

MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:
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FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

Editor:
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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

JUNE 11, 1949

VOL. I. NO. 9: FOUR ANNAS

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

India's decision to remain a member of the Commonwealth in spite of being an independent sovereign Republic gives a new lease of life amongst us to the English language. Until recently English was apt to be regarded as the remnant of a foreign imposition, an inappropriate growth in the way of an authentic indigenous literature. Today it seems an appropriate and desirable link between us and the group of English-speaking nations with whom we have formed a voluntary association: it has become the medium of a larger existence in which we have elected to share. This is all to the good—especially as America with whom we shall have more and more to deal is English-speaking. But we shall be underestimating the significance of the English language in India if we think that it is only a valuable means of promoting our political, economic and technological interests in the democratic world. English is, above all, an immense cultural asset. And it is such an asset not simply because it renders available to us magnificent countries of the mind, but also because it renders possible to us the most magnificent expression of our own soul.

The first impulse, vis-à-vis this statement, will be to cry, "Absurd paradox"! and to follow up with the question: "Can India really take to the English language as an instrument of her Indianness and make her utterance in it anything more than an exotic curiosity?" The answer, surely, cannot be given with a facile pointing out of the great increase in the number of Indians who talk and write fair English. The answer can only be given by seeing whether there is what Galsworthy termed "flower of author". The disclosure of inmost individuality through the subtlest potentialities of the language: this is "flower of author". Such "flower" need not be in one particular style as opposed to others. Simplicity and complexity, plainness and richness, urbanity and intense vibrancy—all these can equally allow it. Can we affirm that, in any style whatever, "flower of author" can be shown to be possible in English-writing India as something more than a rare, almost accidental, growth? Yes, we can. For two reasons.

The Indian Soul and the English Language

What is called Indianness possesses as one of its main characteristics a power of multifold assimilation arising from a many-sidedness, a globality, in the unique penchant that is the Indian genius. The Indian genius is, of course, best described as spiritual; but it is not spiritual in a narrow way: it is an urge of synthesis of a hundred approaches to the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine. Not only does it spiritualise everything in the long run: it also spiritualises everything without depriving any term of its own essential quality. It annuls nothing by the transforming change it induces: it induces the change by raising all things to their own hidden heights of Supernature, as it were—heights at which they are most authentically themselves by being spiritual, by being facets of the Divine, the Infinite, the Eternal. Wonderfully synthetical and assimilative, it can also embrace and Indianise the quality of any race, the force of any culture; hence it can make both the mind and the movement of the English language part of its activity. This mind and this movement do not confront it as utterly foreign: they come to it striking sympathetic chords in its multi-rhythmed heart. That is

the first reason why "flower of author" in English can be an Indian growth drawing not unnaturally or accidentally its nourishment from the soil of the Indian soul.

The second reason is the character of the English language itself. No other modern language is so varied in mentality, so diverse in turn. It is a fusion of many strains—the Celtic, the Roman, the Saxon, the Teuton, the French, the Italian have mingled in it, and the Greek soul and the Hebrew soul have also coloured it. As a result, it is an extremely plastic and versatile instrument capable of being expressive of multifarious types of consciousness. No wonder it does not have any marked tradition of persistent mood or manner—as, for instance, French has; no wonder, too, it is notable for numberless idiosyncrasies: and no wonder, again, it has proved so adequate a medium for every innovation of outlook and in-look, whether it be the adventurous imaginative gusto of the Renaissance, the gorgeous oriental religiosity of Hebraism, the passion and wonder and Nature-feeling of the Romantic Movement, the vague poignancies and dim wizardries of Celtic paganism. The synthetical and assimilative Indian genius meets in the English tongue a multiplicity and pliancy of temper and tone which give that genius all the more chance of taking hold of this tongue for living self-expression.

There is no doubt that "flower of author" is, for Indians, possible in English. This does not, of course, imply possibility for all and sundry. Such possibility is not there for Indians in even the indigenous languages: every Indian is not a literary master. And, where English is concerned, it is quite to be expected that "flower of author" should be less common than in those languages. But to maintain that Indian utterance in English can only be an exotic curiosity and never an organic unfolding of genuine Indianness is to indulge in a sweeping superficiality. What now remains to be shown is that true Indian utterance in English is more than just possible and that it can be in quality finer and greater than in any language spoken by Indians today. This is the supreme paradox we have to elucidate—and if we can elucidate it we shall have dealt the death-blow to all efforts by our educationists to minimise the importance of English in our cultural self-expression.

The Fittest Body for the Indian Genius

English is unquestionably the most highly developed of modern languages both by virtue of the large variety of racial and psychological strains in it and by virtue of the extraordinary crop of poets in English history. Poetry is the sovereign power of all language: where poets of high quality abound, there the language reaches the highest development, especially when the language itself has immense potentialities. No student of the world's literature will deny that England stands head and shoulders above other modern countries in poetry. Neither in modern Europe nor anywhere else do we find such a poetic galaxy as Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Swinburne, Francis

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WORLD INTEREST IN SRI AUROBINDO'S WORK

Two books on the life and teachings of Sri Aurobindo will be published in England this summer. Dr. G. H. Langley, former Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University, is the author of one of these books. The other is written by Dr. Ranji Shahani, Indian scholar and journalist of Karachi, now settled in England. It was he, who some years ago, gave a talk to the East India Association in London, in the course of which he referred to Sri Aurobindo as the builder of the greatest synthesis of all that is best in the cultures of the East and the West.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is a subject of post-graduate study in the Universities of Benares, Allahabad, Calcutta and Osmania. Professor Haridas Chaudhuri received his Ph.D. from the Calcutta University for a thesis on Sri Aurobindo, called *Integral Idealism*, which will be published in America. It may also be mentioned that the Agra University conferred a Ph.D. on Professor J. S. Agarwal of Cawnpore for a thesis on Sri Aurobindo's poetry. It is said that the Ministry of Information, the Government of India, has been receiving, about Sri Aurobindo and his Ashram of Integral Yoga in Pondicherry, inquiries from various parts of the world, particularly North and South America.

In the United States, Dr. P. A. Sorokin, Chairman of the Department of Sociology, Harvard University, and a Director of the newly-started Research Centre there in Altruistic Integration and Creativity, recently asked for a thesis on the aims and methods of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, which Harvard wishes to publish. Not long ago Professor E. A. Burt, Head

of the Department of Philosophy, Cornell University, New York, introduced Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus, *The Life Divine*, as a textbook for the post-graduate course in Philosophy. To the initiative of Professor F. Spiegelberg, teacher of Indian Philosophy at Stanford University, who went to Pondicherry for the *darshan* of Sri Aurobindo in February last, is due the adoption of Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* as part of the course at Stanford.

An institution called Sri Aurobindo Library has been started at 82, Wall Street, New York, whose main object will be to make known to the American public the teachings of Sri Aurobindo. As a step to this end it will bring out American editions of the works of Sri Aurobindo. It has already announced *The Life Divine*.

Madame Gabriele Mistral, the Chile winner of the Nobel Prize in literature, has stated in an interview to an Indian journalist in Los Angeles that she has "derived considerable enlightenment and solace" from the writings of Sri Aurobindo. She will be proposing Sri Aurobindo's name for the Nobel Prize and eminent personalities in India and abroad will be supporting her proposal. It will be remembered that Sir Francis Young-husband, who declared *The Life Divine* "the greatest book which has been produced in our time" had a similar idea before he died. Madame Mistral is planning a visit to India shortly when she hopes to stay in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for some time.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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Thompson and Yeats. In consequence of the intensely inspired impact of poets like these, the versatile English language has acquired a unique capacity for strangely suggestive effects—the super-subtle phrase, the packed visionary phrase, the phrase of indefinable intonation. Even in prose the unique capacity has its play and, within the less daring terms proper to prose, English still surpasses all modern languages, including those of India herself, in the immediacies and intimacies of intuitive speech. If this is so, then English is bound to be most valuable to the genius of a country which is not only synthetical and assimilative in the extreme but also spiritual to the nth degree; for, a speech with extraordinary potentialities of strangely suggestive effects suits most the magic, the mystery, the depth, the sudden and sublime revelatory reach of the spiritual consciousness. English promises, therefore, to be the expressive body *par excellence* of our true soul.

What adds to our conviction about this promise is the fact that the strangely suggestive potentialities of English have already been pressed into service of the spiritual consciousness by English writers themselves. Herbert's religious simplicity, at once piquant and passionate—Crashaw's rich sensuousness kindling into ecstatic devotion—Donne's nervous intricate power troubling the Inscrutable—Vaughan's half-obscure half-bright straining beyond thought into mystical vision—Wordsworth's profound contemplative pantheistic peace—Blake's deeply delicate radiance—Coleridge's glimmering occultism of the weird and the haunting—Shelley's rainbowed rapture of some universal Light and Love—Keats's enchanted luxuriance, through allegory and symbol and myth, in the Sovereign Beauty that is Sovereign Truth—Patmore's pointed polished ardour of the intellect for "the unknown Eros"—Francis Thompson's restless and crowded and colourful heat of response to "the many-splendoured Thing"—Yeats's bewitched echo to the Immortal Loveliness in its world-wandering—AE's crystalline contact with superhumanly populated twilights within and divinely inhabited dawns above—all these quickenings of the spiritual consciousness are already present in English and have turned it to what may be called Indian uses. Doubtless, the uses are still somewhat elementary in comparison to what the Indian genius has achieved in the ancient Sanscrit of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. But the fact stands that English lends itself as the fittest body to this genius with an actually accomplished functioning, however initial, along our own national soul-trend. Hence, if we are to

fulfil that trend the most natural no less than the most desirable act on our part is to find voice in English.

The Supreme Destiny of English

Not that the indigenous languages should be neglected. They must be developed. But English at present comes to us with a face of supreme destiny. And what that destiny is can be seen even now. For, even now, before our very eyes, it is being wonderfully worked out. A band of Indian poets remarkably gifted are uttering in English the mystical experience with an intense fidelity and felicity, and at their head is one of the greatest figures of the contemporary world and he has banished all shadow of doubt regarding the destiny we have spoken of. Sri Aurobindo has given the world what is at once the finest and grandest literary achievement of modern India and the deepest and highest articulation of Indian spirituality today—the epic with which he is occupied in the spare hours of a Yogi and which has already been published to the extent of nearly twenty-thousand lines: *Savitri, a Legend and a Symbol*. In *Savitri*, we have proof as ample as we could wish that, while our vernaculars more easily provide us with footholds for climbing beyond commonplaces into the revelatory intensities of literature, English alone enables at present the soul of India to attain the absolute peak of self-expression.

