always engrossed in some other work. At last Dattu found a favourable opportunity. One day after dinner Tilak went and lay down on his bed Everything was perfectly quiet and peaceful. No one was about. Dattu drew up a chair beside his father, and sat down.

'Papa, you are free from disturbance just now. I shall read you my story.'

'All right. Read it,' and so saying Tilak shut his eyes, and began to listen. Not four or five pages were read before Tilak was fast asleep. Dattu was very hurt, and came to me, 'Mother, Papa has just gone to sleep. How angry he is when he begins to read something he has written, and we do not attend! He never encourages me.'

'Now, child, maybe he is tired. Read it to him later.' But Dattu was very angry.

'I shall never read it to him now,' he said, 'and shall not tell him what happens to the book.'

One day five or six months later, after the post had come in, Tilak sat on in his office for two or three hours. There was no sound of his usual activity, so I went in and found him completely absorbed in a book.

'Have you seen this? Dattu has played a fine prank. Here, take your copy. It is Dattu's book. He has written it, and dedicated it to you and me.'

I remembered something about the book. But Tilak had forgotten it entirely.

'Dattu has also received the prize of one hundred and fifty rupees, and what a beautiful book he has written! I cannot lay it down.'

'But when he was reading it to you, you fell asleep.' Tilak remembered that. He said no more, laughed and began reading again. That day he rose to come to dinner only when he

had finished the book. He was pleased with it beyond all telling, and a letter was promptly dispatched to Dattu; but not only to him: Dr Bissell, Tara and five or six other persons were also written to about it. Tilak told everyone that his joy was like that of the deaf and dumb mother in an old Marathi book, who, thinking her baby would also be deaf and dumb, took and threw down a great, big stone beside its pillow, and when the child began to cry her joy knew no bounds.

17 *ABHANG-ANJALI*

Tilak treads the path of the Poet-saints.

THE *Christayan* was the chief reason for Tilak coming to Satara, but all his poetic inspiration was expended upon the *Abhang-anjali*, and on coming to Satara he found excuses in plenty for composing *abhangs*. An *abhang* is a religious song or hymn written in the traditional metre used by the Indian Poet-saints, to express their devotion to God.

One day after he had given up his work, Mrs Lee said to Tilak, 'What will become of you?'

He made this the subject of one *abhang* Mrs Lee did not convey her sympathy only in words. After making inquiries, later one day she quietly brought fifty rupees, and laid them before Tilak. He returned the money with thanks. Seeing Tilak would not take it, she brought it to me, whereupon Tilak composed another *abhang*.

We had both the sympathy and help of Mrs Lee, Mr W Hazen, Mrs Hazen and other missionaries, but there was one who never approved of Tilak. She was the Rickshaw Lady. The two of them met again in Satara. I do not say that the woman was evil, but she never approved of anything Tilak did. She was a great worshipper of discipline, so much so that everything must be done at a fixed time in a fixed

way. If anything were a little different or appeared in a different form she would be upset, and as a result she and Tilak used to have daily altercations. Tilak used to hold singing parties every morning and evening, to lead which he would put jingling ornaments on his ankles and take cymbals or *chipala*—an Indian form of castanet—in his hands. Behind him there would be a drum to keep time and his state of ecstasy could be described by:

> Who would care for the body
> When he has become one with God?

Tilak would not allow any window or door fastenings in the house; as for lock and key they were utterly taboo.

'Why do you do this?' I would say.

He would reply, 'In truth we should have such faith in God that we should have no desire to save up anything, and whatever we have must be common property. There is no use in keeping the distinctions of mine and thine.' Thereupon he wrote another *abhang*:

> Strip off my wealth and leave me bare;
> Then stand I to heaven's gold the heir;
> Dishonour me, humiliate;
> Honour I gain inviolate.
> This mortal body crucify;
> Immortal rise I to the sky.
> Give me this gift, the servant said,
> Then let me go so perfected.

All Tilak's fiery temper and anger had almost entirely vanished, and now in the place of anger he would feel pity. If anyone spoke against him or hurt him in any way he would say, 'Good! These things provide me with inspiration for my work,' and then he would write another poem. His righteous anger however was still terrible. Though he could not be roused by an insult to himself he used to be most deeply offended by many of the bad failings of the Christian people, and the state of helplessness to which the missionaries had reduced them.

Once when he was preaching in Wai Church, his excitement rose to such heights that, as he spoke, he struck the table before him, and with that one blow the table was split.

After Namya left we had no more servants. Tilak did all the housework, just like me, even from sweeping to plastering the floor.

'When had Christ a servant?' he would say. 'Where had He house or lodging? He had not even a place to lay His head. What do we want with all this luxury?' And on this theme he composed two more very famous *abhangs*:

No servant hadst Thou, Lord; what service need I?
They fed Thee on husks, Lord; shall I feasting lie?
Where laid'st Thou Thy head, or what house may I own?
With ease, as a burden, my soul is bowed down.
Oh, shower no more wealth on so humble a heart.
Great Ocean of Love Thou, most blessed Thou art.

Men spat in Thy face, Lord; can I hope for fame?
Thy back bore the scourge; shall I shrink from the same?
A head crowned with thorns, this my glory to be,
Thus crucified, dying, Thy death grant to me.
Great Ocean of Love, that joy only be mine
That suffering and dying Thou mad'st to be thine.

18 LAST VISIT TO NAGAR

The story reverts to mundane matters.

AND so dawned the year of 1918. In this year Ruth sat for her B A. examination Dattu had got his B A. two years before, and staying in Bombay had begun again to study for his M.A. in the University and also to attend the Bombay L.L.B. classes. This, however, he did only because he enjoyed it. His real work was teaching in the Bombay High School. Now that he was receiving a salary, and had saved some money, there was no difficulty in the way of his marriage. Accordingly I pestered Tilak into fixing the day and month. I said marriages should not be in May. Ruth's father said, 'It must be in May because after the wedding there will be a whole month's holiday during the hot weather.' In the same way I was not listened to in the choice of the place. I said it should be in Satara, and he said it must be in the bride's native town. But so

far as that went Satara was not our native place, nor was Bombay his. In spite of this we managed to agree. I wanted the wedding in Satara because we did not know how to house so big a bridal party in Bombay. Ruth's father however said they would arrange that, and here too I gave in.

He gave Dattu a great deal of help. At that time it was difficult to get a house at a reasonable rent in Bombay, but he secured one, at Byculla between his block and his sister's. All our own household belongings had been stolen, but I had those of two or three people who had entrusted them to me. I had an excellent idea. The things being kept for Benjie's house should be made use of by Dattu till he had furnished his home, and then they should be returned by degrees to Benjie. It would be two or three years yet before Benjie would set up house himself. Benjie was Ruth's cousin, and Ruth's father was his guardian. So with his consent, I sent off all the things to Bombay, and in Bombay Dattu set up house, even though it was in a rented house. My joy could not be contained in the heavens. It was decided to have the wedding in the hot weather.

Dattu had come home for both the Diwali and Christmas holidays. The days went by very happily, and there was plenty of fun. One day Tilak and Dattu made a wager that they would walk to Wai and back. Tilak looked slight but was exceedingly wiry. On the other hand, Dattu looked strong, but fell miles behind Tilak in toughness. I have no memory of Tilak in his whole life ever being two days in bed. He had made no habit of falling ill.

