MOTHER INDIA

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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

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TO THE REFUGEES OF EAST BENGAL

Every Indian heart aches in sympathy with your sufferings. You who have come over to India after seeing your fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters murdered or mutilated or dishonoured—you who have left your money and your property behind and borne innumerable hardships and humiliations on the bitter way from your age-old homes—you have indeed drained the cup of human sorrow to its dregs. Hell has been your lot and for a long time to come you will not have passed out of the misery into which you have fallen. Even when there is some rehabilitation you will bear terrible marks on your lives, wounds that may seem to have healed but whose ugly scars will lie across all your days. We who have been lucky enough to be on the hither side of the partition that has left this ancient country sick in soul welcome you with open arms and we shall exert every nerve to give you help. In the great struggle for India's freedom your families have fought side by side with us and if we fail to do the utmost we can by way of assistance we shall have betrayed the ideals that have served us as beacons in the past.

But material provision to the best of our ability is not all we should offer you. Bread and water and a roof over the head are indeed life's necessities. They must come to you immediately and various organisations have been started to see that they do come. But your problem is not only that of the famished body. Nor is it fully solved when we find you suitable occupations. Even if we could restore you to a state of prosperity—a task which appears wellnigh impossible for several years—we shall not have solved your problem in entirety. For, you are minds as well as bodies and what has happened to you is not just a physical catastrophe. You are thinking beings and probably your gruesome experience will tinge your whole attitude to life. And though we are straining to help you in things material the unavoidable difficulty of meeting the needs of a million unfortunates must take long to be overcome and will make you despair often and may breed in you a sense of hopelessness.

To the keen anxiety darkening your thoughts, to the feeling of frustration gnawing at your hearts, what words of light shall we bring? The first truth to remember is that there is within man a strength which, if summoned, can bear him victoriously through every calamity. This is the strength of the central self in him which refuses to accept defeat. He may have lost all that is ordinarily prized, but this strength is of something that can dissociate its flame-force from the whole outer being's fallen and ruined condition. Detached, poised, secure in a mighty and lofty pride, aware of life's inviolable quintessence in the sheer act of self-consciousness, this central personality has stood unbroken in many an historical figure and cast its brave colour on all external disadvantages and disasters, robbing them of the power to crush the dignity and the joy that are man's rights as a creature developed beyond the animal's uncontrolled reflex and response to circumstance. One of the extreme instances of it in history was Belisarius, the greatest general during the reign of the Roman emperor Justinian. Both he and his master had the ill-luck to get snared by dancing girls whom they subsequently married. The new empress—mean of birth—grew frantically jealous of his influence and his achievement and conspired his downfall. She had him degraded—all his honours plucked from him and his authority taken away. Later, his wife in whom he had put absolute trust ran away with a dissolute monk. In the end the once famous soldier, in whose celebration an Arch of Triumph had been built in Byzantium, was reduced to beggary. He lost even his sight, and used to be observed standing under his own Arch of Triumph—a friendless pauper living on alms. But neither external humiliation nor poverty nor the blight of blindness made him feel that fate had been cruel to him. His face had ever the look of a leader of men. the general who had won so many victories was yet defiant in his features. An inherent greatness he was aware of, in the midst of all adversities, as being his true individuality, consisting of the realisation so finely phrased by Longfellow:

The unconquerable will
This too can bear—I still
Am Belisarius.

This realisation is not the mere bravado or rigid resistance of egoism. There is no selfish assertiveness in it, no rancour for wrongs done, no desire for aggrandisement at the expense of others. Nor is it pure rebelliousness, the force of the fallen archangel depicted by Milton, the hard hate for whatever opposes. A certain peace is here, commingled with power—the result of an intuition of some unchanging inner reality in the midst of earth's vicissitudes. The intuition is not perfect, for it is still in terms of the human personality, no matter if what is felt is that personality's centre and core. But behind the intuition is the soul of man, an immortal spark of divinity, capable of being one with the freedom and bliss of the Eternal, endowed with the possibility of drawing into the frail outer nature not only the deep happiness of the inmost being but also the help, the inexplicable and almost miraculous intervention, of the Supreme Lord of the universe.

We Indians have made history as seekers of the Divine. Not in material things only but much more and fundamentally in things of the Spirit we have reposed our trust. Even the presiding genius of our nation, the One whom we feel as the Mother-Soul whose children are the many millions inhabiting this great land, even the National Being we have invoked as a delegate or aspect or emanation of the Ultimate Spirit. God is the secret ether in which we have lived down the ages and without our awareness of this pervading light and truth our end would have come long ago as came the death of the old civilisations of Europe and the Middle East. And in the days of the comparative decline that was ours in the near past it was always the sense of Durga the Divine Mother or Krishna the World-preserver that has been our mainstay, our fountain of energy. The entire struggle against British domination was inspired by no ordinary patriotism but by a spiritual vision—the vision of the Eternal and the Infinite to whom the earliest makers of our culture, the Rishis, pledged the people who lived at the foot of the immense Himalayas, with oceans flanking them on right and left. And the ancient pledging could take place precisely because the Rishis were not passing wonders but the natural flowering of a seed found in the whole race, the high crests of a surge sweeping through the Indian consciousness. It is spiritual India that has attained greatness in times gone by and that has fought for freedom against the alien rulers. All the best that has happened to us or been created by us was born of our instinct of the Divine. And that is why this best has been so extraordinary a phenomenon, with a quality unique in the earth's annals. Through that instinct we shall emerge in the world's future as a leader of the nations towards unity and harmony and manifold fulfilment. Also, our miseries and eclipses have been due to unfaithfulness to that instinct or else to a turning of it in the direction of other-worldliness instead of in the direction of God's manifestation here and now. If we are true to our characteristic genius we shall never decline and all seeming declines will only be temporary phases. At present, there is a crisis in our country—not basically economic or political but psychological and it consists in our being divided in mind about what makes Indianness. A shallow scepticism, a preoccupation with superficial factors, a watering down of genuine ethics to weak moralism and sentimental pacifism, a false kind of secularity which forgets that the true secularity for India can lie only in a wide tolerant multi-faceted all-comprehensive plastic and dynamic spirituality—these things have obtained sway over half our mind and the other half that is alive to the Divine's presence is unable to find voice and orientate our interests and occupations towards the light that in Saint and Seer and Yogi is still burning amongst us. Because of failure in many responsible quarters to keep bright the instinct of divinity and to live bravely in its ancient unifying force and to develop the country according to the authentic temper of Indian culture great

Continued overleaf

THE MASTER AND THE FORMS

This is the summary of a lecture delivered by Sri Anilbaran Roy as the chief guest at the sixth general meeting of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Sahitya Parishad.

Friends,

Allow me first to offer my thanks to the organisers of this meeting for having given me the opportunity of having a heart to heart talk with you. My talk will be mostly personal, and I crave your indulgence for that. After all, is not that the object of a Sahitya Parishad? The English word Literature does not convey the sense of the term Sahitya; the former comes from the Latin word Litera meaning a letter and means something that is written; while the word Sahitya signifies a close and intimate personal contact; that only is true Sahitya which helps us to have a deep personal communion with other souls. The ordinary mental and vital life is not very conducive to this, it often leads to mutual ignorance and misunderstanding which is the root cause of all conflict and disharmony in society. Sahitya lifts us for a time to a higher level where we can have, at the highest, soul contact with others and that is a source of bliss which constitutes the true *rasa* of Sahitya. Indeed the body, the life and even the mind do not constitute the real man, they are the instruments of the soul which is the real man. Very often we judge others by these instruments, these forms, and that is why we misunderstood them. To really know others we must be able to have a direct contact with the souls of others, and we should judge the outer forms in the light of the knowledge of the soul. This is an illustration of the profound truth of the message of the Mother which forms the subject matter of our talk today.

As I said, I shall give my own interpretation of that message from my intimate personal experience. Before the year 1921, Sri Aurobindo was to me, as to most other people, a closed and sealed book. We admired him only as a great political leader and as he had then retired from active political life we regarded him as altogether lost to the country; he might be seeking his own liberation by yogic practice, but what relation could that have to our practical problems in life? And my own life was very limited and closed; I was deeply attached to my family and also to my work as a Professor of Philosophy. That, I can tell you, is not a very favourable condition, for any spiritual opening. And in fact, though some writings of Sri Aurobindo published in the *Arya* might have fallen into my hands, I could not understand even a word of them, though I was an experienced professor of Philosophy. Then by Divine Grace a great change came in my life. During the Non-co-operation movement of 1921, I felt an inner call from the Divine Mother commanding me to offer myself as a sacrifice for the sake of the country. That was such an imperative call that no worldly consideration could stand in its way. Family, prospects of personal advancement in educational service and a very honourable and comfortable life—all were thrown away and I took the plunge. That act of genuine sacrifice opened the gates of my soul and at that moment somehow a copy of Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* came to my hand. From a very young age I had been fond of the Gita; I could understand very little of it, but I felt that it contained great treasures and I hunted all sorts of commentaries to find the key. Nothing satisfied my soul. But Sri Aurobindo's book came as a real revelation. The first few chapters convinced me that only Sri Krishna himself could write like this; that was the judgment of my soul and not of my mind, and nothing could shake that conviction.