And from that peak the soul of India will communicate, to the whole Commonwealth and to all America and to whatever country is in touch with them, the harmonious rhythms of its own greatness. Far and wide, by means of English, the Indian genius will spread the word born from the occult immensities that are the luminous source and support and goal of its unique history. Embodied in this language by India, Inspiration

"with her lightning feet,

A sudden messenger from the all-seeing tops"

will conquer the heart and mind of humanity. Not through translations from Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil or Hindi—beautiful and powerful instruments of truth though they may prove—but directly through the tongue that was Shakespeare's and is now Sri Aurobindo's, the peoples of the earth will most vividly know India as the creative bride of the Divine and as the mighty mother of a new age which shall justify the light on man's upward face.

FRENCH INDIA AT THE CROSS-ROADS

By NGUYEN LUAN

Informations Tchechoslovaques

The problem of Viet-Nam is not the only one in Asia which demands, in the very interest of France and the French Union, a speedy solution. There is the problem, less spectacular, but as urgent, of the French settlements in India.

In fact, since the liberation of France, it could be expected that the question would come up the very moment when, in conformity with the promises made—and kept—by England, India would have gained her independence. In contrast to the other populations of the French Union, the people of French India do not form a separate race, but are only national minorities. Their customs, language and religious beliefs are those of their neighbours of Hindustan, and Hindustan may rightly consider them irredentist territories.

The Failure of the French

Perhaps it would have been otherwise if France had known how to take advantage of the long English domination over the peninsula to make, of the tiny enclaves which had remained to her, model territories for the standard of living, of instruction and of political institutions. Now, after two hundred years of the presence of the French, the conditions of material living remain miserable—exactly as in the neighbouring parts of India—and nearly eighty per cent of the people are illiterate—more than in neighbouring India. The reason is not far off: with a budget almost entirely absorbed by the cost of the upkeep of officials, far too many for a population of 300,000, there did not remain very much for anything else.

If only the universal suffrage which they had obtained had allowed the settlements to defend their interests or their aspirations! But, deposited to a great extent in the ballot-box by the care of the administration, the voting papers, until the Second World War, served only to procure a seat of deputy or senator for some friend or protégé of the minister in office or of the Government. French India was the very type of the rotten borough.

The deficiency of the Third Republic may be regretted or condemned in this respect. It may be a matter for rejoicing that, since 1945, the right of suffrage has genuinely come into force. But the course of history cannot be set back. Reality cannot be suppressed by the simple fact that one regrets it or wishes to modify it.

Lost Opportunity of Creating Cultural Centres

Now, the fact is—and this is the difference from the other old French colonies—that France did not know how to create between the Mother Country and her old settlements indissoluble moral links. The reality—to which it has become necessary henceforth to submit—the reality is that at the door of these settlements an independent India is going to exercise henceforth a more and more powerful attraction.

However, all was not yet lost when the Second World War ended. France could remain in India on condition that she gave up the main point of her political domination and turned her settlements, specially

Pondicherry, into centres of French or rather Franco-Indian culture.

Never had the circumstances been more favourable. In an India in full spiritual renaissance, it is at Pondicherry that there has been living since the last twenty-five years,—as a homage symbolically paid to French thought in its affinities with the old Hindu humanism—Sri Aurobindo, “the greatest master of Hindu thought”, according to Romain Rolland. Around him have gathered from everywhere artists, writers, assiduous disciples.

Nehru himself, since 1946, seems to have been in favour of such a solution: “such little pockets”—he said, speaking of the old French and Portuguese settlements—“cannot maintain themselves from the political point of view, but may continue from the point of view of culture.” He considered them “windows opening on France”.

Such seemed to be also—with a shade of difference—the views of the Governor Baron who recommended, in 1946, the transforming of the settlements into centres of Franco-Indian culture, the problem of territorial appurtenance being resolved by the transfer of the ownership of the land to the University—or Universities—which were to be founded.

The importance of this policy, unhappily, has not been understood in France. Certainly some concessions were made, some liberal reforms promulgated. A representative Assembly was created on November 25, 1946, a sort of General Council with extended administrative powers.

A Council of Government was formed in April, 1947 to help the Governor, who, moreover, himself made room some months later for a Commissioner of the Republic. The five towns, on the other hand, were given, in November, 1947, the status of “Free City”, which conferred a certain financial autonomy, specially on Chandernagore whose powers were yet more extended by a decree on October 15, 1948.

Though it marked some progress in comparison with the former regime, this policy was vitiated from the very outset by two fundamental errors: first, the seeking of solutions of a strictly administrative kind; secondly, the will to maintain at all costs the principle of French sovereignty. Therefore, it could not satisfy public opinion.

Recent Changes and Complications

Pandit Nehru, who at no time had thought of offending or of making the question of the old settlements the pretext of a conflict with France, accepted at first the principle of such a solution in June, 1948. Now, at the election of last October, organised to form the Municipal Assemblies entrusted with the preparation of the referendum in question, the socialist partisans of integration with the French Union obtained, the majority. One could then await the referendum with confidence. Judi-

cially the question seemed to have been settled.

On the contrary, difficulties were going to precipitate themselves.

There were, at the very first, at the time of the October elections, the disturbances at Mahe. There was, later, the resolution of the Municipal Council at Chandernagore claiming the absolute merging of the city into the Indian Union.

There was, finally, at the Indian National Congress Sessions at Jaipur, the declaration of Pandit Nehru, President of the Council of the Ministers of India, who made known plainly, without idle circumlocution, that the only solution possible to the problem of the French and Portuguese enclaves was of their merging into Hindustan—leaving, however, some autonomous institutions “to territories which have to preserve a cultural heritage.”

The taking up of this clear position provoked among the political parties of French India curious sudden changes.

The minority of the communists, till then partisans of joining the Indian Union, began to preach the remaining within the French Union, because India had taken up anti-communism; while, in the midst of the majority, a fair number of socialists appeared to rally to the views of the Congress.

In these conditions, Pandit Nehru, changing his attitude, demanded that the question be settled, not any longer by referendum, but by direct negotiations.

Meanwhile, and in order to strike the iron while it was hot, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Menon, came officially to Pondicherry on January 11, and suggested what would be the possible bases of a positive settlement: Chandernagore, Yanam and Mahe would be incorporated directly with the Indian Union; the territories of Karikal and of Pondicherry would remain, as a set-off, autonomous, but under the authority of an Indian High Commissioner, and would constitute centres of French cultural influence.*

What will be the reaction of the French government to such a plan?

It has declared that it would stick to the principles of the referendum, but in fact it has not adopted any definite attitude; and the keeping back, for three months on a mission in France, of the Commissioner Baron, who was preparing to rejoin his post, is testimony enough of its indecision.

The Attitude France Should Take

However, a rapid decision is imperative, if one does not wish to prolong the already long enough series of lost occasions. Let us examine the situation without being led away by historico-sentimental considerations or by the absurd prejudice of an illusory political sovereignty. Two questions come up: What part do the five settlements play for France and the French Union? What part can they play?

Their actual rôle is insignificant. What do 400 sq. kms. of land and 250,000 inhabitants represent as a

territorial and human factor? What strategic interest can those territories have where the French boats do not even put into port any more since 1939? What economic value can these enclaves have which have been economically incorporated with India since 1941, which have no trade at all with the Mother Country and whose very currency is linked to the sterling zone?

Their future rôle in contrast may be immense, if it is the rôle of a connecting link, guaranteed by their political bond with the Indian Union, by their cultural bond with France, by the autonomy of Pondicherry and Karikal and by the establishment of Franco-Indian Universities.

It is in this spirit that France should have an interest in considering the problem. Certainly India will never take recourse to violence to recover the settlements. But, if France is obstinately resolved to keep them, what she will surely lose is much more than these crumbs of territory without any interest, which are nothing more for her than family-jewels kept carefully under a glass case; this is the possibility of extending to the whole of India the radiance of her culture; this is, for the part she can play in the world, the precious friendship of a great people.

Touchstone of France's Intentions

That is to say, she will lose what is most essential—essential not only for these vestiges of a past crumbled colonial empire, but for the whole of the French Union. For the way in which this little problem is settled will be the touchstone of the intentions of the Mother Country for the plan of the French Union.

If, for these territories whose possession no longer offers any interest, France does not realise in time and give up her illusory political sovereignty, what can be expected from her in the future by Viet-Nam which indeed bears for the whole Union an economic and strategic interest of the first order?

The French Union will not be strong in the Far East except by the increasing of cultural and spiritual “bridges”.

But the strength of these implies an unequivocal confidence and friendship, that is to say, the preliminary renunciation of political authority in both India and Viet-Nam.

On the French choice about India depends, to a great extent, the rallying of Viet-Name opinion for an indissoluble French Union. It would be good if it were thought over at high level.

* The latest news from New Delhi, June 4, on “India's Plans For French Possessions” is:

“Authoritative sources state that India's intention after peaceful incorporation of French possessions would be to allow them to continue as autonomous units on the same lines as Chief Commissioners' provinces. Chief Commissioners would be appointed in these areas. There would be no merger in adjoining provinces. No change in the administrative set-up would be carried out without consulting public opinion. Special linguistic and cultural rights would be preserved.”

THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA BY "Synergist"

IX. VALUES AND SANCTIONS

(a) THE RISE OF MATERIALISM

We have stated that the philosophies of life which have influenced modern Western civilization do not give rise to an ethic because in the last analysis they do not provide sanction for higher values. Philosophy has become the handmaid of science. Unable to give a philosophy of life which will show man his true relation with the world in which he lives and with his Divine Source, knowing their inability to throw any light on the purpose of existence, philosophers are applying themselves to the more modest task of providing a frame-work for the findings of science; and this frame-work is the basis on which they attempt to create a world-view. But the truths of physics, biology and psychology are, as we have stated, partial truths which if given a wider application than they merit, tend to become exaggerations, and sometimes even become falsehoods.