Father and son made their wager, and agreed to leave the next day at 12 o'clock; someone came in and sat talking to Tilak, and outside the rain began to fall. Tilak showed no signs of going to Wai. Dattu began to laugh. It was suggested that owing to the rain the plan should be put off.

Tilak said, 'What for? I am not afraid of the rain.'

Dattu replied, 'But you show no signs of setting out.' What preparations had Tilak to make? He had a robe on his back and a blanket to hand. In a corner stood his stick, and his sandals were at the door. The words, 'Come, let us be going,' were hardly uttered before Tilak had equipped himself, and was standing outside in the rain waiting for Dattu. In five minutes Dattu too was ready to be off. Tilak and Dattu went

to Wai in a downpour of rain, and as soon as they got there Dattu was put into hospital, and Tilak, after taking a turn round the village, returned to him to say:

'Well, Dattu, are we not to walk back?'

Dattu was feverish and, clasping his hands in supplication, said from where he lay:

'You have beaten me.'

The two of them came home by motor the next day.

'I was now well prepared for our singing tour. Tilak had gone over everything with me again and again. I began to give recitals of story and song which were appreciated at least by some.

One invitation came from Nagar. Tilak too had to go to Nagar for a class. We left together and went to stay with Dr Hume. On our way we went round by Poona and took Tara with us for a couple of days. Tilak was consumed with impatience to get to Nagar, but that was only in order to meet with the members of Christ's *Darbar*. This society had been founded in Nagar so it was natural that he should be drawn towards its birth-place.

From the time he arrived, a great number of the *Darbar* began to come to see him Some people had set themselves up against the *Darbar*, and going to the missionaries prejudiced their minds against it. They spread the tale easily enough that Tilak proposed to create obstacles in the way of their work under the pretext of running the *Darbar*.

The next evening while we were at dinner the opposing party came and sat down outside Tilak did not know this, and after dinner Tilak and Dr Hume went into Dr Hume's office.

There Dr Hume said, 'Brother, what are you about? What are people saying?'

'What people? Who are saying what? That I tell them to steal, to commit banditry, that I incite them to murder? Just tell me what they say.'

'Now brother. . .'

'To whom do I say what? Bring him here before me.' This was all said in such a rising voice that we could hear it clearly from the next room. In the end the thunder grew so loud that Mrs Hume shut the bungalow doors and took me to sit in a room far away.

'Let me go,' I said, but she would not. She had no experience of such scenes. I met with them every day. I pleaded with her. 'Madam Sahib, let me go. I know his ways quite well.'

Saying 'Brother, Brother,' Dr Hume embraced Tilak. Tilak calmed down a little. The people outside came in. Tilak prostrated himself before them, and explaining all the aims of Christ's *Darbar*, pacified them.

As soon as Thombre heard we were in Nagar, he came to see us. He and all his family were in Nagar at the time. He embraced Tilak and me with great warmth, saying he had at long last met his benefactors again. He had felt quite lost because we were not there. On the last day we went to his house to dine, and his mother thanked Tilak and me over and over again saying:

'Thombre is not my son. He is yours. What a lot you have done for him! You nursed him when he was ill.'

I urged Thombre to come to Dattu's wedding, and he promised to come.

Knowing Tilak had given up his work, Thombre asked about our finances

'Have you got any money for the wedding? If not, I can give you as much as two hundred rupees.' And so saying, he began to produce the money.

'I do not want it just now,' I said. 'I shall take it if I need it. You bring it with you. I would only waste it.'

'All right, but you will need presents of cloth to distribute to the women. These I shall give you.'

'Not today. Bring them too when you come.'

We sat all night long in his house, and could not think how we had passed so much time just talking.

The next day he came to the station to see us off, and as the train steamed out tears came into his eyes; I too was wiping mine with the end of my sari, and even Tilak's eyes were wet. Tilak was a perfect miser, when it came to shedding tears. He had made over that whole contract to me; but for once his eyes were affected too.

We were very intimate with all Thombre's family. His elder sister was the only one we had not seen. Thombre used to tell me he had been taught his passion for poetry by her, and that she herself used to compose. I would tell him to contrive somehow to bring her to see me.

Many a time he built castles in the air saying, 'I shall take you to see her,' and we shall do this and that, but it all fell to the ground. Plunging a noble mother, a good wife, a virtuous sister, a loving brother and beloved friends into an ocean of sorrow, the boy-poet left them to compose his poetry in a place of peace. Tilak bathed him in tears. Dattu and Tara had played and frolicked with him. To this day when we remember him our tears begin to flow:

> Take thou these two last tears to sip. Farewell
> Oh bird, wilt thou never return again?

19 DATTU'S WEDDING

Dattu is married. Namya is lost.

BY the mercy of God I have many I can call 'son' or 'daughter'. One such was found in Satara. His name was Ernest. His wife was a doctor, so he too was called Dr Ernest. Now that the date and place of Dattu's wedding were fixed, we wanted a bridal party, and the travelling expenses for one. The bridal party was for the most part already in the house, and the money I had begun to collect. I also asked for two hundred rupees from Dr Ernest. The agreement for the loan was to be by word of mouth, and the conditions of the agreement as follows:

'Doctor, the only witness to the money you have given me is God. As you have given me this money in the dark, so shall I return it in the dark. There is no question of time. If I die or anything else happens, get the money out of Dattu. If you trust me, give me the money. If not, say, "No". I shall not mind. You will get no interest from me.'

My creditor agreed to all these conditions, and on the security of my word alone handed over two hundred rupees.

Tilak's preparations too were well forward. He had a

clerk in the house, and with his help he had briskly set about writing out copies of the Order of Marriage Service. This marriage service was later printed in the *Dnyanodaya*.

Dattu was in Bombay. He was working there. Though the hot weather holidays had begun, he did not come home, because with the help of Ruth's father and mother he had to arrange for his own house and to see about a house for the bridegroom's party, and furnish it with cooking utensils from somewhere.

Tilak's friend Dr Gowande had agreed to lend them, but at the last minute he and Ruth's father fell out, and after that he refused to come to the wedding.

The invitations from both sides were on the same invitation card, and printed in Bombay This was the first big event in my house None of my relatives would come. That was understood. I had set my heart on taking a big wedding party with us; but from Satara the bridegroom's procession would have to set out for Bombay and return again without the bridegroom. He was to remain in Bombay. Nevertheless my bridal procession was made ready. It was composed of Ernest and his wife and daughter, Manjulabai from Nagpur and her daughter, Professor Patankar, my brother's son Wasudev, Benjie, the three of us and Chiki, for all of whom I had to pay the fare except Patankar The war was on and fares were up, so the trip was expensive, and in order to save excess luggage charges, the grain and other things that should have been taken with us were left behind, and so the money invested in grain was as good as lost in the meantime. I had a more practical mind than Tilak and I was proud of it, but sometimes it would fail me and plunge us into trouble. The bridegroom's party set out. Ernest was our leader. A bridegroom with a bridegroom's party is absolutely necessary, so we wrote to Dattu beforehand telling him to join us at some station on the way. Ernest was a young man, very much on the spot. He reserved a carriage for us from Satara. We had plenty of room. The rest of the train was packed. We reached Poona station in comfort, but as soon as the train stopped there Ernest began throwing all our belongings rapidly out.