I cannot enter here into the whole history of my personal conversion. The life of every man, I suppose, is an epic in itself but I leave that for the present. I wonder how the organisers of this meeting chose this particular house which has hallowed associations for me. It was here that I was received as a guest of Sri Aurobindo. You can imagine my exhilarated condition; I knew in my inmost heart that Sri Aurobindo was the Divine. I would soon stand face to face before him, he had graciously accepted me as a guest. A guest of the Divine! For a few minutes I was allowed to rest in the verandah downstairs. What did I see then? A young lady coming out of the bathroom and going upstairs where, I was told, a room had been allotted to me. That sight was a real shock.

A young women in a place where I had come for spiritual sadhana. I had been brought up in the spiritual tradition of Sri Ramkrishna, who had categorically said that if you wanted the spiritual life you must avoid the company of women, not come near them, and if you could not avoid it, should wrap yourself with a thick cloth so that the air breathed by a woman might not touch your body and you should fix your eyes always on the feet of women and never on their faces. Already I had violated that injunction by instinctively looking at the face of that girl. What a test! But did that shake my confidence in Sri Aurobindo? Not in the least. I argued that as Sri Aurobindo had made or allowed this arrangement, this must be favourable for attaining the divine life. I told you that the sight of the girl was a shock to me. I can confess today that the shock was not unpleasant, but extremely pleasant.

Another great shock was in store for me when I saw that a Pariah girl cooked and served the food* that I had to take. You know what a Pariah is. The great Shankaracharya called these people moving cremation grounds: I had to accept my food from the hands of a *chalamana smasana*. I did it cheerfully though it went against the very grain of my being. When Sri Aurobindo allowed this, it must be accepted as a condition favourable for sadhana.

You would be interested to know about my first interview with Sri Aurobindo. He was waiting for me in the verandah upstairs of the Library House, that is the "Prosperity" verandah now. I slowly went with an expectant throbbing heart. What did I see? Many people see a halo, a heavenly light surrounding Sri Aurobindo. I had no such opening. I had a too active mind to have any such experience. I saw in Sri Aurobindo nothing but a man, a man no doubt of impressive appearance, but only such as I would expect of an "acharya" like Brajendranath Seal or Ramananda Chatterji or poet Rabindranath—but still a man and nothing more, there was nothing supernatural or supramental about him. But that did not in the least shake my faith in the full divinity of Sri Aurobindo I argued or rather my soul explained that if the Divine were to appear on the earth, it is in such a body that he would appear. I judged the form by the Master and not the Master by the form. Thus within one hour of my arrival at Pondicherry I was repeatedly tested, and through the grace of Sri Aurobindo I was found not unfit for being his disciple.

The Mother once put a question to me and asked me to reply at once without any thought. I am going to put that very question to you. See what answer immediately comes to your mind. Here is the question:

"What do you know of the ways of the gods?"

I immediately answered "Nothing". The Mother was pleased with the answer. Here at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram we are being prepared for the taste of immortality and the joy of the god-life: the forms and activities here cannot be judged by any human standard however high. As we have accepted Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as manifestations of the Divine, everything here is to be enthusiastically accepted as a means of leading us to the divine life, without allowing our ignorant human mind to raise any question about it. Then only we shall prove ourselves to be true disciples. And what is this divine life? In the words of the Mother, it will "translate physically the great love that is at the origin of the worlds." We can realise that, only when we cease to live merely in the body, life or mind and learn to live in the soul for which this Sahitya Parishad is helping us in its own way. All human relations will be raised to the divine level. "But still the essential relations will be that of love from which all things flow, love passionate, complete, seeking a hundred ways of fulfilment, every means of mutual possession, a million facets of the joy of union."

* The cooking and serving since the inception of the Ashram is done by Sadhaks and Sadhikas themselves—there being no distinction, however, of caste or colour.

TO THE REFUGEES OF EAST BENGAL

—*Continued from page 1.*

misfortunes have visited thousands and thousands of the country's inhabitants. These misfortunes cannot in their totality be removed with ease. Therefore it would be misguiding to hold out vast hopes to suffering men in their masses. But the way open to us is that as many individuals as possible should awaken to the Sovereign Spirit that has been our lodestar and lover through the milleniums.

Every cry rising to heaven from the deep heart is one blow the more struck at the darkness in which are plunged the ten lakhs of you, refugees of East Bengal, who have crossed over into India. Each of you, look within, quest the calm centre of your troubled personality, face with it the hardships surrounding you, pierce through it to the genuine inmost soul that effortlessly breathes God as the body breathes air, dwell in its spontaneous aspiration and call down the help that is ever waiting and shall never fail. Nothing spectacular may take place immediately, even the signs of the help may not show for a while, but behind the scenes and soon enough in the very foreground of your lives the radiant presence will be working. All the more puissantly will it work since not only from invisible heights where the perfect Transcendent Spirit dwells or from the amplitudes that are the home of the Cosmic Consciousness the response will come, but also from individual embodiments of both these splendours, living masters of Yoga toiling for the world's good, self-dedicated dynamos of the Divine's electricity of ecstasy and omnipotence. In our midst are mighty souls that have grown one with the eternal mysteries, the supernatural mights of which our scriptures have spoken. Through them as through shining doorways the Infinite moves out to the world, a constant influence, a persistent sweetness and vigour that is not dependent on office or authority but freely flows forth to all the corners of the earth and is most intense in the country where those doorways stand carved. Take the names of these great ones who are here to father and mother a new humanity. Open yourselves to them, call to them for succour; let the Divine, whose manifestations they are, fold you in the unseen embrace which is more delightful and more life-giving than any ministration of mere man. Nothing else than the Supreme whom the India of history has sought and served and who has never forsaken His child can bring the healing balsam to your wounds of mind as well as body. O ill-starred refugees, He alone is your true refuge. No idle words do we offer you, but the verity of verities. And surely you that are sons and daughters of Bengal must know that only this message is your saviour and the *mantra* of India's greatness and unity, for was it not Bengal's flesh and blood that gave birth to Chaitanya, to Ramkrishna, to Vivekananda, to Sri Aurobindo?

SOMERSET MAUGHAM IN THE MAKING

THE GROWTH OF HIS MIND AND MATERIAL

By NATHANIEL PEARSON

After a long career of literary production (nearly 60 years), Somerset Maugham presents us at last with his own professional "Notebook",* which consists of selections taken from the many notebooks he has kept throughout an active writing life. Perhaps here for the first time we get a real glimpse of the man behind the pen. For although Maugham has written so many books he has always been careful to keep his own personality well in the background, and not let his personal feelings and leanings become apparent in his creative work. Even better than an autobiography—which after all is a deliberate effort to present oneself to the public—these notebook jottings represent the spontaneous impressions and the progressive ideas of a modern writer's development.

The first entry appears under the date 1892 and the last one was written in 1944—at the time of his 70th birthday. In between are all the assorted impressions of a full and varied life, and of a writer who has deliberately gone out of his way to collect the rare and the colourful things of life. Maugham had travelled widely, and there are many interesting notes of the scenes, types and characters he had encountered throughout his travels. These colourful sketches, particularly of the South Sea Islands and Malaya, remind one of an artist's sketchbook where merely a few significant strokes are sufficient to give the outline for some future work. In fact many of these brief jottings convey the living atmosphere of the places better than his stories do; for the interplay of imagination always tends to blur the reality. In the notes we have the fresh spontaneous picture, clear and succinct,—a model for some larger work. Of course, Maugham has always been primarily the story writer, and his main aim was to use these pieces as the background or framework for his imaginative writings. But he is a writer who has never claimed any literary pretensions either of style or of technique. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that he has not as yet been seriously considered in the line of the English literary tradition. He has been read and enjoyed by contemporary critics but not appreciated as a literary figure. His language is simple and direct, almost conversational, and flows naturally with none of the pedantic airs of one seeking literary honours. But he has the power of portraying with the minimum of description the vibrant atmosphere of a place, or the typical characteristics of a person, or the essential gist of an incident.

View of the Individual, Society and Nature

In the Preface Maugham compares his "Notebook" with the published "Journal" of the French writer Jules Renard. Both works in fact represent a writer's private impressions; but whereas the Frenchman's "Journal" was more of the autobiography recording the minute occurrences and incidents of the author's day to day life, Maugham's "Notebook" comprises the preparatory material for his published works. Through its pages we get an inside view of an author's workshop, a peep behind the scenes where the writer carefully collects and prepares his material. Here we have the "blueprint" of a character, the thumbnail sketch of a story, the outline of an "atmosphere", or the significant detail in some person's life. In this way we get a good insight not only into the method and approach of the writer before he embarks on his novel, play or short story, but also into his own personal attitude. First of all we discover Maugham's view of the individual: a person who is not merely an entity in himself, a microcosm, but rather to be taken as a unit of some collective social group. A character is doubtless a unique personality, but over and above this he is a "type" attached to some class or sphere of society. Against the background of his destined or chosen orbit, whether this be the heart of the metropolis or some remote colonial outpost, the individual is like a cell in a large organic body. Thus contained by society the individual has either to submerge his individuality in that sprawling mass, or else assert himself,—in which case he develops a strength of character and personality of his own. But even then society sooner or later suceeds in dominating over the individual, either by smashing his built-up personality—if he goes too far in asserting himself,—or by absorbing him as a useful member. In *The Razor's Edge*, for example, we find that Larry, after courageously breaking through the social resistance of his millieu in order to experience for himself the spiritual knowledge of India, finally felt the irresistable pull to plunge back into the stream of his own social life, from which he could not altogether escape.