It must be admitted that it is but natural and also right that a thinker when he attempts to create a system of philosophy should try to include in it the established facts of physics, biology and psychology, and try to make as wide and all-embracing a synthesis as possible, but then in such a synthesis it cannot be determined whether the value or importance given to a certain finding of a particular branch of human knowledge is true or exaggerated or even false. Besides what is generally taken for a new synthesis is only a re-arrangement of the existing thought structure in the light of some new generalisation. A real synthesis can only be made by possessing a "whole-knowledge". The whole is more than the sum of its parts—to break up the whole into parts, and after knowing their truth to refashion them into a whole is not a synthesis, for the relevance of the parts and their inter-relations remain unknown. A "whole knowledge" can only be possessed by having a "whole-vision"—an integral vision capable of seeing parts and their relations at a single view and knowing through direct contact their truth and inner significance which the ordinary analytical mind is incapable of doing. It must be a way of seeing that looks at the world from top downwards, not from bottom upwards, and views the working of the world-process from its source in the Transcendent Divine Consciousness to its nether end, the Inconscient—an infra-terrestrial region of existence, where, as the Rig Veda says, "darkness lies wrapped within darkness". It is obvious that to possess such a vision, spiritual enlightenment is necessary, for a being imprisoned in his narrow mental-vital-physical surface-consciousness that he calls "I" cannot possibly possess it, he can only possess indirect or separative knowledge by division, and can examine only the surfaces of things.

Philosophy and the Common Man

Before we proceed further it will be advisable to answer an objection which may be raised against us by the anti-metaphysicals. They may declare that we are over-stressing the importance of the part philosophy plays in a man's life—that the common man is not interested in it, for it concerns only philosophers, intellectuals and dilettantes. But such is not the case. History reveals that the world-view prevailing during a particular epoch, the philosophy of life believed in at a particular time, has always affected the life of the common man. We have before us the case of Positivism, with its side-growths, Hedonism and Utilitarianism; the extent of their influence upon the minds of men and consequently on their attitude towards life cannot be overstressed. Or if we take the case of Freudianism—which, though it cannot be called a philosophy of life, yet has pretensions to be one—we find that its influence on the sex morality of the present generation is by no means negligible. A philosophy, of course, does not come from the thinker directly to the common man; it generally comes to him second-hand or sometimes even third-hand. When a system of philosophy or a new psychological theory is formulated by a thinker, it is studied and examined by other intellectuals; if the verdict is favourable and if it is praised or supported by them, it becomes popular amongst men of letters, novelists and playwrights, poets and painters. Through these it reaches the educated public. Freudianism reached the public mind through D. H. Lawrence and other novelists, through Salvador Dali and the Surrealists, through the modernist poets, and through the medium of cinema films.

Even the uneducated are affected by the current philosophy of life, for whether a man likes it or not, whether he realises it or not, the prevailing world-view will affect his life. He may not know what "Will to Power" is, or the "Herrenvolk", or "The Economic Interpretation of History" and "Dialectical Materialism", but it is ultimately he who will have to do the "goose-step" and march to his doom for this or that political ideal. He does not know that the order to go forward and kill or be killed is actually given by a political ideology which is inspired by a philosophy of life, which in

its turn is erected upon a false generalisation which is nothing but an exaggerated application given to some partial truth of human existence. This does not imply that men always go to war only to fight for political ideologies; usually political ideologies are used only to justify wars the real motive for waging which is greed and lust for power.

Newton and Mechanism

European civilisation proceeded along the path that was ultimately to precipitate it in the throes of a crisis, when it discarded the idea of an extra-cosmic Creator or Personal Divine Intelligence and embraced a Mechanistic philosophy. It did not realise then that by discarding a theo-centric philosophy of life it was also destroying the real sanction behind ethical and spiritual values. This does not mean that anthropomorphism should not have been discarded; on the contrary, the crude and primitive idea of a Divine Creator who was a glorified image of man himself possessing human qualities like anger and jealousy, and who seemed to be chiefly concerned with rewarding the virtuous and punishing the wicked, could not possibly be expected to satisfy forever the philosophic reason of man. But anthropomorphism is not an utter falsehood, it does contain within it a substantial truth which has been experienced by spiritual men through all ages—the truth of a Personal God, that is God as a Divine Person and not as an Impersonal Absolute.

The Supreme Being can reveal Himself to a devotee in the particular form in which he is worshipped—as Krishna to Chaitanya, as Christ to a Christian mystic, but He is not limited by any form He may take to manifest Himself. He may reveal Himself to man as an Impersonal "That" or as a Divine Person, but He exceeds both these aspects of Impersonality and Personality. Anthropomorphism does have a very great truth in it, but a partial truth; and this partial truth has been given a very rigid intellectual formulation by the unenlightened mind of man. Anthropomorphism is the answer of the primitive man to the Sphinx Riddle and cannot be acceptable today. But a theo-centric philosophy based upon the truths experienced in spiritual realisations and which takes up within it the underlying truth of anthropomorphism can be acceptable to the philosophic reason. Such a philosophy admits the truth of both the Personal and Impersonal aspects of the Divine Being, and declares that His supra-cosmic Transcendent nature well as His Immanence, that is, the all-pervadingness of His essential Being are real; it also declares the reality of His Omnipresence—His living Presence at the very centre and heart of "All-Existence" and all "separate existences."

The term "supra-cosmic" has been used and not "extra-cosmic" to indicate that when it is stated that the Divine Being is transcendent to the Universe it does not mean that he is entirely unconnected with it—one who after manifesting the Universe has withdrawn Himself from it. By His Transcendence is implied that he is not bound or limited by His Immanence. The Universe is an emanatory manifestation of the Transcendent Divine, and individual beings are centres of Universal Nature—that is, if the individual is considered as a natural being, as a nature organism. But if he is considered as a "soul-being", he is directly connected with the Transcendent; as we have stated before, man is not only a nature organism—a knot of mental, vital and material universal energies, he is in his inner reality a "soul-being" who is a direct emanation of the Transcendent Divine. Therefore he is not utterly unconnected with God, nor is God utterly detached from the Universe; but a veil does exist which separates man from God—the veil of Ignorance. Man can tear this veil and become aware of the Divine Presence within by ceasing to identify his consciousness with his outer nature-personality and withdrawing into a deeper and more luminous realm of his being. So, true "theo-centrism" is not synonymous with anthropomorphism.

The seeds of a Mechanistic philosophy of life were sown in the soil of Europe when Newton showed that the world behaved exactly like a machine, that it strictly followed physical laws, and that causal relations determined its workings. This is rather ironical, for Newton himself firmly believed in the existence of God and postulated a Creator of the world-machine. The great interest he took in mystical writings was well-known; he used to study the Kabbalah and the writings of Jacob Boehme. But the scientists who came after Newton proudly announced that God was a hypothesis they could do without—they perhaps thought that the idea of a Creator was brought in by Newton because of his theological leanings. It seems that

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VALUES AND SANCTIONS

(a) THE RISE OF MATERIALISM

Continued from page 4

they did not know that the concepts of absolute time and space were considered by Newton to be logically tenable only if an Omnipresent Divine Being at the heart of all creation was postulated. This point has been brought out by Philipp Frank in his book "Einstein, his Life and Times", and is worth noting. He says, ". . . consequently, if one remains within the bounds of physics, one cannot give a satisfactory definition of 'absolute motion'. The theory becomes completely and logically unobjectionable only if, as was self-evident for Newton, God and his consciousness are added to the physical facts.

"For a long time no one had realised precisely what was the actual link between Newton's theological reflections and his scientific work Gregory's* diary for 1705 contains an entry concerning a conversation with Newton on this topic. It says: 'What the space that is empty of body is filled with, the plain truth is that he (Newton) believes God to be omnipresent in the literal sense; and that as we are sensible of objects when their images are brought home within the brain, so God must be sensible of everything, being intimately present with everything; for he (Newton) supposes, that as God is present in space where there is nobody, he is present in space when a body is also present.'

"E. A. Burtt in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, published in 1925, interprets correctly: 'Certainly, at least God must know whether any given motion is absolute or relative. The divine consciousness furnishes the ultimate centre of reference for absolute motion God is the ultimate originator of motion. Thus in the last analysis all relative or absolute motion is the resultant of an expenditure of the divine energy'

"By means of this anthropomorphic** conception of God, a scientific, almost physical definition of absolute motion is obtained. It is linked with the energy expended by a being called 'God', but to which properties of a physical system are ascribed. Otherwise the concept of energy could not be applied to the system. Fundamentally the definition means that one assumes the existence in the world of a real source of energy that is distinguished from all others. Motion produced by the energy of mechanical systems, in general is described as only 'relative' motion, while motion produced by this select being is characterised as 'absolute'. It should never be forgotten, however, that the logical admissibility of this definition of absolute position is bound up with the existence of the energy-producing being. During the eighteenth century, in the age of the Enlightenment, men no longer liked to ascribe to God a part in the laws of physics. But it was forgotten, that Newton's concept of 'absolute motion' was thereby deprived of any content."***

19th Century Materialism

The scientists who came after Newton supported Mechanism but did not find it necessary to postulate the existence of God. Some of them said that even if He did exist, He was not actively concerned in the working of His own creation, the Universe—that He was not connected with it in any way after having once created it. This is the idea that gave rise to Deism—the novel idea of an 'absent God'. After a time attempts were made to explain the whole of man's existence on a mechanistic basis, but the results of these attempts were taken seriously only by a certain group of thinkers. It was only in the middle of the 19th Century that a definite materialistic conception of the Universe was formulated. Scientists like Joule and Liebig, Helmholtz and Schwann helped the growth of scientific materialism. Vogt once again brought forward the old 18th Century idea of Cabanis, that the brain produces thought as the liver gives out bile. Soon the tendency to explain the whole of life in terms of matter spread everywhere and the philosophies of the Idealists were rejected as imaginative phantasies. "No sulphur, no thought," became the dictum of the materialist scientist. Whatever was material was declared to be real and whatever was real to be material—any order of reality other than the physical was condemned as "transcendental nonsense", to use a phrase of Czolbe's. Matter was said

to be composed of hard and tangible atoms, which aggregated in various combinations to form objects and this solid world; these atoms strictly followed the laws of physics. Mind was considered to be a refined and subtilised by-product of matter and hence was said to follow the same laws that governed matter; and as causality strictly ruled its workings, it was asserted that mental processes were caused by previous cerebral activity, which was the result of the action of bodily processes. Here it is seen that psychology helped Materialism by supporting Epiphenomenalism. Descartes's theory of mind and body operating like perfectly synchronised twin clocks without in any way interacting with each other was once and for all discarded. The leading tenets of Darwinism—especially the non-finalistic and non-teleological one declaring the evolutionary force to be blind and unconscious, having neither any purpose behind it nor an ultimate end before it towards which it was proceeding—helped to complete the frame-work required for a Materialistic world-view, and Positivism, though it did not support Materialism directly, removed whatever opposition there was to it by providing a man-centred philosophy of life and destroying a God-centred one. Physics, Biology and Psychology, all three supported a Materialistic philosophy of life; all three were based on insufficient data, and all three attempted to apply their petty findings, which were valid only in a particular frame of reference, to those aspects of human existence where they were certainly not applicable, and which consequently became distorted exaggerations. The effect of such a conception of the world on values and sanctions can easily be surmised.