I said, 'What is he doing?'

His wife said, 'There has been some mistake about the reserved carriage.'

From Poona to Bombay there was a continuation of the inconvenience from overcrowding in the rest of the train, but again Ernest's brains came to the rescue, and for a second time he reserved a carriage in which we now made ourselves completely at home. We loosened our bedding, and spread ourselves about. Only Ernest remained sitting in a corner. Poona was left behind.

At the very next station a worldly-wise gentleman came up. He saw through Ernest's ruse and his entrance into our 'reserved' carriage was the prelude to a perfect invasion; the compartment was packed to overflowing. We felt quite exhausted as we rolled up all our things again. We bundled them together somehow, and whiled away the time till dawn as best we could. Near Bombay the milkmen got in with their vessels hung on their shoulders at the end of long poles. I began to laugh; the Doctor's face was a study.

Dattu, as he was told, came to join us. Bhaskarrao Uzgare was with him. They had both agreed that it would be a good thing to meet us at Shiv, a local station near Bombay, so to Shiv they came, and stood waiting for our train. The young gentlemen however had not taken the trouble to consult a time-table. It transpired that our train, instead of stopping at Shiv, shot straight through, and we were vouchsafed a glimpse of the expression on their faces from the train. This meant that the bridegroom's party would now arrive before the bridegroom.

Following my instructions, Ruth's father was there to meet us at Byculla, but I was vexed because Dattu was not with us. We had been given rooms in the Methodist Mission Girls' School. This school was in Jacob's Circle, and the bride's father was living at Bellassis Road. Many people came to see us after we arrived in Bombay.

Ruth's father and mother were both wise. We agreed to share the expense of the dinner and tea party, which meant that each of us had to contribute one hundred and fifty rupees, and I borrowed that sum from them. I paid it back soon afterwards. The bride's father and mother came to stay with us and only their daughter was left at home. The wedding was to be on the evening of the next day. On the wedding day they went home again.

When the hour for the wedding struck, the bride was at

the Church. We too left in good time, but we could not get a tram, nor set out on foot, nor get a conveyance, and finally the bridegroom went ahead at the double in case he would be late. We brought up the rear. Tilak conducted the service according to his new Order of Marriage, and the Benediction prepared by him was recited by a motley crowd including Patankar, Jai, Wasoodev, and Bhaskarrao Uzgare.

The day after the wedding the bride and bridegroom went to Matheran for their honeymoon. The bride's father and mother went off for a holiday and took with them all their things. We were left sitting in Bara Chawl with our wedding party Preparations had been made for the party for about a fortnight, but what was the use? The bridegroom's house was in Byculla and the key was in Matheran. Yesterday there had been sweets and sweetened rice for the wedding party, and today not a spoonful of tea. I was stretched on my bed exhausted, but was praying silently.

Dr Gowande had sent me fifteen rupees for a sari, and with it I had bought bread from the baker. There were plenty of sweets and *bhajis* left over. They served us for a meal. With exactly half the travelling expenses some of the party were sent ahead, and the rest stayed for three days more in Bombay.

Here, however, in Bara Chawl lived Sadashevrao Dethe, a Drawing Master, and his wife and children. His house was near ours. His wife's father had baptized Dattu and me. His house was very small, but his heart was big. He undertook our entertainment. His wife prepared the food, and he brought it over and served us. All my life I shall never forget the kindness of Sadashevrao and Krupabai. I felt as they must have felt in the village of Cana at the wedding, when the wine was finished, and Jesus performed a miracle, making new wine.

Dattu had told Benjie to take fifty rupees out of the bank, and give it to me when it was time to return. He hesitated a little, but did so in the end By the time we reached Satara we had accumulated abundant evidence of the mercy of God.

I give one more instance of how I not only got into debt myself, but also involved others in expense. I sent some wedding cake to Mrs Hume in Mahabaleshwar, asking her to

distribute it to the missionaries gathered there and other friends. Intending them to get just a taste each I sent one slice, but that apparently is not the correct custom. Mrs Hume out of her own pocket paid for a party, during which she distributed my one slice.

Before we even reached Satara a guest with his entire family was sitting on our doorstep waiting for us. This was the Rev. Mr Malelu and his wife and family. They had come to us for the hot weather for a change of air. He was Ruth's uncle. There were seven of them and their woman servant and the three or four of us and Namya, quite enough to fill the house! The shopping done for the wedding now proved very useful.

Tara, Chiki, Namya and I were a brisk and vigorous quartette waiting upon them. Namya did nothing but wash pots and pans and grind all day long. I did nothing but sit by the stove. Grace, Manu, Chiki and Tara from time to time rendered solid assistance.

Ah well! These days passed very pleasantly and happily.

We began to scrape the grain off the bottom of the bins. The rains began to threaten. The holidays were over, and the tide of guests began to ebb Dattu and Ruth came for one day to Satara, before going back to Bombay when their honeymoon was over. We were overjoyed to see them. My daughter-in-law was a B.A. but she did not mind doing housework in the least. We were delighted to see how useful and clever she was, just like her mother.

Namya saw Bombay for the first time at Dattu's wedding. He thought he would like to go back, so when Dattu and Ruth were ready to depart he sat down and sulked. He was humoured somehow, and everything he asked for promised.

'You will send me a ring—and shoes—and a wrist-watch and a hat?'

'Yes, I shall send them all when I get to Bombay.' It was not difficult to send the things. They could all be dispatched for three or four annas.

Once Dattu was away Namya began to worry.

He said, 'What if the postman steals everything on the way after Dattu has sent them?'

No matter what arguments one used, he could never be

brought to change his mind, and would invariably find something to quarrel about. He wanted to find an excuse to get to Bombay.

One day Chiki was washing some earthenware vessels in a metal basin. He watched her thoughtfully, then, nodding his head, said:

'What have you done? The pots will sink in the water, won't they?'

'Let them sink,' said I. 'Papa will bring as many as you like from the town.'

'Really! How many will he bring?'

'He will bring a cart-load.'

'Then I shall go to the station Who but me can bring them safely to the house?' I laughed till my sides ached. Finally Namya became so anxious over the pots that he rose and went to the station on an empty stomach. Recruiting was in progress at the moment and Namya joined up, and went away to fight. Over and over again Tilak told the Recruiting Officer that he was mad and understood nothing, but it had no effect.

After he reached Bombay, however, Namya said no mention had been made of fighting and he had been engaged to fan a sahib; and he was promptly discharged. Namya's tale ended there. Like a drop of water he was engulfed in the sea of humanity, but we do not know where.

20 NOT THE CHRISTIAN BUT CHRIST

Containing a contrast between East and West, the promise of a grandchild for the Tilaks, and an unexpected cheque.