But societies themselves are not entirely self-contained or independent masses, however greatly developed and advanced from their natural origins they may be. They, in turn, are overarched and even hemmed in by that greater power—the living force of Nature. Ultimately it is Nature that is the all-powerful force of cohesion or of disruption which holds together or disintegrates societies, always testing and probing their power of survival through her persistent onslaught on man. This predominance of Nature is naturally seen most clearly in primitive groups, which living closer to mother earth are bound up in their daily lives with the direct struggle between man and Nature. Maugham shows this condition, particularly in his stories of the South Sea Islanders. But even though these primitive societies are more exposed to the ravages of Nature, the dwellers of the cities, whose built-up defences are artificial even at their best, are by no means immune. Nature is always lurking in the shadows ready to attack man when these outer walls have crumbled, as they must inevitably do. And also within societies themselves we find that the primitive and powerful forces of sex and hunger are never far beneath the surface, even amongst the most sophisticated circles. The change of scene from Samoa to London or Paris or New York does not automatically bring a change in human impulses. Except that in the so-called civilised world the feelings are normally more restrained, the fundamental reactione remain the same whether among the civilised or among the primitives. Maugham, with the equal eye of a scientific observer, and wholly unprejudiced by race, colour or class, sees no essential difference in the relation between man and man, wherever and in whatever grade of society they may live. It is the individual who is always held in check by the society, just as the society is destined to be constrained by Nature and forced more or less to conform to a certain pattern.

It would seem that this naturalistic picture of man and the world gives a fairly complete and satisfying framework for the general outlook of a writer keen on reflecting the diverse vagaries of life. Thus it is not surprising that Maugham cannot bring himself to believe in God,—especially the traditional conception of an all-merciful Father, which finds no place in a scheme where Nature is the all-powerful force and giver of life. Moreover, that traditional idea of God does not satisfactorily explain the overbearing weight of suffering nor of the vast amount of evil prevalent in the world. Maugham frankly admits, however, that the nearest he had come to the idea of Godhead was in the Impersonal Absolute of Hindu thought, which in Its infinite extension embraces impartially the good and the evil. But even with this more satisfying explanation he could not be wholly convinced, nor drawn away from his fundamental attitude towards life. One is left rather disappointed that a writer of Maugham's extensive experience should remain a sceptic to the last, in face of the veritable reality of God that is compassed by the "unitive life" of the great mystics.

Secret of the Writer's Mind and Method

The secret of Maugham's power as a prolific writer of so many varied works,—plays, novels, short stories, numbering nearly 60 published books in all—seems to lie in his complete unattachment to any section of life. Throughout his career he has persistently refused to associate himself fixedly with any of the current movements of the times. Unlike so many of his contemporaries Maugham has been more wary of becoming attached to any literary trend, or of pursuing some political aim or social ideal. He has always been content to be the unattached observer of life and the world around him. In this way his ideas have always remained fluid and unprejudiced by any preconceived notions or fixed principles. But at the same time he has not been afraid to taste and experience for himself all the diverse aspects of human life and activity. "What can you know of life," he writes, "unless you have lived? Something escapes you unless you have been an actor in the tragi-comedy." He has been careful, however, not to let himself be drawn into any one particular way of life. First the plunge into life's diversities, and then the withdrawal in order to work out his theme detached from the activity—this has been the secret of his method. "The artist", he observes, "is a lone wolf. His way is solitary... Like the mystic who seeks to attain God, he is detached in spirit from the world". So it is also with the writer who is conscientious in his endeavours. But at times Maugham complains, especially as he gets older, of a feeling of isolation and of a lonliness to which the unattachment has inevitably led him. Nevertheless, for the continued output of new works the creative writer must always remain fresh with ideas. "The only way to be new", he declares, "is constantly to change onself, and the only way to be original is to increase, enlarge, deepen your own personality". That, in a nutshell, is his recipe for a longevity of literary production.

As with contemporary movements and fashions, so with places, Maugham had never become attached to one particular centre. He had travelled to almost all parts of the globe, and as the scene of his travels shifted so the setting of his books mirrored new worlds. But no one particular place held him,—though perhaps Malaya and the Far East became his most fruitful field. During World War I he was fortunate enough to be sent on a roving commission. It was this which gave him his first opportunity to visit the islands of the South Pacific,—such as Hawaii, Samoa and the Fiji group; and it was his first step to the Far East. Before this, however, he had experienced something of the horrors of modern warfare. As a field medical officer in France during 1914-15 he saw some of the terrible results which the first onslaught of war had brought. His notes of that period tell the tragic tale (now more familiar) of mass slaughter and suffering, as well as of the stoicism and courage of the wounded and dying, which at times seemed to be almost superhuman. Later, however, the inevitable tone of disillusionment with all the heroics of war begins to creep into his notes. He realised (as others did) that there were many quieter, even though less heroic, jobs in war-time, than serving in a front-line field hospital. Soon the scene changes,—and we are out of the active fighting zone. First to New York;—then across America, westward to those then-remote islands of the Pacific (before the airliners had linked them more closely to the world). Here we have a large and delightful selection of notes; for each of the islands he touched at brought its own unique atmosphere, its new types of characters and personalities—European as well as native—and its differing modes of life. In 1917 we have yet another contrast of scene,—from the South Seas to Russia. It was then just prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, and for a space we breathe a little of the atmosphere of the pre-Soviet days. But later the Revolution comes, and we get interesting "close-ups" of some of the chief revolutionaries who took part. The remainder of the notes on Russia deal with the literature of the country

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*"A Writer's Notebook" (1892-1944)" by W. Somerset Maugham. (Heinemann, London. 12sh./6).

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN ASIA

PROMOTION OF NATIONAL MOVEMENTS A MYTH

By W. N. EWER

Diplomatic Correspondent of the "Daily Herald" (Lond.)

Surely one of the strangest political phenomena in the world today is the Soviet Government's claim to be the champion of national independence for the peoples of Asia. The fact is that the Soviet Union is the last remaining imperialist power in Asia. It is only within the borders of the Union that Asian peoples are still held under the rule of a European power. "The Union of Soviet Republics" is, in fact, still a Russian empire of which the Asian provinces are governed as completely and as dictatorially from Moscow as they were under the Czars from Petersburg.

In theory, the constituent Republics are self-governing. In practice, they have hardly a vestige of autonomy. The Union is a highly centralised imperial structure.

Central Control

The "Stalin Constitution" professes to be a federal one. But when one examines it, it is nothing of the kind for it reserves to the Central Government in Moscow close control over all administration and all policy.

Under Article 14, it is the Central Government which decides—in the so-called self-governing Republics—such matters as the allocation of revenue between the Union, Republican and local budgets: the "principles" of all legislation in such matters as education, public health, labour laws, the civil and criminal codes and marriage laws.

It is the Central Government which controls not only the armed forces and state police but all banking and financial institutions, transport and communications, insurance, and the economic planning and administration of all "industrial and agricultural institutions and trading enterprises" which are regarded as of "all-Union importance".

Union Law Prevails

To make sure that there can be no independence in anything, Article 20 of the constitution lays it down that "in the event of a divergence between a law of the Union and a law of a Republic, the Union law prevails".

There is no sphere left in which the Governments of the Republics have any freedom of action at all. They are merely local administrative organs carrying out, in certain limited fields, the decrees and policies decided in Moscow.

Nor is this all. Ministers of a Republic Government can at any moment be dismissed or even "liquidated" by order of the Kremlin and on the grounds of "state security". There have been many such cases during the past 20 years.

"Democratic Centralism"

There are then, firstly, the controls laid down in the constitution, secondly, the over-all control of the security police. Thirdly, there is the party control; for local administrations, in so far as they have any functions at all, are responsible to the local party organisations. The membership of these local organisations is predominantly Russian. In any case they themselves are, in accordance with the principles of "democratic centralism", entirely subordinate to the Party Central Committee in Moscow—which is almost entirely Russian or Georgian.

It is true that under the constitution, the peoples of the Asian Republics elect representatives to the two Houses of the Supreme Soviet. But the Supreme Soviet is a dignified but powerless body which merely approves without discussion or debate the proposals submitted to it. It is as august and as impotent as the Roman Senate in the days of autocratic Emperors.

The real power is exercised by the Central Committee of the Party and by its "Political Bureau". These are unelected bodies (for there has not been a Party Congress for 12 years). They form a close oligarchic corporation, responsible to nobody except themselves, with Stalin at their head.

Maintained by Force

The fact of the Soviet constitution is that it is the oligarchy in Moscow which today rules over the Asian peoples of the Soviet Union as despotically as did the Czars. These peoples have no kind of self-government, no kind of national independence, no voice in the management of their own affairs. Any expression of nationalist sentiment is ruthlessly "burnt out with a hot iron" (the phrase is Stalin's).