The implications of a Mechanistic conception of the Universe are these: if a man's actions are causally determined, then his will is not free to choose the good and reject the evil, for he will only do what he is impelled to do by a prior cause, which itself is determined by another cause. The workings of causal determination in man's thoughts and actions were not formulated in detail by the early Mechanists, but with the advance of science in the 19th Century, the Materialists thought that it was possible to explain them upon a scientific basis. This explanation took the form of physical and physiological determinism. The philosophical implications of such a determinism on man's seeking for higher values are not difficult to understand. If a mental act is determined by a cerebral action, which is determined by bodily processes, or by the reaction of the physical and nervous system to the action of external stimuli, then a man's mental processes are physically and physiologically determined, and conditioned by environmental impacts. If this is affirmed as true, then his intellectual acts like his conceptions of good and evil, and right and wrong, or his volitional acts like choosing the good and rejecting the evil are not within his control but are physiologically determined, and if that is the case, then his belief in higher values or his pursuits of ethical or spiritual aims and ideals are chimeras.

Or again, if only matter is real, and if there is no Divine Reality who has manifested this universe and who sustains it in the expanse of His own being, and if there are no archetypes of the True and the Good existing in the Divine Gnosis or the Divine Truth-Consciousness whose reflections are our ideas of them, or if there is no Divine Will in the universe which secretly supports the true and the good and not the false and the evil, then ethical and spiritual values have no ultimate sanction.

This essay will not be complete without Lecomte du Nouy's observation on materialist scientists. Coming from a man who is recognised as a brilliant scientist, and who has been awarded a Prize by the Lausanne University "for making the most important contribution to scientific philosophy in the past ten years," this observation should be considered seriously by those who affirm that a materialistic conception of the universe is still held as tenable by eminent scientific thinkers. He writes, "Because this little group of scientists, drunk with their fragmentary knowledge, proudly deemed that they could forego everything that was not rational, they decreed that all humanity should also go without. They never dreamed that the science in which they had put their faith would soon be completely upset."—"Vain and unconscious men, surrounded by the halo of science, under pretence that the spiritual light which guided humanity in the past was unreal, have raised opaque veils covered with obscure symbols, in order to hide the Light. They did not understand that what mattered was the human orientation which resulted therefrom, and that this reality could not be denied, whereas the Light itself was not of their realm."*

* David Gregory was a friend and student of Newton's.

** It is doubtful whether Newton's conception of God can be called anthropomorphic.

*** With acknowledgements to Jonathan Cape, 30, Bedford Square, the Publisher of "Einstein, his Life and Times" by Philipp Frank.

* With acknowledgements to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., the publishers of "Human Destiny", from which these lines are quoted.

CONCENTRATION AND DISPERSION

In the April issue of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram's highly interesting quarterly, **BULLETIN OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION**, there is the following editorial statement on the right type and method of proficiency in sporting activities. A profound truth is lucidly explained here, a truth helpful not only in the field of physical education but also in every other department of life—if the aim is a harmonious general development which is yet capable, at will, of exercising in any activity the intense competence of the specialist.

In sporting activities those who want to be successful choose a certain line or subject which appeals more to them and suits their nature; they concentrate on their choice and take great care not to disperse their energies in different directions. As in life a man chooses his career and concentrates all his attention upon it, so the sportsman chooses a special activity and concentrates all his efforts to achieve as much perfection as he can in this line. This perfection comes usually by a building up of spontaneous reflex which is the result of constant repetition of the same movements. But this spontaneous reflex can be, with advantage, replaced by the faculty of concentrated attention. This faculty of concentration belongs not only to the intellectual but to all activities and is obtained by the conscious control of the energies.

It is well known that the value of a man is in proportion to his capacity of concentrated attention, the greater the concentration the more exceptional is the result, to the extent that a perfect and unfailing concentrated attention sets the stamp of genius on what is produced. There can be genius in sports as in any other human activity.

Shall we then advise a limit to our action in order to achieve perfection in concentration?

The advantages of limitation are well known, but it has also its inconvenience, bringing narrowness and incapacity for any other line than the one chosen. This is contrary to the ideal of a perfectly developed and harmonised human being. How to conciliate these two contrary tendencies?

There seems to be only one solution to the problem. In the same way as an athlete develops methodically his muscles by a scientific gradual training, the faculty of concentrated attention can be developed scientifically by a methodical training—developed in such a way that concentration is obtained at will and on whatever subject or activity is chosen. Thus the

work of preparation instead of being done in the subconscious by a slow and steady repetition of the same movements, is done consciously by a concentration of will and a gathered attention centred on one point or another according to plan and decision. The chief difficulty seems to be to obtain this power of concentration independent of all inner and outer circumstances—difficult perhaps but not impossible for him who is determined and persevering. Moreover, whatever method of development is chosen, determination and perseverance are indispensable to obtain success.

The aim in the training is to develop this power of concentrating the attention at will on whatever subject or activity one chooses from the most spiritual to the most material, without losing anything of the fulness of power,—for instance, in the physical field, transferring the use of the power from one game to another or one activity to another so as to succeed equally in all.

This extreme attention concentrated on a game or a physical activity like lifting, vaulting, punching, running, etc., focussing all energies on any of these movements which bring about in the body the thrill of an exhilarating joy is the thing which carries with it perfection in execution and success. Generally this happens when the sportsman is especially interested in a game or an activity and its happening escapes all control, decision or will.

Yet by a proper training of concentrated attention one can obtain the phenomenon at will, on command so to say, and the resulting perfection in the execution of any activity follows inevitably.

This is exactly what we want to try in our Department of Physical Education. By this process the result may come more slowly than by the usual method, but the lack of rapidity will surely be compensated by a fulness and richness in the expression.

Moon Mother

Not as a symbol, silent, remote and cold,
But a light in my soul—in all reality—
So have I known Thy loveliness of old
Reflecting Truth on man's high destiny.
O when thy beauty stirs the sleeping rose,
Thy spirit-touch the quiet solitude—
'Tis then my heart surrenders, and love flows
Into the light of thy selenitude.
Into thy arms my age-long spirit flies,
Rapt in the splendour of thy mystic hue—
Trance-held in thy bosom—cradled in starlit skies
Of eternal bliss—clothed in a magic blue.

NORMAN DOWSETT.

Immense, Above....

Thank God for all this wretchedness of love—
The close apocalyptic fires that only prove
The shutting of some golden gate in the face!
Not here beside us burning a brief space
Of life is ecstasy; immense, above,
The shining core of a divine abyss
Awaits the earth-unglamoured lonely gaze,
The tense heart broken into widenesses.
All quiver and cry of time is splendoured there
By an ageless alchemy smiling everywhere!

K. D. SETHNA.

One-Pointed

O make me yearn to Thee,
Thy vassal, everlastingly!
Can the wings fulfilment find without Thy sky?
Can the bee without Thy flower her pent thirst slake?
Can the bark find rest if the oceans she'll deny?
Even so my self's forlorn, reft of Thy ache.

For Thy sap in the rocky earth
The blade will seek rebirth,
For dawn alone will night forswear her sleep,
For the cloud alone the chatak pines and sings,
For the Timeless will Time's eye lone vigils keep.
Even so be Thou alone my King of Kings!

May my river-soul but chase
Thy deep of gleaming Grace!
And give: no barriers may she brook nor fear,
Harkening but to Thy far shoreless call:
Overleaping everything may she career
For Thine one Blue of Sleep, my All-in-All!

Translated from his own Bengali Song by

DILIP KUMAR ROY.

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(9)

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many perplexing questions with which the common man is faced in his daily life. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not merely a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in the many trying situations that arise in the course of its day-to-day existence. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it directly applicable to the concrete problems of life, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers based on Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q. 1: A section of scientists in Europe who could not deny the occurrence of supernatural phenomena have tried in recent times to investigate it by scientific experimentation and collected a mass of evidence in this field, especially in the psychical research societies organised for the purpose. Communications with the dead through spiritualistic séances have been a subject of special interest to these societies. Is there any truth in the claim made by them that it is possible to have communications with the dead persons through a "psychic" medium?

A: There is after death a period in which one passes through the other worlds and it is quite possible for the dead or rather the departed—for they are not dead—who are still in regions near the earth to have communication with the living; sometimes it happens automatically, sometimes by an effort at communication on one side of the curtain or the other. There is no impossibility of such communication by the means used by the spiritists.

Q. 2: But are not a large number of communications received by mediums in the séances quite false?

A: Usually, genuine communications or contacts of that kind or brought about by that means can only be with those who are yet in a world which is a sort of idealised replica of the earth-consciousness and in which the same personality, ideas, memories persist that the person had here. But all that pretends to be such communications with departed souls is not genuine, especially when it is done through a paid professional medium.

Q. 3: Why do these mediums receive false communications?

A: It is because there is an enormous amount of mixture of a very undesirable kind—for apart from the great mass of unconscious suggestions from the sitters or the contributions of the medium's subliminal consciousness, one gets into contact with a world of beings which is of a very deceptive or self-deceptive illusory nature. Many of these come and claim to be the departed souls of relatives, acquaintances, well-known men, famous personalities, etc. There are also beings who pick up the discarded feelings and memories of the dead and masquerade with them. There are a great number of beings who come to such séances only to play with the consciousness of men or exercise their powers through this contact with the earth and who dupe the mediums and sitters with their falsehoods, tricks and illusions. (This refers, of course, to the mediums who are not themselves tricksters). What comes through the medium may be thus a mixture of the medium's subconscious (using subconscious in the ordinary, not in the Yogic sense) and that of the sitters; there may be an intervention from something like conscious vital sheaths left by the departed or perhaps occupied or used by some spirit or some vital being. The departed himself in his vital sheath or in something else assumed for the occasion may intervene; the communication in either case is from his vital part. Or some elemental spirit of the lowest vital physical world near earth may intervene. Where there is such a mixture a horrible confusion can for the most be the result—a hotch-potch of all sorts of things coming in through a medium of an atmosphere of "astral" grey light and shadow.

Q. 4: Sometimes these "mediums" claim to contact the departed souls of the great men of the past like Christ, Buddha, Shakespeare, Napoleon, etc. and to receive communications from them. Are these communications genuine?

A: All such pretended communications with the famous dead of long-past times are in their very nature deceptive and most of those with the recent ones also—that is evident from the character of the communications.