THIS was the last year of Tilak's life, but in many ways this one year was worth ten others. He used to say our country would never attain to its true greatness without bringing the teaching of Christ into practice, or until men were regarded

as more sacred than books or cults. He began to tell his brethren that, not the Christian, but Christ Himself must be lifted up; and his prayer to Christ was: 'Let my soul be a mirror that will reflect Thee to the World. Live Thou in my thought, live Thou in my speech, live Thou in all my deeds, Oh most Holy.' This train of thought made him dissatisfied with the conditions about him. He said a Christian must be like Christ, and an Indian Christian in every way like an Eastern Christ.

In the first place he began to make surpassing efforts to be so himself. He had been preparing for this year by his way of life during the past ten years. No less than ten or twelve years before, he had said, 'Oh Lord, I am still extremely lacking. I have not freed myself in the least from the debts of my brothers and sisters. Oh Saviour of the unholy, I shall ever remain indebted to Thee,' and he made prodigious efforts to fill up what was wanting. Many of the faults with which he had been born, thus slowly disappeared, and in this last year it would be no exaggeration to say they vanished completely.

Take for instance his hot temper. Not once, when he was insulted, was he seen to lose his temper, as he used to do, but his rage was many a time transformed into righteous indignation.

Tilak was no longer working for money. Sometimes he would receive some for his writings. We had been poor from the beginning, and were still so. The only difference between our previous and present poverty was that now we were free from debt. By the grace of God there were plenty of people, as before, in the house. Different castes, different religions, different ways of thought, gathered under our roof but all were of one heart and mind. Some were thinking about Christianity, some had already thought about it, and some had accepted Christianity.

Twice every day there were meetings for hymn singing and choruses. A gong was introduced, and when the hour struck, the neighbours began to gather. Sometimes people from the town and sometimes passers-by would come in and sit down too. For want of money Tilak began to wear a saffron-coloured robe, because thereby the cost of washing was saved. These robes he had made out of old dhoties. We all used to sit and

sing together. Tilak remained standing. Each one held cymbals or castanets. Someone would beat a drum. Sometimes Tilak would fasten jingling ornaments to his feet and dance in his abandonment. He and his audience and chorus would at such a time rise to that state of ecstasy when 'Body is forgotten in union with God', and they would continue their singing indefinitely.

Near our bungalow in Satara was the Mission bungalow. The missionaries living there were very kind, except for our friend the Rickshaw Lady, who had a mania for discipline, and insisted that every single thing must be done at a set hour, and within a set time, and in a set way. Such a disciplinarian cannot be expected to get on with a man guided only by inspiration. So it was here.

Tilak's singing would go on for hours on end, and this woman could not endure it. She privately forbade her servants to attend, but they, setting her orders upon the shelf, continued to come to the services and she grew more and more infuriated. She dismissed one or two of them, and Tilak promptly found them other work.

War was declared. She thought her servants gave more respect to Tilak than to herself, and that her prestige had been impaired. Tilak thought she made slaves of the Christian people, and on that theme he wrote a song.

I was responsible for pouring more oil onto this blaze. A member of the Church had been excommunicated for unseemly behaviour. He had mended his ways, and wished to be taken back into Communion, but he was not prepared for the public forgiveness prescribed by discipline, and the Rickshaw Lady would not give her vote to have him reinstated; all those in her employ followed her example against their will.

One day in Tilak's absence a letter came from Dr Hume saying Tilak should persuade the people to take the man back into the Church, because he would only sink lower if he were so abandoned. I agreed with Dr Hume, and I myself undertook the task, before Tilak's return.

When I inquired of one Mission servant he replied, 'Bai, we agree with you, but we cannot go against Bai Sahib. It can only be done if you take the lead.' I spoke to 'Bai Sahib', and she replied, 'Bai, why involve yourself in such quarrels in the congregation? It is better that you should take no part.' I

went home and in humility prayed to God to show me the path to follow.

It was a Sunday. At the evening service I sent a note up to the Minister, which note he read out.

'I have a message to give from God. Will everyone kindly wait for five minutes at the end of the service. Your Grandmother.'

Having got a boy to read from the beginning of Chapter 8 in St John, I stopped at the eighth verse. 'He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her.' 'Christ came to save sinners, to lift them up. He did not come to crush them. Do you value men or your own greatness? Is there no pride in your demand that this man should submit a written request for forgiveness, to be displayed before the world? You are risen up to brand a soul made clean by repentance.'

Everyone began to murmur saying, 'This woman was given five minutes in which to speak, and she has embarked upon this!' The outcome, however, was good and the man was received back into the Church Both Tilak and Dr Hume were very pleased. Soon afterwards I found a wife for the excommunicated man, and he began life again happily. Only our Rickshaw Lady failed to approve of anything I had done. A double measure of wrath was poured out on my head because not only had I got him taken back into the Church, but I had also arranged his marriage.

This man's four daughters were in the Boarding School. One day they came home. They had been expelled. Tilak forthwith arranged for them to be taken in at Poona. Just as we were sighing with relief over that, the fifth daughter, who was a teacher working for 'Bai Sahib', was told to go to her 'Grandmother', and dismissed from her post. Her 'Grandmother' would supply her with work! She came to me crying. I comforted her, saying, 'God is the Protector of the Poor,' and told her to go away, and not to worry. In my heart was a fervent prayer.

The next day a guest came to me from Nagar. Her son was earning a hundred rupees a month. He was unmarried. She asked me if I knew of any place she could find a wife for him. I was overjoyed. There was a place in my own house. I entertained her as if she had been my own daughter's mother-in-law. I let her see the girl. She approved of her, and it was not long before the wedding was celebrated.

From the first we had been in the habit of enjoying two things, a rent-free house, and a doctor like one of the family, in Nagar Dr Sorabji, in Satara Dr Kelkar, in Poona Dr Gore, in Bombay Dr Dandekar, and in Nasik Dr Gupte.

I was due to give a *kirtan* one day in the town, but the day before I had high fever. Tilak sent a note to Dr Kelkar 'Come at once, my wife is not well.'

The note was sent in the evening. The Doctor was not in. He had been called out to some village. As soon as he returned he saw Tilak's note. There was nothing in it to say what was the matter with me. It was about ten o'clock at night. The Doctor's assistant had gone home. Hunger was gnawing at the Doctor's stomach. He could not decide what medicines he should take with him, so, thinking of all the things it was possible for me to have, he packed up a big bag with medicines and instruments. His tonga was there, but no driver; he harnessed the horse himself, put in the bag, and drove himself round to our door. By this time my fever had come down

'Well, you decrepit old woman,' said he, 'what is wrong with you? Snake bite, or cholera or what? What a fright you gave me!'

I was sorry but felt like laughing at the same time.

'I have to sing tomorrow, Doctor,' I said, 'so I do not want to have any fever then' Instead of medicines I received on my shoulders two strokes from the cane in his hand. They, being administered in kindness, required no salve to be applied afterwards. The Doctor then prepared and made me take some porridge. The next day I gave my *kirtan*, and from then on began to receive invitations to sing elsewhere too.

A European named Fritchley also sent me an invitation. He was not a missionary; he was a sculptor. He had been told about us by someone, and he sent for us because he was an exceedingly religious man. This was the first Christmas after Dattu's wedding. I thought Dattu should come to Satara with Ruth, but he sent a letter inviting us to Bombay. Tilak was never in the habit of inventing excuses. He accepted at once, and we went to Bombay to Dattu's. To provide for our coming Dattu spent eight days sitting over the translation of a book, and earned seventy-five rupees. Tilak was very pleased with this display of industry on Dattu's part, and with his eagerness to earn some money.

