

A DISTINGUISHED DAUGHTER OF TRAVANGORE*

By Mrs. M. E. COUSINS

ABOUT five years after I came to India in 1915, my husband and I visited Trivandrum for the first time. Quite rightly the Women's Hospital was then, and still is, one of the show-places of the capital. It was then that I first met Dr. Poonen Lukose, and as she showed me round the hospital I found myself greatly attracted to her. She told me that she had gone through the specialised course in midwifery and women's diseases in 1915-1916 in the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, the capital city of my country. This course was famous, and a source of pride to Ireland. It is a great link between Ireland and India that this young Miss Poonen of Travancore should have learned and practised, through bringing more than three hundred Irish babies into the world, that skill which has brought her such fame in this city, and has brought such ease and confidence to thousands of her Indian sisters. This Women and Children's Hospital in Trivandrum is ushering three thousand babies a year into the world. From Dublin she came straight to the post of Superintendent of this newly built institution,

* Tribute paid to Dr. Mrs. Poonen Lukose by Mrs. Cousins when recently she unveiled a portrait of Dr. Mrs. Lukose.



VAIDYASASTRAKUSALA DR. MRS. POONEN LUKOSE, RETIRED SURGEON-GENERAL.

recommended by the Secretary of State for India, the Hon. E. S. Montague, who also helped to secure votes for women in India.

It must be well-known to those present that many distinguished visitors have sung the praises of the hospital in the Visitors' Book—medical men of all-India experience like Lieut.-Colonel Cox and Major Naidu of Hyderabad State. Colonel Cox stated that very few hospitals in India could rival it in equipment and management. A much-travelled Frenchwoman wrote that the luxury and beauty of the grounds and the plan of the various wards made it an

deal place, and concluded, "The smartest countries of the West could take many hints from this wonderful institution." Lady Willingdon was an enthusiastic appreciator of Dr. Lukose's skill as a surgeon, organiser and administrator. I remember how deeply impressed the American visitor, Mrs. Margaret Sanger was with the high excellence of all the arrangements of the work of the hospital and the beauty of its planning.

Dr. Poonen Lukose is no ordinary woman. She achieved her unique position as the first woman in India in full control of the entire Medical Department of her country by sheer capacity, hard work, conscientiousness, integrity, by unquestionable skill, high character and professional honour. To her fell the fate of becoming the first woman Member of an Indian Legislature, a historic distinction proudly shared by the State of Travancore. In that great new sphere of law-making Dr. Lukose also showed her outstanding ability, her gifts of eloquence and her grasp of affairs.

The people of Travancore are rightly proud of Dr. Lukose as a daughter of this soil, a worthy subject of the royal son of that other ornament of womanhood, Her Highness Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi. But by her seven years' study in London and Ireland she may also be called a product of the British Commonwealth of Nations. I look on her as a bridge-builder between nations. She is a triangle of forces, of hand, head and heart. She is skilled in hand as a surgeon. She is

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salts is as fertilizers. But they also form the starting point for the preparation of all other potassium compounds in industrial use, such as caustic potash, potassium nitrate, potassium dichromate, and potassium permanganate. Before the war, Germany controlled the market for potassium salts obtaining them by recrystallisation from the famous Stassfurt salt beds. Every country is now keenly interested in the recovery of potassium salts from their natural sources, including sea water. Already the great Tata Chemicals Ltd., in their works at Mittapur have begun the production of potassium salts on the large scale from salt bitterns along with other products of the salt industry.

Experiments conducted both in the laboratory and in the field have shown that it is possible to obtain from the bitterns a complex mixture of salt containing from 20 to 26 per cent of potassium sulphate from which by further chemical treatment pure potassium chloride could be easily obtained. Two of the prominent salt manufacturers have started the recovery of the complex salt, under the guidance of the Research Department for sale to a firm interested in the manufacture of potassium chlorate and other potassium salts.

Bromine is another valuable product that can be obtained from the bitterns left after the recovery of potassium salts. Experiments are in progress for perfecting the method of recovery of bromine from this source.

full of knowledge of the facts of medical science, one of the brainiest of doctors, so quick of intuition that her diagnoses have been part of her outstanding characteristics as a doctor, while her tact in her relationships with people has gained her wide popularity.