Q. 5: Is the possibility of genuine communication with dead persons then very rare?

A: Through conscientious mediums one may get sound results, but even these are very ignorant of the nature of the forces they are handling and have no discrimination which can guard them against trickery from the other side of the veil.

Q. 6: Does this mean that there is little hope of getting true knowledge of the after-life through the spiritualistic séances?

A: Very little genuine knowledge of the nature of the after-life can be gathered from these séances; a true knowledge is more often gained by the experience of individuals who make serious contact or are able in one way or another to cross the border.

Q. 7: Is it quite safe to take part in these séances and psychical societies?

A: Such séances can put one in *rappor*t with a very low world of vital beings and forces, themselves obscure, incoherent or tricky and it is dangerous to associate with such a world or to undergo any influence.

A contact with such a level of beings can be harmful and spiritually dangerous. Many mediums become nervously or morally unbalanced.

Q. 8: It is said that it is the "ghost" of the dead person who comes to these séances. The term "ghost" is also often used in other connections, e.g. in the case of haunted houses. Belief in ghosts, in fact, was universal till the advent of modern science. Is there any truth in this belief?

A: The word "ghost" as used in popular parlance covers an enormous number of distinct phenomena which have no necessary connection with each other. To name a few only:

(1) An actual contact with the soul of a human being in its subtle body and transcribed to our mind by the appearance of an image or the hearing of a voice.

(2) A mental formation stamped by the thoughts and feelings of a departed human being on the atmosphere of a place or locality, wandering about there or repeating itself, till that formation either exhausts itself or is dissolved by one means or another. This is the explanation of such phenomena as the haunted house in which the scenes attending or surrounding or preceding a murder are repeated over and over again and many other similar phenomena.

(3) A being of the lower vital planes who has assumed the discarded vital sheath of a departed human being or a fragment of his vital personality and appears and acts in the form and perhaps with the surface thoughts and memories of that person.

(4) A being of the lower vital plane who by the medium of a living human being or by some other means or agency is able to materialise itself sufficiently so as to appear and act in a visible form or speak with an audible voice or, without so appearing, to move about material things, e.g., furniture or to materialise objects or to shift them from place to place. This accounts for what are called *poltergeists*, phenomena of stone-throwing, tree-inhabiting *bhutas*, and other well-known phenomena.

(5) Apparitions which are the formations of one's own mind and take to the senses an objective appearance.

(6) Temporary possession of people by vital beings who sometimes pretend to be departed relatives etc.

(7) Thought-images of themselves projected often by people at the moment of death, which appear at that time or a few hours afterwards to their friends or relatives.

Q. 9: Is there any truth in what is called the "automatic writings" recorded by the spiritualists?

A: Automatic writings like communications with the dead are a mixed affair. Part comes from the subconscious mind of the medium and part from that of the sitters. But it is not true that all can be accounted for by a dramatising imagination and memory. Sometimes there are things none present could know or remember; sometimes even, though that is rare, glimpses of the future.

Q. 10: What is the explanation of such phenomena as dematerialisation, re-materialisation, levitation etc. known to many Yogis in India and Tibetan Lamas? Are they merely tricks or magic as is usually supposed?

A: There are different planes of substance, gross, subtle and more subtle going back to what is called causal (Karana) substance. What is more gross can be reduced to the subtle state and the subtle brought into the gross state; that accounts for dematerialisation and re-materialisation. These are occult processes and are vulgarly regarded as magic. Ordinarily the magician knows nothing of the why and wherefore of what he is doing, he has simply learned the formula or process or else controls elemental beings of the subtler states (planes or worlds) who do the thing for him. The Tibetans indulge widely in occult processes. The books of Madame David Neel who has lived in Tibet give an idea of their expertness in these things. But also the Tibetan Lamas know something of the laws of occult (mental and vital) energy and how it can be made to act on physical things. That is something which goes beyond mere magic. The direct power of mind-force or life-force upon matter can be extended to an almost illimitable degree. It must be remembered that Energy is fundamentally one in all the planes, only taking more and more dense forms, so there is nothing *a priori* impossible in mind-energy or life-energy acting directly on material energy and substance; if they do they can make a material object do things or rather can do things with a material object which would be to that object in its ordinary poise or "law" unhabitual and therefore apparently impossible.

NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

THE TIME-SPIRIT AND THE WEST

By A. L. CRAMPTON CHALK

Sri Aurobindo Circle Annual 1949

"The discords of the worlds are God's discords and it is only by accepting and proceeding through them that we can arrive at the greater concords of his supreme harmony, the summits and thrilled vastnesses of his transcendent and his cosmic Ananda."¹ This is the hardest thing in the world for the Western mind to understand—indeed, the Western mind will not generally make the attempt to understand it, but rejects it out of hand.

Nowadays the Westerner who has a social conscience, or consciousness, is either saturated with formal Christian ethics or is an ethical-materialist. In either case whatever offends his own notions, or detracts from his mental or material comfort or idealism, he labels as "evil", and promptly denies it any validity whatever in the scheme of things.

Lop-Sided Conception of Life

Not only the Westerner but every normal human being agrees that some things are better than others, in the scale of relative values in this existence of ours. War must give way to peace, disease to health, poverty to plenty, and pain to serenity. Indian philosophy says that the human task is to supplant tamasic and rajasic action by sattwic conditions. The whole thinking world would agree that this is the worthy object of human endeavour; it is only on the question of how to set about it that opinions differ. In particular, the West seems to start off on its crusade for peace, health, wealth, and serenity, under such a misapprehension of the hard facts of life as to render its efforts towards achieving these good things almost completely futile.

Whether the approach in the West be from the traditional Christian, or from the increasingly popular ethical-material standpoint, the attitude towards the unwanted part of life is that it is evil, a mistake and unnecessary, not of God but of the Devil, and that somehow or other it must be pushed violently out of existence. The fact that it belongs to God, just as surely as the part of life of which we happen to approve belongs to God, hardly occurs to us for a moment. The day and sunshine and happiness we can see is Divine, so we think; but the night and darkness and suffering we instinctively put to the account of powers outside the Divine.

This wrong-headed and lop-sided conception of life must prevent any clear light of faith from the Divine getting through to the plane of action. In our anxiety to range ourselves on the side of God—or Marx—or Peace—or the Party—against the Devil of this, that, or the other evil or heresy, we Westerners shut out the possibility of comprehending the centre on which this universe swings, its very *raison d'être*. Thus, in our fight against war we make war, in our struggle to bring social independence we enslave ourselves, and in our passion for human equality we oppress each other. Bewildered and dismayed we stand among the rubble of one war fearing the next which seems about to burst upon us, and wondering what on earth has gone wrong with our world.

1. "Essays on the Gita" (Second Series) by Sri Aurobindo, p. 161.

External Symptoms and Inner Causes

Our myopia has the effect of persuading us to attack the external symptoms of our ills and diseases, while ignoring the inner causes from which they spring. The inveterate externalisation of all our conceptions and impressions makes it impossible for us to get below the shallowest surface of circumstances for meaning. Among ourselves we cannot agree on any single principle that shall be universally accepted as our common guiding principle, on which we could all fix our eyes as on a star to lead us to a new Bethlehem of our desires. It is true that we agree superficially at least—that we all want material security, for example. But this does not get us very far because, lacking a practical conception of what security is actually possible, we differ tragically about the means to be used to get it. One man wants to achieve it by immolating himself and all other men blindly to the State, another wants it through peace at any price of human responsibility, another by enriching himself with goods and power, even at the expense of unwilling neighbours. The trouble with all these conflicting useless endeavours is that they do not go below the surface of the matter, much less get to the bottom of it, and for one fundamental reason. They are all based on the misconception that the particular "evil" they attack can be obliterated and pushed out of the universe, just as one could shove something off the edge of a cliff to destruction. This strange and blind error of the materialist, who fights against disharmony by sheer resistance to its symptoms, is all the more tragic because he advances it as the one "practical" method of relieving humanity.

The Immanence of the Divine

If the sincere battler for the right—whatever it is for the moment—could see that "the discords of the world are God's discords and that it is only by accepting and proceeding through them" that he could come to the inner realisation of what he is after, not only his methods but his whole life would be changed. By refusing to shut himself off from any aspect of life he would come to understand the mainsprings of his existence. He would begin to see the Divine everywhere. This is, perhaps, the very heart of the trouble which so especially troubles the Western part of our world—there is no appreciation of the immanence of the Divine.

That this whole universe and all it contains is God, and the splendour of God, never occurs to us in the West. It does not even occur to the best of us; our priests, artists, poets, and philosophers, with the rarest exceptions, preach, paint, and write about things, and circumstances, and conditions, never about the glory that exists behind all

things, all circumstances, and all conditions. The very words of the founder of our preponderating religious systems have been put aside, or forgotten, or never believed—"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."² The modernised version of these startling and invigorating words might well be rendered—"But seek ye first for what ye shall eat, drink, wear, and enjoy; and the Kingdom of God and his righteousness shall be added unto you."

If only we Westerners could realise that it is God in his Kingdom that is always "destroying in order that he may new-create, who is Time, who is Death, who is Rudra, the Dancer of the calm and awful dance, who is Kali with her garland of skulls trampling naked in battle and flecked with the blood of the slaughtered Titans, who is the cyclone and the fire and the earthquake, and pain and famine and revolution and ruin and the swallowing ocean."³

To Wisdom Through Stark and Awful Truth

Such imagery and such a notion, to a Western mind must seem to come near to sheer blasphemy. We want, through the weakness of our spirits, to think only fair and comforting things in association with God—our God, of course. We cannot yet stand the stark and awful truth, the harsh and fierce aspects of our common humanity and existence. The feeble attempt to find a solution to the problems of life by rearranging the pieces and external conditions that make it up is as useless now as ever. There is no real help in political, social, or personal revolution, but every virtue in spiritual struggle. This is a hard thing for us to understand, and the darkness seems to have fastened down upon us even more solidly than ever during these post-war years. To seek God, to peer and struggle through the surrounding darkness of misery and our own sin, or through the blinding glitter of pomp

2. Matt. 6, 33-34.

3. "Essays on the Gita" (Second Series), p. 159.

and circumstance, so as to detect and recognise the glory shining calmly and eternally behind it all—this is the way to wisdom. One glimpse of the eternal qualities behind the screen of fate will give more knowledge and power over life's problems than any amount of revolution and political action can ever do.

What, then, should be the enlightened attitude of mind, of West as well as of East, towards the catastrophic complexity of conditions that is about us today?⁴ Abstinence from action is as useless as action which ignores the fundamental fact that these conditions are of God. Seeds have been sown, harvests must be gathered. To endure, to pray, to do one's duty in that state of life to which one has been called, to try to see God; to seek first the Kingdom of God,—first, last and all the time; to strive incessantly to see the Glory of God everywhere, behind everything, at all times under all conditions; this is the noble Aryan path.