We arrived in Bombay. Chiki was staying with Dattu. Tara was staying in St Columba's and attending college. We reached Byculla at dawn. Dattu came down and took up our luggage. When we peeped inside we found Ruth had taken to bed, and could hardly swallow a mouthful of water. However, it appeared that her father and mother were delighted with the cause of her indisposition, and we too were well pleased.

I had come prepared. Things had only to be fried for our meal, and that Tara and Chiki did. It must not be thought that Ruth was incapable or slack about her work, but she was for the moment unfit to do anything. Anything she could do, she did.

I had been completely taken up with my *kirtan*. This was our last Christmas together and we spent it very happily. Ruth gave Tilak a cup and saucer, kettle and everything for making tea, and me a sari.

Christmas was over. For the New Year we decided to go to Lonavla, where we had been invited to sing by Fritchley Sahib. I had come to know him very well through our correspondence and one or two meetings. He had begun to have a profound respect for Tilak. We went to Lonavla on the last day of the year. I gave my recital. We saw the New Year in.

On the first day of 1919 we were the guests of Fritchley Sahib. As we were leaving the next day, he put a five hundred rupee cheque into Tilak's hand, and then we came on to Poona.

Here too I gave a *kirtan*, and we reached Satara with our little bundle of five hundred rupees intact As soon as we got back, Dr Ernest's money, borrowed in the dark, was repaid in the dark, and I heaved a sigh of relief.

Tilak always prayed to God to keep him poor.

'I do not want money.'

My prayer used to be, 'I do not want to be in debt, oh God.'

God answered both of us.

One of Tilak's poems says: 'May money never bring pain to hand or heart.'

God heard both our prayers, and answered each by changing our attitude. Here was the answer to Tilak's 'I do not want money', and in answer to my prayer Tilak gave up getting into debt. He had now stopped borrowing altogether, and we were neither debtor nor creditor to anyone. After Tilak's death neither Dattu nor I had to pay back a farthing.

Even though so much had been achieved it was my nature to grumble. I used to say:

'You never can tell. One needs a little money in case anything happens.'

He would reply:

'Will He not now provide for us, who made provision before we were even born? What is to be gained by worrying?' Out of five hundred rupees, two hundred went to pay off my debt, one hundred went to Christ's *Darbar* and two hundred were laid aside. This money proved useful at the proper time later on.

21 SHADOWS

Famine is followed by plague and influenza. Tilak converses with his wife.

NATURE took on a ferocious appearance. The farmers having expended all their energies in preparing their fields were now reduced to sitting watching their cattle till rain came. Everyone's eyes were turned to the clouds like that strange bird the *Chataka*, of which it is said that it drinks only rain water, and all the hot weather its piteous thirsty cry wearies the heavy air. The thunder was as terrible as the roar of cannon. Empty, deceitful, smoke-like clouds chased hither and thither, helter-skelter across the whole sky, and in their midst one odd, black cloud would appear. The very water in the mouths of men dried up for lack of rain.

Mohammedans and Christians, each in their own way prayed to the Almighty. The Brahmans began the propitiation of their gods. The idols in the temples were immersed in water. The poor called out to their Creator, and the hearts of men were shaken to their foundations. Prices soared and the child became a burden to its mother. Tilak's whole faith was in prayer and

fasting. He ate only once in the day, and sometimes did without even that. As he sat at a meal, I have seen him choked with tears, then he would say, 'How can I eat when my friends and relations are short of food? Rather than that give this meal to my starving brothers and sisters.' He began to distribute flour and salt, all that was or was not in the house, to the poor and needy.

One calamity followed another. Fleas, the heralds of plague, appeared, rat-traps began to be brought into the houses, everywhere was the smell of molten tar. Inoculations were begun and the people fled from their villages The news began to spread of this one stricken by plague yesterday, that one today.

About this time Tilak read somewhere about fumigation, and getting me to make up the preparation, he began to distribute it by the handful to anyone that came This form of fumigation drives away rats, bandicoots, flies and fleas. By the mercy of God and the skill of man King Plague was overcome, but a lion was let loose to take his place

The sight of a new disease on the very heels of the plague turned every heart to water, and froze the speech on every lip. The first attacks of influenza in Satara out-plagued the plague. Of ten in a family one would be left on his feet, the rest lay upon their beds. The cattle grazing in the jungle were abandoned to the jungle; the cattle in the stalls stood tied to their stakes. There was no one to supply them with fodder, no money for food, no oil for the lamp, and no one to carry water. In those days one heard of a man who, having no money, sold a cow for two pomegranates.

Seeing the pathetic state of the people, Tilak opened a small dispensary, and started a little distribution of food. I would boil in one day six or eight pounds of medicinal herbs. This medicine, milk, sago, sugar, oil and matches, Tilak would give out from eight in the morning till twelve noon. Bigoted Brahmans, Marathas, and Mahars, received alike from the store.

Tilak's hymn-singing was continued daily, morning and evening. We were given daily notice to vacate the house we were living in rent-free. Though the house was rent-free, we paid no attention to the notices because we did not own as much as a padlock.

The terrified people at last escaped out of the clutches of both plague and influenza. Tilak in those days wrote many hymns.

From the time Dattu was a baby I had been troubled with a pain in my stomach, and sometimes it used to become unbearable. As usual, then, I had a pain. Tilak got up every day at dawn, and first lighting a brazier put it under my bed; he then made tea for himself. Nowadays he talked a great deal with me. I do not mean that he did not speak to me before. I mean that now he would make time, when he had none, to come and sit beside me. I did not appreciate his conversation at all. Sometimes I would only grunt in reply; sometimes I would say:

'Enough of your long-windedness. I do not like it a bit. No one knows what will happen. You should always speak of happy things God's Angels are about the house. They are apt to say, "Amen and Amen".'

He replied:

'What have I said wrong? Two travellers are on the road together. One of them reaches his destination first, and the other later. What is there in that? What is there to be afraid of? I wanted to speak, so I invented a topic to speak on, and what harm was there in it? Can anyone know when anything will happen? Do we get any notice beforehand? A mother knows how long to let her child play outside. When it is tired of playing, she goes and lifts him up, and takes him in beside her, and makes him rest. God does the same. If not today, tomorrow He will take each in his turn. Instead of resenting the event, we should look forward to that day eagerly.

'A man must rise above his circumstances If not, when one is gone, the other who is left, will sit and weep, which is to be a slave to your state and a rebel against God's Will.

'When a woman's husband dies, she becomes a fool in her sorrow, forgetting that she has a responsibility towards her children. She sits and weeps any time and anywhere. She takes no thought at all of the effect of her lamentations on others; and those women, who come to comfort sorrow, bring to mind all the good qualities the dead may or may not have had, so adding their oil to the flames of grief. Her comfort goes by default. No one considers the needs of the relations of the dead, or how they can help them, or how they can be made to forget their sorrow. They gather, make her weep, tear open the wounds of sorrow; a hundred people will come and a hundred times reduce her to tears, and make perpetual sorrow the habit of the house. The widow's eyes are blinded with weeping, and the health of her children affected.'