"Russia in Asia" is today what it always has been—a centralised empire built by conquest and maintained by force. That is the reality behind the fiction of the "Union of Free Republics". The Soviet Government, self-proclaimed champion of national aspirations anywhere outside the boundaries of the Union, tolerates no nationalist aspirations and permits no national freedoms within those boundaries. Its actions are an acid test of the genuineness of its professions.

Somerset Maugham In The Making

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and the comparison between the character and atmosphere of the novels and the real life of the people. It is interesting that he saw a marked influence exerted by the literature in building up the Russian type and the pattern of its life. Altogether his experiences during that wartime period were the most fruitful of his career. He collected copious notes which were to form the background of most of his stories and plays published during the '20's and early '30's.

Maugham the Novelist

One outstanding feature of Maugham as a novelist, which is revealed more clearly in his notes, is that he has not made the attempt to become the psychological writer. Rather he has been content to record merely the surface and outer aspects of things. Thus his remarks concerning the portrait painter Velasquez, whom he greatly admired, may be taken to be his own general attitude also. "Velasquez," he observes, "takes them (his sitters) at their face value....He may be superficial, but he is superficial on a grand scale." So with Maugham in his delineation of types. But of Maugham we might say that he is superficial on an extensive, almost global scale. He has embraced a wide field even though he has not delved deeply. It is interesting also to note his method of presenting a story, which is to let the plot unfold itself in a simple and natural way. At the same time he does not force his characters to conform to some fanciful imaginative pattern, but keeps as far as possible to the inherent realities of the situation. Modelled on real types, he allows the innate qualities of his characters to express themselves freely and naturally with the minimum of interpretation. He does not seek to analyse a character, nor does he probe unnecessarily into the family background of his life, as with many modern writers. To present a character as part of a social pattern, is the principal aim. A person who has not outgrown his family ties and attachments, and entered society as a free individual, is to be regarded as not yet fully developed. It is only when he has taken the plunge into the life of the world, and entered the fray, that he can have a true rôle to play in the drama of life. By way of contrast we may compare Maugham's charaterisation of types with the meticulous detailed presentation of his contemporary Georges Duhamel. Both writers in fact commenced their carrers with medical training, which gave them perhaps the more tolerant attitude towards human weaknesses and failings, as well as a broader understanding of human relationships. With Duhamel, however, the home and family influences of the individual form the whole basis and pattern of his life; and a character's rôle in the world is subsidiary to these fundamental connections. Hence we have in his writings that intimate detailed unfoldment of the whole family background of his central characters. Maugham, on the other hand, being more of the dramatist, sees only the clash of human lives and the activity outside the shelter of home and hearth as arousing the real interest and revealing the true innate character of a person. In one of his earliest notes, almost at the commencement of his career, we get the clue to his future course: "I have never claimed to create anything out of nothing," he writes, "I have always needed an incident or a character as a starting point, but I have exercised imagination, invention and a sense of the dramatic to make it something of my own." These three qualities,—"imagination, invention and a sense of the dramatic"—became for Maugham the fount of his whole, creative endeavour.

Perhaps greater than any of his other books, the "Notebook" is both instructive and a delight to read,—or even to dip into at any odd moment. It is evenly balanced with broad slices of humour sandwiching fine layers of pathos, and scattered throughout with rich fragments of wisdom. Particularly it should be recommended to the budding novelist or short-story writer—if not as a text-book, at least as an ideal model of how a writer's notebook should be kept. There are many notes of advice to the young aspiring writer; but also there is something of value for all who would enrich their outlook on life. It is the life-long experience of a writer who is not only devoted to his craft, but who has himself learned from the hardest of all schools—the school of life.

THE POWER OF TEACHING

Continued from opposite page

that one child quicker by a thrashing, but have we only that one child to consider when we once resort to a method of violence for the subjection and control of students? Have we not also to consider the reaction of the whole school? Can we, by this means, still maintain the basis of our discipline—that of Mutual Respect? True, we may have subdued that one child, but have we disciplined him according to the tenets of our creed?

Resorting to Corporal Punishment means that we have come to the end of our resources, we know of no other method of controlling the child than by violence. In other words we confess ourselves beaten —conquered by a child! What do you think is the reason for a world-wide decline in the use of Corporal Punishment? Is it not because man's intelligence has progressed that much as to do away with the need of such a primitive method? Teachers today use their intelligence, where yesterday violence was used. Consider, for a moment, the unsophistication of youth having just read the words of Christ when Peter came to Him and said,* "Lord how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven times?—"I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven"; and again† "That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." The lesson being—That ye resist not evil with evil—then will he, our youth, not reason: Is it not evil to thrash even an evil boy?—Is that not countering evil with evil? Certainly, Corporal Punishment is not a thing of this age; it has gone the way of the "Dunce's Hat," the way of ignorance, of unhygienic clothes and insanitary streets. Like the righteous indignation of bucolic bishops, it is a thing of the past—may it ever remain there.

* Matthew 18: 21: 22

†Matthew 5: 38: 39.

THE POWER OF TEACHING

BY NORMAN C. DOWSETT

Discipline

In a modern school, where students are afforded freedom of expression, and no actual punishment is meted out for wrongdoing, it is more than ever necessary that the teacher, and especially the young teacher, should know the fundamental basis upon which discipline is founded. This basis, the root and heart of discipline, is *Mutual Respect.* How do we arrive at this?

Discipline, as a noun, means mental and moral training—the teacher should first adjust himself to the attitude of one who is to train, to instruct, and to serve the student to the best of his or her ability; to bring the students under him to a trained condition, as opposed to an untrained condition. If this is explained to students in simple words, one will find that they readily acknowledge the need to be made fit and trained for a place in the world; a place where they will feel they have as good a chance as anyone in the adventure of life. If the teacher explains this to his students—explains it as unostentatiously as possible, better usually by hint and suggestion, he will find a growing respect, which perhaps before was lacking.

Discipline, as a verb, means to bring under control, or train to obedience. It is discipline as a verb that mostly has such a negative effect on the consciousness of the young. The teacher should always remember that impetuosity is one of the prerequisites of youth. It is in the very essence of their joy of living, the expression of energy in their necessity to grow; and as such should commmand the respect due to its value in the necessary growth of the mental and moral characteristics of the child.

To discipline, to bring under control anyone, child or adult, is to require them to be subservient to one, and nobody wishes to be subservient to a person unless there is a higher ideal for which that person stands; —which invokes admiration, respect, or love, or all three of these. Love, of course, stands highest of the three. If a teacher is loved by his pupils he has something more than respect and admiration—and he naturally commands obedience if respect is added to love. It will also follow with the lower virtue, if respect is added to admiration. Therefore it is suggested that *respect* is, to a teacher, an absolute necessity if he is to do his work sincerely, and command the obedience necessary to conduct a class.

It is not the object of this thesis to enumerate a list of do's and dont's, but perhaps a few comments on the question of respect will not be amiss. To the inexperienced and also the experienced teacher it will be found that respect from students fluctuates, for which it will not always be easy to ascertain the cause. Most teachers will understand what "class feeling" is—it is a psychological atmosphere felt by the class as a whole, and it is as well if a teacher is sensitive to it. Its cause is seldom detected, and it is usually a waste of time to find out. It may be the atmosphere left by a preceding teacher, or some small incident that has created an inexplicable rebellion dimly perceived in the unconscious mental changes of the students; or perhaps merely the dress you are wearing or the way you wear it. There are, of course, more tangible reasons for this class feeling—such as an impending cricket match or football match of some importance, a festival or holiday, or any other forthcoming event to which young minds would naturally be focussed, but which the teacher, full with the pride of a well prepared lesson, might easily forget. However, when the teacher, on entering the class finds this atmosphere, he should set about changing it at once, if it is not to mar the attention and discipline of the whole lesson. It is precisely here that humour can play an important part. A humorous remark at such a time might be invaluable in restoring the right attitude if the teacher has sensed an atmosphere of depression.

It might also be mentioned here that some knowledge of what the preceding lesson consisted of should be borne in mind. For instance, if the last teacher has just given forty minutes' rapid dictation in French, one can imagine the consternation of the class if one announces another period of rapid dictation in English; especially when the class happens to be of children who still find some difficulty in writing with ease.

However well a teacher may know his subject, if he has little idea of maintaining discipline he will find his work difficult, exhausting, and teaching will become a miserable occupation; and to the average headmaster he would be considered of little use.

It was said of one teacher that he could always manage two boys: he could hold one down while he taught the other. Many jokes are told at the expense of weak disciplinarians, not without some basis of fact. One teacher was discovered by his headmaster far from his classroom, in which Pandemonium reigned. "Return to your class at once" said the headmaster, "the boys are making a fearful noise." "It's no use," replied the teacher, "they get worse when I am there".

Without discipline one cannot begin to teach, and unless a young teacher can maintain order he should think twice about making teaching his profession. As B. Dumville, M.A. (author of *Fundametals of Psychology)* says: "Only the teacher who has stood, all alone, before a new class of mischievous boys, who has seen the evil look in their eyes,* who has been intensely conscious that they were all on the alert to trip him up at every possible point in his procedure, can realise what an important thing discipline is."