To go forward in this state of mind is to meet one's duty, to go hand in hand with one's destiny. The work for each one will be put before him; if it is God who is sought, the task and the unfoldment will appear quite naturally as his path. If we are sure it is God's will that we seek to do, and not that of our own ego, there will be no doubt as to what is required of us. Then each of us shall "accept in its deeper sense, which the superficial mind does not see, the greatness of the struggle, the glory of the victory—if need be, the glory of the victory which comes masked as defeat—and lead man too in the enjoyment of his opulent kingdom."

"Not appalled by the face of the Destroyer, he will see within it the eternal Spirit imperishable in all these perishing bodies and behind it the face of the Charioteer, the Leader of man, the Friend of all creatures."⁵

4. The answer to this pressing and tormenting problem is set out in practical terms on pages 165 to 167 of "Essays on the Gita" (Second Series). The attention of all readers who are involved in this problem is earnestly directed to this passage.

5. "Essays on the Gita" (Second Series), p. 167.

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By "LIBRA"

The celebration of Rabindranath Tagore's day of birth—May 8—brought forth many illuminating comments on his life and work. We yield to none in our admiration of his genius in the realm of idealistic thought and literary expression. But we should be unfaithful to the cause of truth if we left unchallenged the remark: "Indian painting, in order to be living and creative, should follow two directions, each wonderful in its own extreme way—the 'village-art' pictures of Jamini Roy and the 'free-fancy' pictures done by Rabindranath Tagore in his old age."

It is our conviction that this remark sums up exactly the two main dangers Indian painting must avoid. Formerly, there was the danger of a facile imitation of Nature: it was due to the influence of Victorian art. That influence is no more, and even in England, the most backward of European countries in painting, strict subservience to the outward eye is a thing of the past. But the break-away from such subservience is not without its own perils, and we must not let the present western tendency blind us to them. The remark we have quoted seems really an unthinking echo of western opinion. For, it is Continental critics who first "boosted" Tagore's pictures, and the cult of Jamini Roy got a tremendous fillip from the declaration by Beverley Nichols that this artist is the most vital today in India.

The Deficiencies of Jamini Roy

When after a decline of several centuries India knew a renaissance of her own authentic values, the art of the brush flowered most characteristically in the school founded by Abanindranath Tagore. There was here a profoundly imaginative commingling of strength and delicacy. No doubt, the Neo-Bengal school of Abanindranath did not cover all features that might be desired; perhaps its strength was often subdued to a delicacy too fastidious and some closer contact with the common man's vitality and posture would be salutary; also, the claims of external Nature might sometimes be conceded more generously and more accurately. Jamini Roy is one direction in which the break with the Neo-Bengal school has led. But, as a sensitive critic, Mr. S. Chatterji, has observed, this direction has not culminated in any artistic triumph comparable to the masterpieces of Abanindranath or his disciples.

Mr. Chatterji explains that the type of village-art which Jamini Roy brings to the fore based itself on a repetitive motif and its methods were unsophisticated and formal. The colour-scheme was limited and the flat washes showed barely any shading. The figures stood out in heavy dark outlines. The subjects

were mainly mythological since the old villages lived in religious traditions. Jamini Roy's use of this village-art exceeds the old themes: he embodies also the modern temperament and atmosphere. And he has introduced a few improvements in technique: a linear quality that is more forceful and a colour-scheme that is more varied. Yet his performance as a whole fails to be inspiring to the inner self. The emphatic outlines are frequently stiff and impervious to character-nuances. The colouring tends to be stereotyped. There is, unquestionably, a play of quaint and fantastic attitudes which intrigue the eye and create a sense of novelty. Still, they lose much of their appeal because he goes on repeating them until they are degraded into a monotonous and mechanical vitality. What saves his pictures from being failures is, as Mr. Chatterji marks, his invariable flair for balanced composition.

But can original and well-poised patterning suffice? Is there any significant experience behind it, any revelatory vision, any profound stir of emotion? Are there intensity of sight and intensity of rhythm breaking across the striking surface of Jamini Roy? Does any elemental power of magic or mystery surge from his depths, any magnificent secret from beyond the exterior of life shine through? The intellect, the heart, the instinctive nature, the unknown background which we vaguely call the soul, remain unthrilled when we look at the quaint forms and designs which he executes in the main with a ponderous and obvious touch. Here and there his human figures lend some charm and voice to his paintings—but this appeal is not lifted, except on rare occasions like his "Santhal Girl," to the pitch of creative art.

The Confusions of Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore's deviation from the Neo-Bengal painters is towards a variant of the Surrealist school. Jumbled ideas and obscure impulses, amorphous stirrings in the grey cells and in the entrails, are the preoccupation of Surrealism: physical proportion and verisimilitude

mean nothing to its practitioners, rules of regularity, symmetry, harmony are shackles for them, their hands fight free of such superimpositions on the natural and primitive urge in them to represent their thoughts, feelings, whims, fancies, dreams, nightmares "unrationalised", as they put it, just as these froth up from the recesses within. Crudely simple or grotesquely complicated, glaringly monstrous or confusedly gorgeous, their "unrationalised" outburst tramples on what they deem the dull and tame rigidities of the old art.

Now, these rebels do have something in common with the essential Indian mind in their emphasis on the inner reality which is different from the outer to which we are accustomed. A good part of ancient and medieval Indian art violates perspective and anatomy and the "values" of the physical eye in general. But it does not dabble in the chaotic subconscious or the hallucinations of aberrant nerves. There are a few geniuses among the Surrealists, and their distortion and excess are rescued from sterility by the powerful piercing focus to which they somehow bring their gaze, making it disclose strange traits of character and strange psychological tensions in a sort of perverse perfection. However, the bulk of the results is disappointing, and for the Indian mind the mood of Surrealism cannot be natural. The Indian mind bases its defiance of ordinary canons on the Superconscious and not the subconscious, the illumined spiritual being and not the ambiguous field of the psycho-pathologist and the psycho-analyst.

We may be affected by "modernist" penchants, but we must remember that what in this case we are affected by is penchants of "modernist" Europe. India, going "modernist," need not pursue the same mood as Europe. Some affinity there can be, and yet some dispositional difference too. The pictures the aged Rabindranath produced are not in consonance with the "modernist" turn we may expect from India. It is an oppressed, contorted, incoherent inspiration, achieving a simulacrum of harmony in isolated spots by sheer accident, the major portion of the work remaining crude in conception, gross in technique and deficient altogether in the genius-pitch the Surrealists here and there attain in France. It is a deformation of art. It has no saving height of power or passion lifting momentarily the deformation to a kind of ideal of its own wryness

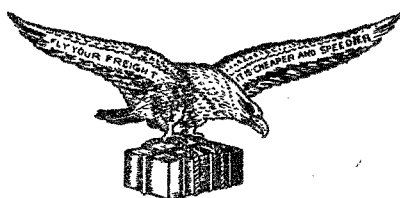
and fever and crudity. Merely to make an odd and bizarre impact on us cannot provide us with the artistic experience, nor can a sudden raising of the subconscious to a chaotic arch-image, as it were, of itself ever lead the human mind—least of all, the mind of Indian humanity—to its artistic fulfilment.

Artistic Fulfilment for India

Every country has a harmonious depth from which its best art is produced. But there are depths and depths: those of the western world are such that Surrealism can on occasion get linked up with them. That is why the West could sometimes get even valuable effects from it. Our deep trend is to create harmony not only with the insight of a Life Force greater than the earthly, but also with an intuitive eye bright with visitations of the Divine. All the less, therefore, the psycho-pathologist's and psycho-analyst's scrutiny can lead us to genuine greatness. It is the eye of divine vision that we must set functioning. That eye need not spurn innovations of technique and new "slants" of observation—not even those originating in the West. Neither is it obliged to dwell exclusively on what is behind the veil. It can range over the outer world, it can take up novel modes of expression; but it must not lose contact with the veiled wonders and their secret spontaneities and concordant wholes. Truly to avoid being echoes of the past, let us become more intuitive than the ancients and the medievals and not less. Truly to be "modernist" let us turn towards regions the ancients and the medievals scarcely touched, yet not with an intuitiveness inferior to theirs. The fastidious delicacy of Abanindranath Tagore is not the only mood legitimate to Indian art: his greatest disciple, Nandalal Bose, has achieved fine departures from it, and several departures of other kinds, even in the direction of Naturalism, are also possible. All the same, there must be a certain fastidiousness and there must be a certain delicacy of one type or another in order to keep the measure and the subtlety without which neither strength nor novelty can become art. And if we are to rise to the top of our potentialities we must practise the measure and the subtlety which are art's indispensable conditions with a living influence upon us of the basic genius of India—the intuitive soul that feels itself to be a spark of the Eternal and the Infinite.

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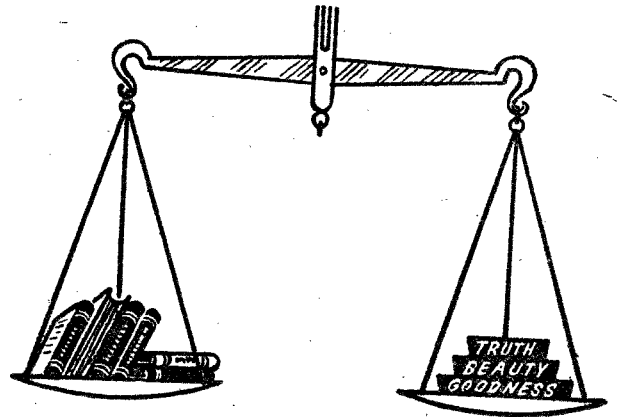
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BOOKS in the BALANCE

IS R. C. HUTCHINSON A GREAT NOVELIST ?

TWO EMINENT CRITICS SIT IN JUDGMENT



RICHARD CHURCH

writes in *John o' London's Weekly*:

It is an odd coincidence that two novels demanding major consideration should appear within a few weeks of each other, and both be marred by a factual improbability such as common sense would have avoided; an improbability which breaks in upon the reader's credulity, but is in the end accepted just as one accepts Hardy's devices of coincidence in the creaking plots of his superb tales.