When he spoke like this, I felt as if the chords of my heart were being torn asunder.

'You can tell there has been a death in a Christian house by their clothes, just as you can tell a devotee of Vishnu by the mark on his forehead. I do not approve of this at all. A black hearse, black horse, a black coffin, a black sari, black ribbons, a black edge round the note-paper, what are these? Should it be an unhappy thing to go to God? Can it be a misfortune to go to Him who is immortal and holy? Which is suggestive of holiness, black or white? If I go before you, you are not to do any of these things. Let everything connected with me be white.'

'I do not know why you should have begun on this.'

'It is better that I should go before you.'

'I see nothing better or worse in it.'

'You will later. When I am gone, you or the children must not mourn for me at all. I am convinced that I must go to God, and that there is no cause for sorrow in my going. He will take me and He will continue to look after you.'

The Rickshaw Lady now began to increase her opposition. Notices to quit the bungalow poured in. The bungalow continued to be occupied Twice a day prayers were held. The Rickshaw Lady's servant came to both hours without fail, and heedless of threats and orders.

Gradually Tilak began to preach regularly in Church. In those days there was no separate building for the Church, and services were held in the school, which was regarded as the Church. This school, however, was in the hands of the Rickshaw Lady. She was forever locking it up.

'Let the building be never so simple,' said Tilak, 'but let it be your own. Build a Church with your own hands. Live on one meal a day, endure privation, but build your own Church. How long are you going to drink water from another's hands? How much longer are you to remain like a cat with its nose in the dish? It is a century since you became Christian. Are you still to remain children only able to crawl? Were your forefathers thus? Are you not proud of them? Why do you bow your necks to others?'

To the missionaries he said, 'How long are you going to spoon-feed us? Let us stand on our own feet. Do not inter-

fere. Let us try. Let us battle with the waves; let us die, but let us learn to swim.'

To me he said, 'See, the time is coming when these Christian people and missionaries will turn against me, but I shall continue to do and say what I think is for their good. I can endure persecution, and shall labour for their profit till I die.'

Yet except for one—the Rickshaw Lady—no Christian man nor missionary ever tried to harm Tilak. On the contrary they all behaved with the utmost friendliness.

The month of February being nearly over, the first signs of the hot weather began to be felt. On Sunday the Rickshaw Lady would not give up the keys at the time of the service. The school was locked up, and the Rickshaw Lady had resolved that, come what may, no one should get the key. The congregation came to tell Tilak.

'Today the doors to Heaven have been slammed!'

'Let them!' said Tilak. 'God does not live in a Church. Our Lord says, "Where two or three are met together, with one heart for my sake, there am I." Come, let us go and sit outside, and open our Church under a tree.'

Tilak set off The congregation followed. The Rickshaw Lady saw it all from afar. Immediately a boy came running after the people with the key, and brought everyone back. The doors of the Church of God which had been slammed were flung open again.

The congregation's eyes were wet with tears that day when Tilak finished his sermon. His text was, 'His servant says, "Oh Christ, give me a little room on the edge of Thy garment".' As the sermon came to a close, Tilak said, 'This is the last time I shall speak to you. My foot shall not tread the floor of this Church again. When I leave here I shall never drink of the water of Satara again.' The people began to weep. Tilak's words came true. That indeed was his last sermon in that Church. How strange are the ways of God! The congregation, who used to gather in the school to hear Tilak preach, after his death got a new and beautiful Church called the Tilak Memorial.

Death, like an evil man who seeks out some reason for performing his deeds, is content with any excuse. He can use a foot tripping on a stone, a hiccough, or any insignificant thing.

A press for sugarcane had recently been set up. After the singing of hymns and choruses, the juice of the sugarcane would be brought, and sometimes Tilak would drink it with the others. It cannot have agreed with him. He began to look like a sick man.

In spite of this there was no cessation of his constant industry. He would get up at any time he thought fit during the night, and sit and write. I again began to buzz about his ears.

'We have not a farthing in case of illness or need. What is the meaning of being so helpless? You look on money as your enemy. What shall we do for medicines later?'

He replied, 'He knows what we should eat and drink. I believe He will not let us want for medicines, neither will He let me lack a funeral. After I am gone, He will even provide you with food for a full month in your sorrow. After that you will have to look after yourself. One month is enough for mourning.'

Dr Kelkar began to come frequently. At three o'clock one morning, Tilak rose and came into my room. He never used to wake me out of sleep, because, if I was so roused, I used to shake all over. Waking me up, he said, 'I have given you a great deal of trouble all your life. Forgive me.'

'What has come over you to think of that today? Is there anything the matter?'

I got up in a hurry, and lit a brazier, then went through to our neighbour, Dhanaji, and woke him up.

When we returned together, Tilak was sitting writing.

'How are you, Sir?'

'All right.'

Dhanaji left and I lay down. That night Tilak sat and made out his will. As you will wonder what kind of a will he made when he did not possess a farthing, I give part of it below. One copy was sent to Dattu, one to the Mission, and one he kept himself:

'If I had not truly loved God, Christ and Beauty (I have my own ideas about Beauty), had I not been a man who loved Jesus, then I should have been altogether another kind of person, the reason being my own particular views on life. Honour and dishonour I regard as mere babbling. If, after my death, any man's ends can be achieved by slandering me, then he is welcome to do so. It is nothing to me.

'Life is not to be measured by time, but the performance of useful work. It is better that a man should die than that he should do no useful service. Everywhere in this world, I see but two things—Beauty and Ugliness. I delight in Beauty, therefore have I loved it. My only reason for loving Christ so deeply is that He is the essence of Beauty—nay altogether Beauty itself. He Himself is the image of this Beauty. No one can truly love this Beauty in the hope of heaven or the fear of hell. Love knows no desire. I delight in Beauty, therefore have I loved Him sincerely. I believe there are two states, Heaven and Hell, and the spirit is drawn towards one of those two states. If a man, believing this, should lose the indwelling Christ, then that man will become terrible indeed.

'If it is the wish of my friends and relatives to put up a tombstone over the spot where my body is laid, on that stone should be carved the line, *How imperfect am I, even yet oh Lord!* Before my name no title whatsoever should be written, such as Rev. or Mr or Ra Ra. They should not write N. W. Tilak in the English way, but Narayan Waman Tilak in Marathi; in all earnestness I say to my friends and relations, that they must take the utmost care to see that the word poet, or any other title of respect, is not inserted.

'No one knows when his calling will come from God, and no one should waste time in futile thought about it. I shall never describe the call of God as "Death", because it is to be called of God, God's calling. It is an awakening to new life. When thoughts of death come into my mind I never feel despondent. "In death there is no pain, and in life too there is no pain." This is the right of the Christian man, and in Christ I have had experience of it beyond all conceiving. I think I have not loved Father, Mother, wife or children, friend or even myself as much as I love my country. The Indian Christian must be made to ponder deeply upon the growth of the Church, the making of it truly free, and the filling of it with life.