Nevertheless there are one or two weapons in a teacher's armoury which may prove effective. There are those who speak in derision of a teacher who is able to subdue boys with a "glare"; but let those teachers who possess it be truly thankful to God, for it is the most valuable weapon a teacher can have. It is the expression of a personality that has will and confidence behind it, a power in the teacher, other than physical, demanding respect from the student. Together with this there is another attribute which is most effective in commanding attention—it is the prolonged pause, with perhaps the eyes fixed on one student who is not paying attention. A similar "pause" is often used by actors and actresses on the stage to hold the audience, and to produce a more dramatic effect for their words. It should be used, however, sparingly and with discretion.

* "Cette race est sans pitie," says La Fontaine.

Adult and Child Relationship

The relationship between adult and child is a psychological problem which the sincere teacher has always to make clear in his mind, and then formulate his attitude of approach if he is to be at all successful. Firmness and determination are a necessary equipment to the teacher but "the heavy handed adult" is an abject failure. It is extremely important that a teacher should have a high sense of justice, always trying to adjust it to the thinking mind of the child. It is never a good thing to ridicule a child, especially in the presence of his fellow students. The student will be perfectly right in resenting it, and it will be found that most of the class will be on his side—and when such a situation arises the teacher had better beware, for a class does not so easily forget what to them is an injustice on the part of the teacher.

Truthfulness is another important necessity in a teacher's equipment. Many teachers take their stand on the theory that to admit to the class that "one does not know" is to ruin the confidence the class may have in one. Really this theory comes from a subconscious reflection of a teacher's lack of confidence in himself. It is always dangerous to try to bluff a class; time will come when a teacher will have to eat his words, which naturally is a greater blow to any confidence he may have built up. No, it will always be found that students will have a greater respect for a teacher if they come to realize that he is human like themselves, that there are some things he does not know, that he also can make mistakes. At such times it is by far the best policy to say: "I don't know but we will find out," or gracefully admit a mistake, thanking the student who was bright enough to point it out. This attitude not only enjoins respect but it can also establish a happy sense of fellowship between student and teacher. If a teacher appears to his pupils as too omnipotent he will find his relationship always strained; they would not think of taking him into their confidence or count on him for a friend to whom they could go in times of trouble or perplexity.

However, "I don't know" and "mistakes" will happen very rarely if a lesson is properly prepared beforehand. The teacher who thinks he can mug through a lesson without preparation is fooling himself, for the more carefully a lesson is prepared the more smoothly will it proceed. Organisation beforehand is one of the surest aids to discipline.

There is a lot more to discipline than just ordering students about. In fact a "do this" or "don't do that" reiteration becomes irksome, and is often the seed in which a silent rebellion breeds. Children are quick to criticise, but they will be just as quick to appreciate and respect orderliness, clear-cut methods and organisation. It therefore behoves a teacher to set an example worthy of the standard he expects from them. There is nothing more disconcerting to a teacher than to arrive some minutes late for his class to find a disordered mob of students, which, even if his appearance subdues it at once, leaves a restlessness that takes some more time to dispel. It is far better for him to be a few minutes early to receive them, than to place himself in the position where they have to receive him.

Patience

A teacher without patience is like a ship without ballast—ever liable to be tossed about on the storm-waves of nervous reactions of his own ego. Lack of patience means little control over one's own nature. Such a person would naturally find it almost impossible to control children, for to have no patience for the ignorance of others is to display ignorance in oneself. Patience is not necessarily a virtue one is born with, it is acquired through life, and life's experience—in the conquest over one's own recalcitrant nature. It will be found that impatience with a pupil will always weaken one's power to teach, whereas each act of patience, resolutely pursued, strengthens and fortifies it.

In teaching, a twofold patience is needed, patience with the pupil as well as patience with oneself. Therefore when one has to deal with a particularly exasperating case of "incomprehension" it is always best to concentrate one's power of patience on the pupil in difficulty, rather than allow that wave of self-pity to become identified with one's own patience.

Often impatience in teachers is born when, in a frustrated endeavour to maintain a schedule, they find they have not the time to spare for the pupil who wishes further enlightenment. So, when questions are asked, they treat them impatiently as interruptions. Questions should never be discouraged. It is not suggested that a planned lesson should be allowed to develop into a quiz game, or that indiscriminate questioning be permitted; but a teacher should use enough discretion to ascertain the sincerity of the question, and if it is out of order explain that students can make notes during the lesson, from which they may ask questions at the end—time being allowed for such a purpose.

One of the chief duties of a teacher is to assess the degree of response in each student; and it is much easier to do this if one allows a student, when he is puzzled over a particular point, to feel free to ask. At times it is difficult enough, especially in the case of shy pupils, to get them to talk naturally and freely to a teacher; so, to discourage questions except at a prescribed time is a dogma that should be carefully considered before one falls into the habit of it.

On the other hand a different kind of patience is needed for the recalcitrant and precocious child—patience with oneself, control over one's impulse to box the ears of the cheeky or impudent child. Here the superior intellect of the teacher should take the place of the old method of Corporal Punishment.

Corporal Punishment

Much has been written both for and against Corporal Punishment. It is upheld by many authorities that there is always the child who can be disciplined in no other way than by a sound thrashing. It is certainly true that one may *subdue*

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THE M

ON THE GOAL (

By RISHA

Mankind can be divided into four categories from the standpoint of a goal of life. The first category comprises the preponderant bulk of men who never think of any goal of life, but are content to live from moment to moment with an unquestioning submission to the blind drive of fickle desires and the urgent demands of conventions and contingencies. They are born, they grow, they develop and imbibe traits and tendencies, they labour and succeed and enjoy, and fail and suffer, and are whisked away unawares under an imperious summons, they know not why and where. Their crowns and crosses roll together in the dust while they, the travellers, depart for a while to return to this earth again—and again, to seek fresh laurels and suffer fresh martyrdoms. Every time a new stage is set and a new rôle assigned to each of them; something is worked out once more, they know not what, through the tangled knots of combining and conflicting elements. A groping and a gamble in the hinterlands and an aimless drift and a restless vagrancy on the surface—this is their life.

It is not that this category is made up of the waifs and offscourings of humanity,—many strong and sensible men are also found in it; and not that they are all easy-going, unambitious men either, shirking the responsibilities and shrinking from the hazards of life. Some of them may be intrepid men, avid of adventure and courageous in confronting difficulties; but what distinguishes the men of this category is the lack of a vision of a goal of life and the absence of a steady endeavour for its realization. Their life is a vicious circle and they do not know and never pause to think that it can have a definite issue or a divine purpose. Petty and provisional objectives are fixed upon by some, such as excellence or eminence in a particular field of action, fame and power and wealth; but there is no perception of an ultimate goal bound up with the harmonious perfection of all or most human parts and the most complete fulfilment of life's deepest yearnings.

The second category is constituted by those who are seeking for a goal, but have not yet found it. Even though they live apparently like the men of the first category, swayed by desires and moulded by the opinions of others, they are vaguely or acutely aware of a want, a deficiency or a lacuna which gnaws at the centre of their being and turns the wine of life into gall and wormwood. Inwardly they fret and fumble for an issue out of the clamours and constraints of their ambiguous days and long for something which will give them an unalloyed freedom and felicity. Their discontent disturbs the tenor of their lives and discovers a thorn in every rose of pleasure, but yet it is the herald of a wholesome change and the only spur to self-transcendence and the conquest of the hidden secret of existence.

To the third category belong those who have glimpsed or envisaged some goal and advance, slowly or swiftly, according to their capacity, towards it. This category breaks off into diverse units proceeding in diverse directions. Some canter to a near and comparatively easy goal; some, drawn by a higher and wider idealism, strive for a greater and more difficult consummation. A selfless service of one's society or country or of humanity, the spreading of the gospel of peace and harmony, the dissemination of lofty truths and the imparting of true cultural education are some of the ethical goals they endeavour to pursue. They renounce most of their personal desires and try to rise superior to the formations of their lower nature, so that their life may get out of the rut of vital-physical preoccupations and emerge into some kind of transparent purity, freedom and noble beneficence. Some go even beyond these shining ideals finding them rather lacking in any fullness and finality, and sacrifice their all to discover and realize the soul or the Spirit, the Brahman or the Divine. This is a goal which alone seems to them worth attaining, the rest appearing as unsubstantial or illusory. The fathomless peace of the Eternal or the unutterable ecstasy of the Godhead gives a profound satisfaction to the deeper parts of their being and carries with it a limpid freedom and finality which preclude any further quest or seeking. Most of the sacred writings of the world enjoin upon men to seek only the immortality and infinity of the Spirit and give up all other thought. An exclusive pursuit of the ineffable Reality or the supreme Knowledge or Truth has, therefore, been the dominant spiritual note for many a century and claimed the absolute loyalty of some of the rarest men in the world. But even the liberation of the individual soul or the realization of the immutable Eternal or the bliss of the divine embrace in the depths of the being may seem to some to be a falling short and not the supreme fulfilment. Something more is wanted, something more comprehensive and complete, something that is real not only to the inner or ingathered consciousness, but also to the outermost active personality of man, and patent and palpable even to his physical senses.