I refer to Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* and the new novel, *Elephant and Castle*, by R. C. Hutchinson (Cassell, 15s.). Both are books which have matured in the minds of their authors over a period of ten years, and it may be that this slow gestation has led both into such a firm illusion, a world of their own, that it has become impossible for them to see the incidence of their fictions as a disinterested reader would. Introspection, and too grave a deliberation in the weaving of emotional patterns, has this danger: that it makes the improbable probable, and the wilful pull of the author's imagination become an authority unto itself. Dostoevsky suffered from that wilfulness, and his genius magnified it into an egocentric mania, from which the sweet humour of everyday good sense was eroded like soil from a rocky mountainside.

The improbability in Miss Bowen's book was that her secret service agent should have been in love with the heroine and want to possess her. I fear that the false relevance may affect the final estimate of that beautiful novel, just as in *Jude the Obscure* the hanging of the little brothers and sisters in their bedroom mars what would otherwise be one of the greatest novels in European literature.

And now Mr. Hutchinson has taken a similar risk in *Elephant and Castle*. Let me discuss this first, so that I can get on to the remarkable qualities with which this major work is so generously stocked. The story is about a girl who belongs to a rich, highly civilized family of Quaker origin, whose tradition is public service. She is slumming one day down in Lambeth, with an aunt, when she witnesses an incident that changes the whole course of her life. Outside a small shop there is a quarrel with a hire-purchase man (a familiar cause of trouble in such quarters), in the course of which a boy, mistakenly thinking a policeman is ill-treating his mother, knocks him out and seriously injures him. The boy gets three months in jail. He is a dumb creature, half Italian. He reminds me of the hero of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, one of those golden-hearted simpletons who think with their huge, clumsy but sensitive hands rather than with their brains. His manner of speech is spasmodic; he fumbles for words, and is incapable of formulating an abstract idea or phrase. His father is a theatre-hand, formerly a sailor, and the ménage is one of abundant

squalor behind the shop, with the vast Italian mother presiding over it like a prolific hen.

Can one really believe, then, that into this slum world the girl from a family of wealth and refinement should come as a daughter-in-law, electing to live on the same terms as the boy whom at first she sets out to vindicate, and finally to marry? I found it sickening, especially as I contemplated the life to which she condemned herself, amongst these primitive people, excellent in their own way and their own world, but torturing to a person who by birth, tradition and upbringing is possessed of a totally different range of consciousness and values. I just could not believe that this particular girl, with her innate pride (a quality which later was, under the torment of outrageous circumstances, to grow and become a disease) could bring herself to such a wilful, masochistic humiliation.

But the whole argument of the book is that she could, and did; and Mr. Hutchinson expends all his powerful gifts as a novelist on proving it and in convincing the reader. I remain not quite convinced. But I am deeply respectful towards the effort, and the achievement, and for the following reasons.

To begin with, the tale is on a vast scale, and infinitely complicated, with dozens of characters all of whom are living individuals whose lives we enter as we enter those of our own folk in the amazing world of flesh and blood around us. There is constant surprise in the book, the surprise of scene, event, atmosphere. Mr. Hutchinson is creative, just as Dickens was creative; Dickens, Balzac, Tolstoy; with a fecundity that pours out a solid universe furnished with the interplay of time and space and the still sad music of humanity which is the overtone from that interplay. I find it difficult to give an idea of the richness of this author's mind in this matter of sheer creative ability. The book teems with life. Not only that, but he stands outside it and informs it with understanding scholarship and a painstaking humility of craft. The labour that must have gone to such work makes me feel almost oppressed. No detail of Cockney dialect is missed, or slickly conveyed. The language of the Italian mother is a masterpiece of phonetic presentation, and the humour of it is a constant delight throughout the book.

Here is a world portrayed by an imagination that smoulders, damped down by thought, then suddenly flickering out with intense heat that shapes scenes, events, persons, through the medium of phrases that have the ring of gold.

If I attempt to tell the story of the book, I shall interfere with the reader's full enjoyment. There are two violent deaths, in which the innocent husband is involved, partly by circumstantial evidence and partly because of the bias of the police dossier. Round this tale of the miscarriage of justice, a slow-moving accumulation of the cruelty

of life which continues over a period of some twenty years during the ill-sorted marriage, there accumulates a wealth of analysis of human motives and actions, a wealth whose weight gradually comes upon the reader with a sense of tragic destiny, shot through with spiritual anguish, such as one feels while reading *The Brothers Karamazov*. This never lets up, this close pressure upon the evidence of circumstance and character, and sometimes one feels that the author is too unremitting in his conscientious obedience to his own moral impulse. For in effect the book is a profound moral essay, based upon a conviction that the deadliest of all sins is that of spiritual pride and self-righteousness (what horrors it leads to in this tragic tale!), and that the obverse of this human weakness is that "perhaps the schooling of a human creature is bound to include a stretch of solitude, where daylight fails and the country no longer corresponds with the explorers' charts."

It is such solitude, in all the principal characters of the tale, that Mr. Hutchinson sets out to explore and to chart with the pencil of sympathy and love. The end of the book, after the final disaster, is a hymn to love; a love which by then has been submitted to every form of test, amongst the stench and horror of human circumstance at its lowest. Disease, poverty, violence, one by one these reagents are brought to bear and discarded, until finally the sweetness and light of selfless and innocent love are shown at work, both in the hearts of the young and of the experienced. This is a great book, and I have given no inkling of its rich texture, its fidelity of detail (even though it does refer to the dining room of The Athenæum, when that august place has only a coffee room!), and the new evidence which it affords of the author's power of pouring the whole of himself into his work.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

writes in *The New Statesman and Nation*:

R. C. Hutchinson is an ambiguous figure on our literary horizon, gigantic, but blurred in outline and nebulous in substance. His admirers have made very high claims for him, and on at least two occasions, so the cover of this new book informs me, Mr. Day Lewis has singled him out for abiding fame. It is prophesied, in fact, that the wraith-like giant will solidify into a monolith, and that the English novel of our time may be represented for posterity by these colossal and far-flung narratives. Since no literary prophesy is safe, none can be safely contradicted. But we have the right to back our own fancies to the limit of our critical reputations, and I would happily lay odds of five hundred to one against the survival of Mr. Hutchinson.

A prerequisite of survival, it can be reasonably and confidently said, is that a writer should have done something which nobody else has or could have done. Above all other qualities it is their uniqueness which delights and heartens us in the great writers of the past. The very name

Dostoevsky instantly evokes for us a whole wide stretch of the human imagination which that one man, and he alone, has succeeded in opening out for us. Creative art is constantly and joyfully proving to us that we live in an expanding universe, and there is, so far as we know, no limit to its expansion. For this reason alone it seems to me to be evident that the later you are born in human history the richer will be your inheritance. Other things being equal (and one of Mr. Hutchinson's rather superfluous intentions is to prove that they are not) it is better to live after Dostoevsky than before him. Can anyone seriously say that Mr. Hutchinson has contributed to our inheritance? My difficulty in writing about *Elephant and Castle* is that I cannot envisage the defence which I feel called upon to refute. Of an earlier novel by this writer it seems that Mr. Julian Huxley has claimed that "it has the quality of true art of achieving a vital reality". The defence is vague enough, but it may provide a floor to trail a coat on.

One thing must certainly be granted: Mr. Hutchinson's theme and intentions are high ones. He is in no sense a lightweight. Approximately, the present book deals with the marriage of a young lady from Kensington and the counties to a ferocious but good-hearted young slum-dweller. The heroine, Armored Cepinier (all the book lies in that name), marries Gian Ardree from mistaken motives of self-sacrifice and with the mistaken intention of conducting him to more ambitious spheres. The result of her original mistake is a gradual poisoning of her own character and of her relations with everyone about her. She becomes a sour and unscrupulous egotist, much preoccupied with unrewarding activities against the Christian religion. Her husband, by contrast, turns gradually into a kind of Jo Gargery. Both achieve salvation in the moment before death. There are, of course, many sub-plots and hundreds of more or less subsidiary characters (for example, Trevon Grist, Elizabeth Kinfowell, Gordon Aquillard, Hilda Nicholidd, Captain Desterin and Everard Liske!). *Elephant and Castle* is seven hundred pages long, and the word "panorama" trembles on my nib. Mr. Hutchinson is a thorough writer, and he leaves nothing out. If there is a marriage, the wedding party must be fully described, with a list of the guests, an "atmosphere" and a great deal of *oratio recta*. If someone is required to traverse the Euston Road then the Euston Road must be evoked for us. These are the terms of Mr. Hutchinson's evocation:

The mist was turning into rain, Euston Road was like the Neva, black and scintillant below the phalanxes of taxis surging towards King's Cross. Where the soaked fly-sheets signalled 'Colonies—Hitler's New Demand' a flotilla of umbrellas tossed like coracles on the swirl of bread-winners draining into the tube.

An equal eloquence is displayed when Armored's portrait is first painted for us:

And here was perfection: the
Continued from page 10

The Owl's Banquet

BY "MINERVA"

King Yaya of the West Coast of Africa was deported to the West Indies, but allowed to take with him only five wives. In the face of such an unreasonable restriction he wrote the following letter to Queen Victoria: "Dear Sister Queen Victoria: You have ordered me to be sent away from my country. Perhaps you are right, but we will not go into that; but you have ordered that I should have only five wives to go with me. I do not think it dignified for a king to have only five wives. I beg you to let me have at least twelve. You would not like to have only five husbands."

According to Admiral Mark Kerr, the Queen was so amused by the letter that the complementary permission was given.

One of the wittiest things said about love—with quite a true touch about emotional extravagance—is that stanza by Collin Ellis:

I put my hand upon my heart
And swore that we should never
part—
I wonder what I would have said
If I had put it on my head.

Perhaps the most amazingly poignant simile for a situation of love occurs in that generally tame poem of Coventry Patmore's early days, *The Angel in the House*. It is a simile of the rejected lover:

He wakes renewed from all his
smart;

His only love, and she is wed!
His fondness comes about his heart
As milk comes when the babe is
dead.

Max Jacob decreed in *Le Cornet à Dés* that for forty days after sexual intercourse writers were incapable of creative activity. Balzac put it more epigrammatically: "Une nuit d'amour, c'est un livre de moins"—One night of love is one book the less.

A curious mixture, very cleverly expressed, of contented bachelorhood and world-weariness is in the epitaph a man composed for himself—a neat little masterpiece of stoic contempt for both love and life:

I lived quite glad
Without a dame.
I wish my dad
Had done the same.

Logan Pearsall Smith has a wise word in general on the true significance of life, a word suggesting the real reason why a mere run of superficialities, however pleasant-seeming, can never satisfy: "The indefatigable pursuit of an unattainable Perfection, even though it consists in nothing more than in the pounding of an old piano, is what alone gives a meaning to our life in this unavailing star."