'After my death, my body should be burned, and at the funeral black should be avoided. My remains should be placed in the cemetery at Nagar; and in the Theological College there, a picture of myself and one of Dr Hume should be hung side by side, and under Dr Hume's should be written the words, "He took care of", and under mine, "this man".'

Mrs Lee, Dr Hume's daughter, lived at Satara. For her Tilak typed the following letter at the same time:

Satara
9-12-1918

My dear Mrs Lee

I am suddenly become so very sick with a pain in my heart that I think I shall be called away any moment tonight I am quite ready. I leave the following wishes and messages:

1. The Mission, I hope, will take care of my wife. She is an angel, but she has her weaknesses. Will you be her sister?

2. *Christayan* is incomplete. Help Tara, and try to develop her poetical inspiration, that she may finish it one day.

3. Do not make much of me anywhere when I am gone. I have not accomplished one thousandth part of what God made me capable of accomplishing. I wish nothing from you all or from the world but pardon.

4. Burn my remains, and then if my friends wish it take some remnant and bury it. If any monument is to be raised over it, say on it, write no name but only this, 'Some one that in right earnest loved Jesus and his countrymen'.

5. These persons are very dear to me. My wife first, Tara and Dattu, Dr Hume, Hatty Bruce, yourself, Jaibai Gaikwad, Bhaskar Uzgare, Manohar Uzgare, Mr Edwards, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, Bhadrabai Mangaonkar and Dr Macnicol. Tell them so.

My messages:

1. To India: Follow Jesus.

2. To my Christian Brothers and Sisters: Your life is in Christ, your life is in Him and nothing else.

3. To Missionaries: Cease to be fathers and mothers, be real brothers and sisters. Know how to appreciate, trust people, and take the place of India's revered saints.

4. To all: I lived as a friend, and died as a friend of all, and I am still, both here and hereafter.

Yours sincerely
N. W. TILAK

22 'WHAT FEAR HATH HE?'

Wherein it cannot be said that Tilak died.

TILAK sent a letter to Poona to Dr Daulatrao Gore by the same post that carried the copies of his will. Dr Kelkar was visiting him as usual, and was indeed ready to take Tilak into his own home, but he had no hospital.

A letter came from Dr Gore saying we should come to Poona whenever we liked, and he would make all our arrangements for us. We left Satara. Even as Tilak had prophesied at the time of the service, he never set foot in the town again.

Dr Gore kept his promise, and made excellent provision for us. God had planned a private room, a ward-boy and medicine all free. Also Mrs Mathurabai Malhar had reserved to herself the right to provide us with vessels, braziers, hot water and miscellaneous articles. Up to this point all was well. Only the most important thing was left out—hard cash! But even that came and stood, as it were, with folded hands before us. Manjulabai's son, Govinda, the moment he heard Tilak was ill, came on purpose to see us in Poona. He brought me some fruit and fifty rupees, saying, 'Mother, take this, and spend it for Papa. I have saved it out of my salary.'

I was both pleased and vexed. Just to think of him, a mere boy, giving so much to me! I was ashamed to accept such repayment from him, whom we should have been helping, and indeed had helped to some extent. However I did not wish to disappoint him. I took the money and laid it by.

From the next day money began to pour in from one source or another. Milk, soda and fruit added to our own expenses, and the cost of our guests, who came to see us, mounted to six or seven rupees a day. In spite of this expenditure I had at least a little balance left over every night. Except for Sundays anything from one to a hundred rupees came in daily.

There was a woman to do the work, and Rambhaou Dharmadhikari to help us. He, poor thing, was on his feet night and day. We began to have personal experience of Tilak's poem, 'I have the Lord of all the Earth for my Father and Mother, what then shall I lack?'

Not even here would Tilak stay in bed. He went and visited the other patients, held prayers, and sang hymns.

A member of the *Darbar* called Chintamanrao Gaikwad used to sing with him. Here too were many hymns born. Sometimes Tilak would give addresses, but sometimes he used to be so overcome with pain that I was terrified. No matter at what time I ran for Dr Gore he always came. He would put down the bite on its way to his mouth, and rise. The only time he was not available was when he was in the operating theatre.

We got a letter from Zai. Zai was Manjulabai's daughter and a sister of Govinda. Tilak loved her as a daughter. She was a nurse in Nagpur, and there she fell ill. Before Tilak left Satara she had set out from Nagpur to meet him, but on the way she herself became so ill she had to return to Nagpur. Now her letter came saying, 'Papa, I am as ill here as you are there. The doctor has now given up all hope of me. It is not possible that we should meet again.'

Govinda also received a letter asking him to come and see her. He brought the letter to us. We forced him to take back the fifty rupees he had given us and sent him away to Nagpur.

Pandita Ramabai sent Manoramabai, her daughter, to see us. She brought with her some light dishes, and a hundred rupees. As Tilak had prophesied, our state was most prosperous. Tara asked for a holiday, and came from Bombay, and Dattu too took a few days' leave. His wife was not well, but in spite of that she packed up some things, and sent them with Dattu. The hope of seeing her child brought joy to me and her parents; and Tilak too from time to time enjoyed the thought that he would soon be a grandfather.

Amidst all this bustle I embarked on sewing for the coming grandchild, to add to which Tilak himself sewed a blanket. Many a time I left all the sewing to be done by Mrs Gore, and she, poor thing, did it with the greatest pleasure.

What was this great incurable disease with which Tilak was smitten? Piles! Sometimes he would be overcome by the agony of it. He urged Dr Gore to perform the operation necessary, but because he had a little bronchitis, Dr Gore said he could not give him chloroform; he would get better gradually with treatment. He had him examined by one or two other doctors, who said the same thing.

The beauty of the hymns Tilak wrote increased in proportion to the pain he had to suffer, and he wrote thirty to thirty-five in Poona Hospital. We got word of the death of Zai there, and he wrote a poem about her. Here too was written the poem on the death of the poet Ram Ganesh Gadkari.

In a little while Tilak began to feel better and the children returned to Bombay. Though Tilak was better in health, his mind would not consent to the fact. He was eating well, drinking, writing, reading, walking, talking and singing, but he had it firmly fixed in his head that he must have an operation.

About this time Ruth's father wrote to say that there was a very good surgeon in the J. J. Hospital, Bombay On this letter's heels came another from Fritchley Sahib, also saying that an excellent surgeon had come to the J J. Hospital, and that he was his friend, and he would make all the arrangements for us going there.

Everyone in the hospital in Poona was against Tilak going. A hundred times Dr Gore told him not to go.

'I shall take care of you here,' he said, 'an operation is quite unnecessary. I do not wish you to have one.' Tilak answered, 'I have a lot of work I must be perfectly well. There is the *Christayan* and Christ's *Darbar* You should not go against the will of God'

To this Dr Gore had no reply. In Bombay, Ruth had hardly risen from her bed when Dattu fell ill. We only knew he was not very well, and that Dr Dandekar was attending on him. In reality he had typhoid, and his wife was in her sixth month.

It was finally decided that Tilak should go to Bombay and Fritchley Sahib reserved a second-class compartment for him. Everyone in the hospital was very sorry when Tilak left. Dr Gore had tears in his eyes. He was quite convinced that he was witnessing the funeral of his 'Guru Maharaj'. He and his wife Harrietbai always called Tilak 'Guru Maharaj'.