The fourth category consists, therefore, of those exceptional souls who hunger for the highest possible perfection and fulfilment in life. They are born with a sense of the indivisible unity of existence and cannot rest satisfied with any experience that cuts up this unity into pairs of opposites: Spirit and Matter, Light and Life, One and Many, Reality and Appearance etc. And the unity they aspire after is not only the eternal and essential unity of all existence, but also the unity that breathes and blooms in opulent rainbow splendour even in all that is fleeting and phenomenal. The essential and the expressional aspects of the one Reality are felt by them as eternal correlates and seizable by an englobing realization. Besides, they feel that the expressional aspect is not a confused blur of teeming elements, but a real cosmos, an ordered evolution, a mounting harmony, self-conscious, self-fulfilling and invincibly purposive. But what has been up to now only a feeling and a vague, if insistent, aspiration is luminously revealed by the Mother as the very goal of human life and the central secret of the soul's descent into human birth.

"August 29, 1914.

Of what use would be man if he was not made to throw a bridge between that which eternally is, but is not manifested, and that which is manifested; between all the transcendences, all the splendours of the divine life and all the obscure and sorrowful ignorance of the material world? Man is the intermediary between That which has to be and that which is; he is a bridge thrown over the abyss, he is the great X as the cross, the quaternary link. His true abode, the effective seat of his consciousness, should be in the intermediate world at the joining point of the four arms of the cross, where all the infinity of the Unknowable comes to take precise form for being projected into the multitudinous manifestation.

This centre is the seat of supreme love and perfect consciousness, of pure and total knowledge. Establish there, O Lord, those who can, who must and who will to serve Thee truly, so that Thy work may be done, the bridge may be definitively established and Thy forces may spread untiringly in the world."*

In this Prayer the Mother sets up a goal, outlines a destiny before mankind which surpasses its highest imagination, but is destined to fulfil its widest and deepest aspiration. Man has to be a bridge between That which eternally is, but is not manifested, and that which is manifested. High above, beyond the frontiers of Time and Space, are the ineffable and unthinkable transcendences and infinitudes of the Unmanifest, and below, at the polar end, are the obscure, travailing expanses of the material existence, ignorant and sorrowful. Man must raise himself out of the lower yoke of desires and passions, ascend to the peak of his being, now veiled from his mental consciousness, and take his effective seat in the intermediate world from where he can canalize and conduct the golden stream of God's descending Light for the illumination and transfiguration of the whole of his earthly nature. He is "the great X as the cross, the quaternary link". Body, life, the psychic being (soul) and mind constitute his quaternity. The first two link him to the manifested world and make him its representative and medium of self-expression, and the last two raise him beyond himself and beyond the universe and unite him with the eternal Unmanifest. He is thus created to bridge the yawning gulf between Matter and Spirit and be the great reconciler and unifier of what appears as eternal opposites in creation. His birth here is not a chance caprice of Nature or vain error. If he has come down into the material world, it is certainly not to depart from it for good and all, leaving it in its distressing darkness, but to illumine and transform it and render it an abode of the Divine. The overstress on the individual salvation was a passing phase of human aspiration when the spiritual vision was contracting and the spiritual force receding before the advancing tide of materialism. The great primeval prayer of the human heart was, in the words of the Rig Veda, "Become high-uplifted, O Strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the Godhead." *(Vamadeva—Rig Veda iv).*

Manifestation of the Godhead, implicit in the soul of every man, is then the goal of human life. Man has to exceed his present ignorant humanity and establish himself in the intermediate world "at the joining point of the four arms of the cross where all the infinity of the Unknowable comes to take precise form for being projected into the multitudinous manifestation". This intermediate world is what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, the immense manufactory of definite forms and the source of all life's distinctions and diversities. Securely seated in that effulgent world of infinite creativity, he, the jivanmukta, will act and live

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* See "Prayers and Meditations of the Mother"—page 12.

OTHER
)F HUMAN LIFE

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"Only to bring God's forces to waiting Nature,
To help with wide-winged peace her tormented labour
And heal with joy her ancient sorrow,
Casting down light on the inconscient darkness"

(The Collected Poems of Sri Aurobindo)

Man has to combine in himself, because it is the Divine in him who combines in Himself, the transcendent, the universal and the individual. His individuality is meant to be a focal point and expressive facet of the universal and the transcendent. He is destined to be at once the golden crown of the evolutionary Nature which began her ascensive spiral from the inert Inconscient and the most complete and creative embodiment of the descending Love, Light and beatific Force of Sachchidananda upon earth.

It is a commonplace of spiritual philosophy that God is the ultimate goal of life, and it has also been an experience of countless men, purchased at the cost of many a cruel pang and bitter remorse and cheerless roving in the wilderness of the world. Even the politicians of today, who have perforce to ply a trade in blustering falsehood and burnished hypocrisy, take the name of God and impore His protection at the crises and junctures of their lives. All the hackneyed cant of rationalism is hushed and the pride of bolstered up personality falls to the ground when, at a crucial moment, the soul of man turns to its eternal Master. Even rank atheism sometimes betrays a tremor or a glimmer of faith, a pin-point of hope and trust upon which, as upon a rock of safety, it can rest its tired head in the midst of an unspeakable agony of doubt. God is not only the friend and refuge of the poor and the weak, but also the secret guide and deliverer of the high and mighty.

But all has not been said even when God is affirmed as the goal of life. God—yes, of course; but what do we mean by God? Is God only a static, transcendent, nameless Reality to which the soul has to climb and cease? Is the upward ascent the sole legitimate movement of the aspiring human consciousness and can it affirm a retreat to its Source as its only goal? Has the soul of man taken upon itself the burden of terrestrial birth only to fling it on the wayside and run back to the Incommunicable? Is not there any glorious *denouement* of this long toil and travail upon earth? The naked soul beating a precipitate retreat to its Maker may rejoice, but

"O Soul, it is too early to rejoice!
Thou hast reached the boundless silence of the Self,
Thou hast leaped into a glad divine abyss;
But where hast thou thrown self's mission and self's power?
On what dead bank on the eternal's road?
One was within thee who was all the world,
What hast thou done for His purpose in the stars?
Escape is not the victory and the crown!
Something thou camest to do from the Unknown,
But nothing is finished and the world goes on,
Because only half God's cosmic work is done.
Only the everlasting No has neared
And stared into thy eyes and killed thy heart:
But where is the Lover's everlasting Yes,
And immortality in the secret heart?....
A black veil has been lifted; we have seen
The mighty shadow of the omniscient Lord;
But who has lifted up the veil of light
And who has seen the body of the King?....
To free the self is but a radiant pace;
Here to fulfil Himself was God's desire."[1]

The goal towards which the Mother would have us advance is just this fulfilling of God in the world. So, when she speaks of the integral union with the Divine, she means a union out of which will pour, as from an inexhaustible fountain, His Love and Light and blissful Force upon this obscure material world.

"O divine Mother, Thy march is triumphal and uninterrupted. He who unites with Thee in an integral love journeys unceasingly towards vaster and vaster horizons, towards a completer and completer realization, leaping from peak to peak in the splendour of Thy light, to the conquest of the marvellous secrets of the Unknown and their integral manifestation."[1]

The Mother never tires of insisting on manifestation, the manifestation or revelation of the Divine in Matter, the shaping of His perfect Form in the clay. This is, according to her, the work of all works, the Goal of all goals.

"My sole aspiration is to know Thee better and serve Thee better every day. Knowledge, Power, Love, Union—all are harnessed to bring about the manifestation which is the purpose of God in creation.[2]

"Let the pure perfume of sanctification burn always, rising higher and higher, and straighter and straighter, like the ceaseless prayer of the integral being, desiring to unite with Thee so as to manifest Thee."[3]

So long as one is in the material world, living the material life in a physical body, one cannot lead the life of an absorbed contemplative—the ineluctable necessities of this life will constantly pluck at his elbow and remind him again and again of the work he has to accomplish and the debt he has to discharge. He may elect to be stone-deaf and content himself with a clumsy compromise, a radiant serenity and silence within, and a lurid hush without; but he can never arrive at a conquest of the evils of life and a victorious vindication of the omnipotence of the Spirit.

"Even he who might have arrived at perfect contemplation in silence and solitude, could only have done so by extracting himself from his body, by making an abstraction of himself; and thus the substance of which the body is constituted would remain as impure, as imperfect as before, since he would have abandoned it to itself; by a misguided mysticism, by the attraction of supraphysical splendours, by the egoistic desire of being united with Thee for his personal satisfaction, he would have turned his back upon the reason of his earthly existence, he would have refused cowardly to accomplish his mission to redeem and purify Matter. To know that a part of our being is perfectly pure, to commune with that purity, to be identified with it, can be useful only if we subsequently utilize this knowledge for hastening the earthly transfiguration, for accomplishing Thy sublime work."[1]

What fire-flakes of words to kindle the consciousness of man into the right perception of his goal and the right aspiration for its attainment!