Books In The Balance

Continued from page 10

ripeness and the innocence, a body moulded faultlessly to wrestle or to float in the air; eyes where the eager light held steady as October sunshine, a warmth, a gentle and unconscious grace in the gestures of head and hands, in the way the lips and tongue moved, forging instantly the smile which the grave voice was to carry.

In fact, the texture of *Elephant and Castle* is quite peculiarly displeasing. Mr. Hutchinson writes with a lush flamboyance which cloy and sickens.

Yet it is not inconceivable that a novelist may fail in detail, only to succeed triumphantly in his total effect. Perhaps the vital reality which Mr. Huxley detected in an earlier novel may break through the enclosing crust of words to provide for us, here too, an ultimate illumination. But I believe not. We can indeed detect the writer's intentions without the least difficulty. He has wished to exhibit to us the calamitous progress of self-righteousness, and at the same time to suggest that the reason why the modern world is to be deplored is that we have abandoned Christianity. The book ends with two members of the younger generation reflecting on the sceptical aridity of their elders and looking forward to a richly believing future. The girl's father is about to be executed for murder, and she decides to spend the night in a church: the young man will remain in the porch, and he expresses himself thus:

I know you'd let me share, if I asked you. Later on, sometime, we'll go back to it. Then I'll share as much as I can. I'll know most of what it was like. The pain. Not

the sacredness. I won't try to share that. You see, I'm small, comparatively. I understand it. But it's all your own. You see what I mean?

One does, indeed, see what he means, just as one sees clearly enough what his creator means at any and every point of his expansive dissertation. But to perceive the intention is pitifully not enough. Young men who talk like this, young women, who make the impression which Armored appears to have made on Mr. Hutchinson, might as well be dumb for all that they can communicate to us. It matters very little whether or not we are in sympathy with Mr. Hutchinson's view of life. What we require from him is that our own apprehension of life should be somehow deepened. Mauriac's form of Christianity is far more extravagant than any that we shall find here, but Mauriac holds our excited attention because his vision is pure and direct. In *Elephant and Castle* the characters, the places and the situations are grossly contrived; any one of them could be dug out from the particular context of this book and rebedded without any loss of "vital reality" in almost any pretentious popular novel of our time. Once again it is a case of life escaping, despite, or perhaps because of, the superficial gusto with which the task has been approached.

Elephant and Castle has all the air of being a "great" novel. There are a lot of pages, a lot of people, a lot of events and a lot of purple. "Vital reality" is not a phrase which I would have chosen, but perhaps it may serve to describe what this novel utterly fails to exhibit.

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COMMUNAL SEPARATISM AND PAKISTAN

CAN THE INTER-DOMINION AGREEMENT STIFLE TRUTH?

BY "SATYAVAN"

The doctrine of communal separatism is a pernicious one and never to be accepted. The establishment of Pakistan is the culmination of this doctrine. Therefore Pakistan's establishment is most pernicious and unworthy of acceptance.

This is a syllogism of the strictest logic and the utmost candour. But who is the author of it and is it in keeping with what the India Government has been advising the press and the people after the recent Inter-Dominion Agreement? Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon: the author is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself. The Head of India's Government has spoken his mind without mincing his words and without caring a rap whether the Inter-Dominion Agreement is flouted or no. It is unbelievable, a fit feature for Ripley's series, but it is perfectly true and all who run may read it in the "Stirring Call" splashed over all the Indian newspapers on May 29. Nehru has not exactly syllogised his thought, yet the point of it is unmistakably there and it is a point which goes straight to the heart of the matter and clean through the appeasement-clause in the Inter-Dominion Agreement. Here are his very words: "India has waged a heroic battle in Kashmir against the pernicious doctrine of communal separatism supported by the Muslim League, which found its culmination in the establishment of Pakistan and wrought havoc on Hindus and Muslims of India."

Pandit Nehru and the Inter-Dominion Agreement

What are we to think of these words? Has our Prime Minister committed a faux pas? The Head of the Government should certainly know what the Inter-Dominion Agreement implies or enforces. And if his words are an index to his view of the Agreement, it is clear that no unconditional acceptance of the country's partition is implied and that the appeasement-clause in the Agreement is a dead letter now.

The Agreement had as its background a desire on India's part to avoid talking of reunion if Pakistan who hated reunion could be just and straightforward in her dealings. India was inclined to think, in spite of all past signs to the contrary, that a change of heart in the Pakistan Government was possible, if not actually imminent. But the ink was scarcely dry on the Agreement when the Premier of the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, Khan Abdul Kayyum Khan, one of the organisers of the tribal invasion of Kashmir, ran amok against India. Most irresponsibly he indulged in utter falsehoods by stating that the Red Shirts in the Hazara District had been "continually passing information to the Indian Union and Sheikh Abdulla to checkmate the efforts of Pakistan to bring Kashmir within Pakistan," that they had also plotted to murder the Frontier Premier with a view to creating confusion behind the Kashmir front" and that the "plotters were being financed by India and were in correspondence with a certain Pandit Sahib." On strong protest by the India Government it was declared that no names had been named and there was no reason for Pandit Nehru to conclude

that he was the Pandit Sahib referred to. But one can put two and two together and when in the same breath the plotters are said to be financed by India and corresponding with a Pandit Sahib it is difficult to avoid seeing an insinuation that the Pandit Sahib is one who is closely connected with India's Government and therefore is none other than her Prime Minister.

Close on the heels of Khan Abdul Kayyum Khan's outrageous antics came the flagrant truce-violations in Kashmir and the refusal to agree to the disbanding of the so-called Azad Forces and an all-round effort to make the proposed plebiscite a farce. The illusion of the possibility of change of heart in Pakistan's Government dissolved and Nehru seems today to see no sense in pretending that Pakistan is friendly or that the communal virus which it keeps on spreading in the name of religion and which is the essence of Pakistan is anything except pernicious. Not only has he forcefully suggested that Pakistan is a monstrosity but he has also on the very next day after this suggestion proclaimed the hostile and untruthful and undemocratic attitude of Pakistan. On May 29 every newspaper in India carried the following report: "Dwelling on the history of the Indo-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir he pointed out that while India had throughout been guided by constitutional, moral and humanitarian considerations Pakistan's case was based on aggression and falsehood as was ultimately confessed by her to the U.N. Commission. Pandit Nehru drew a striking contrast between the position of the States in the two Dominions and underlined that while the will of the people had prevailed everywhere in India autocratic rule continued in the Pakistan States."

When Pakistan has not shown any genuine intention of acting in a fair or friendly manner, the fundamental reason for not talking of reunion which is disagreeable to Pakistan is removed. As far as such talking is concerned, the Inter-Dominion Agreement is a mere scrap of paper. It was high time this was realised all over the land, and the undeniable implication of the Prime Minister's utterance has now left not a shred of doubt.

Betrayal of India's Soul

The appeasement-clause in the Agreement was an act of foolish optimism. What is more, it was a betrayal of the soul of Mother India. We may accept for the nonce the terrible mutilation of her beautiful and sacred body: we let it take place in a most ill-starred moment, thinking that somehow a worse calamity might be avoided by it, and under existing circumstances we cannot undo the horror. But to pledge to ignore the horror, throw a veil over the gaping wounds, give a sweet smile to those who have forced our hands to allow the atrocity—this is unpardonable. The Great Mother whose children we are may find it in

her heart to forgive what we did in an hour of extreme perplexity. Now that the dire day is gone, can she look with forgiveness upon suave condonements of her vivisection? Pakistan is erected upon a crime, our own as well as the Muslim League's—our own in a bewildered desperate mood, the Muslim League's in a mood of calculated cruel profanation. We must not for a single instant forget the crime. It must stand written in letters of fire on our conscience and our memory. Let us never corrupt our soul by shutting our eyes to it or by bringing ourselves to imagine that there is no help now and that a *fait accompli* can change evil into good. As practical politicians we may devote our energies to internal consolidation rather than beat frantically against the barriers preventing us from undoing the wrong. But as idealists of indivisible Mother India we must search and search for the right means to restore the physical unity that has been lost.

Perhaps neither governmental negotiation nor strength of arms is the master means: perhaps a deep contact of a mystical kind with the true spirit of indivisible Mother India will alone create conditions in which the physical unity will be regained. At least Sri Aurobindo who should know most accurately the subtle forces at work behind the world-drama believes that such a contact is indispensable and that if even governmental negotiation or else strength of arms is to be effective there must be at its back a general spiritual awareness of the delegate of the Divine among earth's nations that is the Indian genius, the one and unifying Race-Soul within the vast multitudes of our ancient land. Whatever be the master means, we must keep vigilant for its discovery and there can be no vigilance if we grow complacent about the greatest calamity that has befallen the country.

All Agreements Open To Criticism

The Inter-Dominion Agreement, inasmuch as it showed a relaxing of this vital vigilance, was an unworthy gesture on our part. The unworthiness of the gesture is all the more if there is an attempt, by those in

power, to check the mind of the nation from constitutionally expressing itself upon the issue of partition or any other issue—so long as there is no motive like that of the Communists to serve primarily the interests of a foreign power. "The will of the people," says Nehru, "has prevailed everywhere in India." But there would be a falsification of this statement if the voice of the people in any legitimate respect were stifled. Provided nothing is spoken or written to excite communal feelings, lead to violence within the country or to any infringement of law, and provided no secret orders are taken from Moscow or elsewhere, are not people free to articulate their views on any subject, no matter if the Government does not see eye to eye with them? The Government may have one opinion on what is good for the country; private individuals may have another. Why should the press and the people in a free country kotow to the Government's opinion? If one does not conform to it, one should have the freedom to publish his vision of things. Even if reunion or removal of partition be wrong in official thought, there must be the liberty to utter the idea that it is right. What the Government may say in any Inter-Dominion Agreement must never abrogate this liberty that is fundamental to democracy. All agreements and treaties and resolutions are open to criticism in a country whose Prime Minister claims that it is not under an autocratic rule such as prevails in Pakistan and her States. Least of all should so colossal an error as partition be pampered and the burning realisation of the enormity of it be sought to be erased from the mind. Born of a pernicious doctrine, the dreadful flower and fruit of a dark seed, it must be shown up for what it is—Inter-Dominion Agreement or no—as Nehru with his courageous instinct of truth has done.

If it is not thus shown up, with what face can we fight for the accession of Kashmir to India? Communal separatism on a basis of religion is the evil we are combating in Kashmir, and surely we cannot stop calling it an ultimately unacceptable evil in the case of the establishment of Pakistan herself who in Kashmir is really our chief enemy.

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