Having left by the night train, we reached Byculla station at dawn the next day. A stretcher had been sent from the J. J. Hospital for Tilak, who laughed when he saw it. He dismissed it and went himself to order a victoria. We got down at Dattu's door, and Tilak too was coming upstairs. Mr Malelu, the pastor, advised him not to wait, but to go straight to the hospital. He hesitated, saying, 'Let me see

Dattu,' but fate was calling him. He did not even set a foot on the stairs. Dressed in a robe, he walked by himself to the hospital.

On the ninth day after he went in on foot he came out borne on four shoulders.

Tilak went on to the hospital. Tara and I went upstairs. At Byculla station my strength had given way completely, and my hands and knees turned to water. When I got upstairs I found Dattu laid low with a six months' illness, and seeing him the very water in my mouth dried up. Though I was not ill, I could do nothing but lie on my bed. Ruth had a great deal to do for Dattu. There was no one in the house to take care of Tilak. He was lost to us the moment we set foot in Bombay, and we to him.

With a mind tortured by forebodings of the future I sent a message through the pastor to the surgeon to say Dr Gore did not approve of performing any operation. The pastor brought back the reply, 'Do you think I follow the trade of a barber?' Who can teach the wise? Be the trade the poor thing followed what it may, he departed for England three days after he had taken the victim in hand, so an ignorant woman like me had no opportunity to learn the difference between a surgeon and a cut-throat barber.

Like an inauspicious festival, with Jupiter in the sign of Leo, when swarms of Brahmans live on the offerings to Ganga, so now in the J. J. Hospital there was a festival of examinations—and a super-abundance of students. These would-be doctors gathered to examine minutely the symptoms apparent in each patient. Tilak was subjected to an exhaustive examination. Our house had now become the very home of sickness. Ruth was weak, my son stretched out on his bed, and from the moment I had set foot in Bombay I had been glued to my mat; Chiki was enduring Bombay somehow, though the air did not agree with her.

By the grace of God, at least Tara was well. We had no one else. She used to go to the hospital and bring back the news. Professor Patankar was at that time in Bombay. He used to do his work, then come and spend the rest of his time helping us. It being the month of May, many of our friends had gone away for the hot weather. The others were busy. Ruth's father and mother were in Matheran. Ruth was

their only daughter and she was in the state I have described. It was only natural they should want to take her with them. She, however, could not tear herself away, and she stayed on in Bombay. What Tara, Babu Patankar, and Manoharrao Uzgare did in those days was beyond all price.

After five days Tara compelled me to go with her to the hospital. There I found Tilak, lying, writing still. While he was wrestling with Death he produced an article for the *Dnyanodaya* and some hymns. It was Tara who contrived that I should speak with Tilak for the last time, and that I should see him while he was still conscious.

'I am now better. I shall soon be quite well. Do not worry. I have yet to complete my two big tasks, *Christayan* and Christ's *Darbar*. Guess which is my favourite hymn.

What though by foes oppressed I stand,
Besieged, hemmed in on either hand;
What though their patience, courage tower,
Like hills unbent to mortal power,
What cause hath he to flinch or fear
Whose Father, God Most High, stands near?

Descends the axe of Fate most dread,
Yet not for me to bow the head;
The merest hollow toy it seems
With no more force than fading dreams,
For God, Almighty Love and Power,
My Father is in danger's hour.

My foe presents before my eyes
All griefs and fleshly agonies,
And still behind me brandisheth
His ancient arms, old age and death,
Weak shield, frail helm, and frailest sword
'Gainst him whose Father is the Lord.

This will be worth remembering in the year 1919.'

I realized that this was a sermon meant for me. My heart overflowed, and in order that he should not see my eyes wet with tears, I left the room quietly, to weep my heart out.

That same day Ruth went to see him. He drew her close and having blessed her said, 'You are about to have a son.' The next day a student friend of Dattu in the Medical College came to say that Tilak had some fever, but it was nothing to worry about. His temperature rose to 105°, and Babu Patankar sat up all the following night with him.

On Friday, 9 May 1919 at two o'clock in the afternoon, Tara went to the J. J. Hospital to see him. Dattu and I were in bed. Something within him urged Dattu to go and see his father. He had not yet been allowed to get up, but he rose and came to me.

'Come, we shall both go and see him,' he said, but I had not the courage. In the end we set out on foot, he supporting me, and I supporting him. Somehow or other we got to the hospital. Near the door Tara was leaning up against a tree. We went straight into Tilak's ward. He had been given an injection of morphia. Standing by him were Manoharrao Uzgare and Kashinath Raghunath Mitra, and one or two others. Tilak saw his son at last, and was able to fill his eyes with the sight of him. He could not speak, but pointed to his face with his finger. Dattu dropped a spoonful of water into his mouth, and then Tilak breathed his last.

The morning song he used to sing every day came into my mind.

> Rise, rise oh my Soul,
> Praise the Lord of Day and Night.
> *In the beginning of the new path of Life,*
> Sing the glory of God.

Tara was standing outside. I went and clasped her to me.

'Tara, let us say that you have lost your mother and your father is still living. I will not let you want for anything. I shall complete your education.'

The two of us went home, and in a little while Mitra and Manoharrao Uzgare brought Dattu back. Chiki was standing waiting by the door.

'How is grandfather?'

'He is better now.'

'Then why do you not take me to see him?'

'You will see him tomorrow.'

Not a sign was shown that Death had entered our house. The neighbours did not even know. Thus far all was accomplished as Tilak wished. What rest Manoharrao Uzgare had for either mind or body God alone knows. He himself undertook to see about everything. Telegrams, telephoning, visits to the printing press, settling of times and hours were all done by him with the advice of Malelu. A wire came from the missionaries in Mahabaleshwar to say everything should be

done according to Tilak's will. Only then did we remember about it at all.

'What can we do?' said Manoharrao.

We sent a reply, 'All will be done as Tilak desired.'

On 10 May Tilak was brought back into that house which he had left after spending Christmas there six months previously. Chiki now knew the truth.

A great many people were out of town, but by the aid of the press, telegrams and telephone people were gathered from Nagpur, Poona, Lonavla and other places.

According to Tilak's orders black was completely banished, and there was no question of a black or white hearse, because the company insisted on carrying the coffin on their shoulders.

The Church in Byculla was packed with people both Hindu and Christian. I was not crying, but was hardly conscious.

After the service the congregation carried the coffin to Worli crematorium singing all the way, and the next day gathered his remains into a little urn, and brought them away. The hymn selected by the people to sing during the funeral procession was Tilak's own. Though sixteen years today have passed since then, I think I can hear the words and tune resounding in my ears yet. This is the hymn:

What fear hath he whose Master is the Lord,
Whose heart and mind can form no alien thought,
Who speaketh of the Lord his God alone,
Who liveth in this world to bless the world,
But owneth no allegiance to the world?
His poverty is here his sole reward,
But all the wealth of Heaven is his to hold.
His body is his own, but therein dwells
Not his own soul, but lo, the Soul of Christ.
Beneath his conquering foot lie agonies
Of heart and flesh, and even Death dies there.