Dwelling on the right attitude man should take for the progressive attainment of his goal, the Mother says, "To be constantly in search of Thee in everything, to will to manifest Thee better in every circumstance—in this attitude is to be found supreme peace, perfect serenity, true contentment. In it life blooms, widens, spreads out so magnificently, in such majestic surges that no storm can any more trouble it."[2]

The main cause of the human misery, ideological confusion and colossal dissipation of energy in the present world is the lack of a definite goal of life. Men have chosen to be flotsam and jetsam upon the tempestuous ocean of life. Theirs is a wandering without an aim, a hopeless, rudderless drift. Depolarized, deflected from the true course, deluded by appearances and seduced by contrary attractions, they dance "like puppets at the end of threads held they know not by whom or by what. When will they take the time to sit and draw inwards, to collect themselves and open that inner door which hides from them Thy priceless treasures, Thy infinite boons?.... ....How painful and miserable seems to me their life of ignorance and obscurity, their life of foolish agitation and profitless dissipation, when a single spark of Thy sublime light, a single drop of Thy divine love can transform this suffering into an ocean of joy!"[3]

"Give peace and light to them all, O Lord; open their blinded eyes and their obscured understanding, calm their useless torments and futile cares. Turn their regard away from themselves and give them the joy of consecration to Thy work without calculation or mental reserve. Let Thy beauty blossom in everything, awaken Thy love in all hearts, so that Thy eternally progressive order may be realized upon earth and Thy harmony spread till the day when all will be Thyself in perfect purity and peace.

"Oh! may all tears be dried, all sufferings relieved, all anguish disappear, and may a calm serenity dwell in the hearts of men and a potent certitude strengthen their minds. May Thy life circulate in all as a regenerating flood and may all turn towards Thee to draw in this contemplation energy for every victory."[4]

Will not man in his present predicament and perplexity hearken to the Mother's call of love and turn to the Divine to make Him the Pole-star and His Will the single pilot of his life? Will he not awake to the reason of his earthly existence, to the glory of his mission here, and grow into "the great X, the quaternary link," joining God and Nature, Spirit and Matter, Light and Life, Heaven and Earth? Will he not become the gold-and-blue bridge, the intermediary between "That which has to be and that which is", the flame-channel at once of the highest aspiration of the sorrowful earth and the redeeming and transforming Grace of the Divine? The great goal to which the Mother beckons him is a double fulfilment by a double identification—a dynamic identification not only with the transcendent Fount of all existence, but also with its perennial, rapturous cosmic Flood; and a fulfilment of his integral being in the Divine and the fulfilment of the Divine in his integral being upon earth.

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1. Sri Aurobindo: "Savitri", Book III. Canto II.

1, 2, 3. "Prayers and Meditations of the Mother".
1, 2, 3, 4. Ibid.

LOUIS BRAILLE
SAVIOUR OF THE BLIND
BY PROF. JOSE DE BENITO

In one of the galleries of the Louvre there is a picture by Breughel the Elder. It is a pleasant Flemish landscape with a church in the background and in the middle distance a field with cows grazing and hens scratching. In the foreground there are six blind men walking, each keeping touch with the man in front of him by holding on to his stick. The first is already in the ditch and the second is beginning to fall; it seems inevitable that the remaining four will follow the first two. The name of the picture is "The Parable of the Blind Men". The Scriptures have it: "If the blind lead the blind shall they not both fall into the ditch?"—and that was how it was century after century in the story of mankind until a man, or rather a mere boy, no more than twenty years old, was sent by fate to break the spell.

He himself had been blind since the age of three. The sights of his babyhood—the little village of Coupvray itself, near Meaux in whose Cathedral Bishop Bossuet had so often preached, and the smiling landscape round it, the winding River Marne, and the road to Esbly —must have been no more than a hazy memory to the sensitive youth whose keenest delight was the flutings and thunder of the organ beneath the nimble hands which his blindness had made doubly sensitive.

Louis Braille could not see the rainbow columns of the armies like the other boys of his generation, nor could his heart be pierced by the grievous sight of the Eagles in retreat.

While the Imperial Colossus was working his own undoing in the steppes of Russia misfortune struck down the child Louis Braille. Playing in his father's saddlers shop, the knife with which he was trying to cut a piece of leather got stuck; in trying to pull it out somehow it pierced his eye. Then sympathetic ophthalmia attacked the other eye and left him blind.

Very soon he began to find compensation for his physical darkness in an exquisitely sensitive ear and all the varied loveliness of sound brought light to his spirit.

The Quest for Light

Homer tells us how, sailing the Mediterranean on a day when the sun made the sea bluer, brought heaven nearer and dazzled men, he could not resist looking into the eye of it and its blinding light pierced body and soul alike. Never could finer words be found nor of a more joyful courage to express the infinite tragedy of the man who will never see again.

The same light which darkened the eyes but lightened the soul of the poet little by little took possession of Louis Braille and in the course of his childhood and his youth a whole kingdom of his own took shape within him. When he was ten years old his parents sent him to the Royal Institute for Blind Children in Paris, founded by Valentin Hauy in 1784, and the first school ever opened for the blind. Here they struggled against infinite difficulties to find an effective method for teaching reading. The founder first, and later, in 1821, Charles Barbier, a former captain of cavalry, had tried two systems, the first involving the printing of books in ordinary lettering but in relief and the second a system of phonetic signs worked out by Barbier during his military career to enable soldiers to write messages at night without a light.

Louis Braille was twelve years old when Barbier, feeling his system might help the blind, presented it to the Royal Institute. Young Braille began to realize the imperfections of the two systems by which he himself had to get his education and an idea started to bubble in him to which he turned his able and methodical mind and vivid imagination. He was an outstanding pupil and was early appointed monitor of the College and later—before he was twenty-one—"repétiteur", the equivalent of a teacher on the establishment. He taught geometry, algebra and music, the three great loves of his life, and was also organist of several churches in Paris. Nevertheless, the hope of easing the circumstances of the companions in misfortune to whom his life was dedicated drove him to work without a pause until he had perfected what his intuition had suggested to be possible.

Braille's Genius and Its Results

Braille's genius devised the system by which the blind (of whom there are more than seven millions in the world) can read and write: in other words, he broke the chain of fate which the Flemish painter illustrated in his "Parable of the Blind Men." It is not that the blind cannot build themselves an inner life because they cannot read or write—the withdrawn but sunny smiles which now and again light up their faces prove the contrary. Yet that inner life could still be made richer by the delights of reading or creative writing; and if this could be achieved there would be restored to the blind the noblest gift that physical sight can give.

In 1825, when he was sixteen, Louis Braille completed what, with slight modifications which he himself introduced five years later, was to become the universal system of reading and writing for the blind. His motive had been to serve the blind, and as a blind man himself he never forgot to give credit to Barbier for the original idea: "If it has been my good luck to have done something which may be useful to my companions in misfortune I would ever repeat that my gratitude is owed to M. Barbier who was the first to invent a system of writing by raised bosses for the use of the blind." Barbier himself admitted in 1833, and again publicly in 1834, the superiority of the method discovered by Braille over that which he himself had created.

Very briefly the essence of Braille's invention was the utilization of the 64 possible mathematical combinations of a figure of six bosses arranged in two rows of three at most, to represent not only the alphabet but punctuation marks, figures and mathematical and musical symbols; and a special device of those guide bars and a series of rectangular compartments enabled the blind to conquer the otherwise insuperable difficulties of writing.

With Braille, the gropings of Hauy and Barbier became a practical system which 121 years of experience have served only to confirm. Braille, the saviour of the blind, who still brings inner light to those who can no longer see the light of the sun, died of tuberculosis on 6 January 1852 at the age of 43. Since then the intellectual heritage of the blind has been enriched to a degree which a single item of statistics can best indicate: the library of the National Institute of the Blind of France today contains 150,000 works all transcribed in Braille.

Study of a World-Problem

However, although the problem has been resolved in theory, the enormous figure of seven million blind persons makes it in practice insoluble; other difficulties limiting the advantage derived from Braille's excellent invention have been the high cost of printing, diversity of language and the use of more than one Braille alphabet. Moreover, the danger grew greater every day of yet more differences and if a speedy remedy had not been sought the blind would have lost most of the immense benefit of having within their reach an easy and rational system whereby they can use their fingertips to replace their blinded eyes. Accordingly when Unesco was asked by the Government of India to study the problem, it decided to make it a major effort. And so a preparatory meeting was called some months back attended by the most distinguished experts, almost all of them blind themselves, to study the approach to a generally satisfactory solution through agreement on rules for the necessary adaptation of the alphabet to the many written and spoken—or merely spoken—languages of East and West. This first meeting took place in December 1949 and laid down the main lines for the 1950 Conference between 20 and 29 March. Morning, noon and night the visitor to Unesco House these days could see the white sticks and sightless eyes of the blind experts from fourteen countries, India, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and many others who had come to perfect the universal instrument destined for their seven million companions.

In the programme of the Conference there was one final item: the tribute of the blind experts to the man who made it possible for them to be today men of wide culture, deep learning and sure judgment. On 29 March the members of the Conference for the Standardization of Braille left Paris on a pilgrimage to Coupvray in the department of Seine et Marne.

For two hours as they passed along the road to the village, the smiling landscape of the Ile de France unfolded before them, with the Spring just bursting the buds of the poplars and plum trees and the first sprouts of tender green beginning to show. The eyes of the pilgrims saw none of it. And when they got to Coupvray these men of all races and all peoples, for whom the name of Braille is that of the apostle of their redemption, visited the house where he had been born and his bust in the market place and the tomb in which he lies.

Before they left Coupvray each of the blind experts invited by Unesco to its Conference passed his wonderful seeing hands over the calm and noble features of Braille's statue and each of them fixed those features in his memory that he might later tell his brethren in misfortune, back in his own country, who and what manner of man had been the youthful genius who in 1829 opened for them a window to the light of culture.

My thanks are due to M. Pierre Henri, professor in the *Institut des Jeunes Aveugles* of Paris and one of the experts attending this Conference, blind like Braille and like him vowed to the education of the blind, for his kindness in giving me information by word of mouth and allowing me to use the most interesting article published in the last number of the *Cahiers Français d'Information.*

(An "Exclusive" from UNESCO)

The Paramour of Soordas

"You deem me a bliss
That never can die;
But death comes gathering flowers,
And a flower am I.

Why do you strain
To a little thing
Your mouth of limitless
Heart-hungering?

Tear down this timeful
Mask of me:
What you desire, O flame,
Is eternity!

Seeker of unflawed
Loveliness—
Let all your passion of body
Inward press

Unto a Splendour
Beyond decay:
Hold in a deep embrace
Of sheathing clay

The ineffable Spirit
Whose mystery
Alone can fill your love's
Immensity!"

K. D. SETHNA

NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

GREEK GIFTS

BY SIR RICHARD CLIFFORD TUTE

The Hibbert Journal

In the days of the old Roman Emperors the Greeks were regarded as the most able exploiters of the arts of bad faith. The Greek was proverbially suspect even when he brought gifts. In this paper I am concerned with a charge which used to be brought against races and nations, and which to-day is valid against groups and movements not confined to national boundaries.

I

Before the Renaissance the great Christian Church, which then held not only a virtual monopoly of theological learning, but claimed to interpret all learning, became notably decadent. In France it was the chief support of the feudal framework of society which was tottering to its fall. In England the Reformation started a clearance of political and other pretensions that had little to do with religion, and which had scandalous aspects of which the people and their rulers had tired. It resulted, as we all know, in the downfall of Roman Catholicism as a ruling factor in the life of the nation.

Meanwhile other forces were moving into recognition. The most important of these was science. The experience of Galileo emphasised the futility of permitting churchmen to pronounce authoritatively on matters of observable and therefore scientific fact. Bacon's *Novum Organum* placed this matter beyond the range of ecclesiastical interference, and supplied the small band of scientific enquirers with a solid philosophical groundwork for their researches. In those days science was a sort of offshoot of philosophy. Indeed scientific enquiry was generally known by the appellation of Natural Philosophy. In France in the century which closed in the French Revolution, a powerful and growing body of educated enquirers into truth concentrated on the aspects of truth which the Church regarded as falling exclusively within its spiritual jurisdiction. These were the Encyclopaedists. The most notable figure among them was Voltaire.

Their chief contribution to the forces which were bringing about the Revolution was the turning away of large numbers of educated men from the religion of their fathers. They not only ceased to believe in the old religion, but they ceased also to believe in any religion. In its stead they professed to worship truth. On the scientific side they held that the universe is a dead, self-created mechanism in which man and his creeds are abnormalities of an insignificance comparable to the insignificance of the earth to the infinity of the dead worlds which surround it. Man is a mechanism that entertains a delusion that it is something more important. There is no God and the religions which profess to worship him are mischievous and mistaken organisations. Man's morals and societies are as meaningless as the habits of the social animals and insects.

The French Revolution was followed immediately by a flowering of supposedly scientific declarations of cosmic truth. Comte, the great materialistic philosopher, initiated the worship of the goddess of reason, and founded a new religion which he called the Religion of Humanity. Churches were erected for the new worship. One was set up in London. The writer attended its services a couple of times in the late nineties—that is to say, about 100 years after the Religion of Humanity was founded. They seemed to consist in a subdued kind of worship by man of himself. The impression I carried away with me was one of futility.

The mathematician Laplace was one of Comte's contemporaries. He is best remembered for the statement that a mathematician of adequate ability, who was supplied with all the material facts, could prophesy the state of the universe at any given future time with complete exactitude.

These two developments dominated the thought of most educated men during the rise of the industrial era in England. There were many religious men who contrived to accept them without abandoning religious faith. However, as education spread, atheism or at best agnosticism began a progressive emptying of the churches. The tenets of the religion of Humanity were simple and for this reason commanded an often unwilling, but apparently compulsory, acceptance. This acceptance was facilitated by the fact that the writers on social science in its various aspects generally tried to base their conclusions on the background of cosmic mechanism. For example the philosopher Malthus held that every kind of living organism tends to increase up to the limit of the subsistence provided by its surroundings. At that limit there must always be a fringe of organisms which support their existence with great difficulty, and by dint of hard struggle. This pronouncement, which is still often quoted, enabled the great industrialists of the first half of the nineteenth century to condone an organisation of industry which is based on an inferno of human degradation. The fact that this existed was regarded as a condition for which natural law was responsible, and not the industrialist and those who flourished exceedingly with him by the exploitation of human misery. Many indutsrialists and their friends attempted to alleviate by private charities appalling conditions for which they believed no cure existed, or could exist. Others, and they appear to have been in the majority, took unashamed advantage of them. These excused their rapacity by quoting another supposed economic law, which raised unrestricted competition to the level of another law of nature. Their watchword was *laissez faire*. This meant precisely what the Darwinian means by the survival of the fittest. As Arthur Bryant has shown in his great book, *The English Saga*, these and other supposedly scientific laws of human societies were accepted and acted upon by the governments of the time. Of these the most notable was the Government of Great Britain which then led the world in industry, and the industrial conditions she tolerated were generally accepted abroad as having the inevitability of natural law. His book shows with convincing clarity that the second half of the nineteenth century saw a gradual process of amelioration of the conditions of industry, not, apparently, because the scientists and social philosophers were finding that their views were mistaken, but mainly, or entirely, because human nature was in revolt against them. Many scientists and social thinkers believed in them up to the end of the century. Many of them still believe in them. But the whole tide of human thought, and of the resultant political outlook, rejects them. What many still regard as scientifically inevitable is now forgotten on the higher ground that it is humanly impossible.

II

For many the Marxist variant on natural law replaces the old scientific suppositions. It substitutes the inhumanity of the proletariat for that of the old industrialists, and supplies the hatred they inspired with a new brand of scientific fuel. Marxism claims to be scientific. Its claim is in process of being tested, presumably by another world-wide war, which the Marxian scientist holds to be inevitable and justifiable. His ultimate basis is also that popularised by Comte and Laplace. It is the old materialistic atheism.

On both counts, that which justified the cruel industrialism of the first half of the nineteenth century, and that which, according to Marx, justifies a hatred that seeks to break up every civilized society, science is quoted as the compelling cause. In the first case we may perhaps follow Comte picturing the goddess of truth as the presiding deity. In the second she must be seen as dethroned by Marx's new God of Hate.

What we have to note is that science in its early masquerade of materialism is directely responsible, both for the horrors of the early industrial age, and for the succeeding era of Marxian hate, which later blended with the texture of a society that was trying to temper scientific industrialism with unscientific benevolence. Since then Marxism has become the driving force of what can only be called a world-wide religion of hatred.

When an unthinking generation praises science as an unmixed blessing, these facts should be recalled. Against them we must of course set the material benefits that we owe to science. They are practically innumerable, but hardly any of them are indispensable. The average man is not appreciably better or wiser for being able to send a telegram to his friend abroad. The improvement on this advance constituted by the telephone, though marvellous, is hardly uplifting to the soul. We are well on the way to eliminating space, but this merely serves to make life a more hurried business than it used to be. Our agriculture has become vastly more scientific, and ought to be vastly more productive, but there seem to be more starving people in the world to-day than history records of the past. The benefits conferred by science are too often double-edged. The plane has enabled us to fly. It has also enabled us to indulge in the barbarity of bombing, and has converted wars that used to be conducted with some respect for non-combatants into scenes of slaughter in which no decencies are respected. The latest developments of radar have as one of their most important uses the guidance of robot missiles. The latest triumph of physics has given us a knowledge of the constitution of matter, which, through the atomic bomb, threatens man's civilisation, even his existence, with wholesale and rapid destruction. In a world which is obsessed by such terrors it seems somewhat redundant to observe that modern man has now the means of curing diseases that once killed men by the thousands. The same observation modifies our raptures over the increased facilities for sanitation, through which many endemic diseases are prevented from spreading. The scientists have given us a world that ought to be healthier and better fed than it has been at any time in the past. What science has given us is a world in which its terrors outweigh its amenities. Modern man is neither happier nor safer than he was before the scientific era was thought of.

Our next indictment is that the scientific boast that science is the pursuit of truth is simply not true. The conclusions of the scientific men of the last century gave us a materialistic outlook on the cosmos which no informed scientific man now accepts. The truth of the nineteenth century scientist consisted in deductions from a supposed background of atoms and laws of nature which has disappeared from scientific thought.

The old scientists used to think that, because the universe is a mechanism based on matter, no God can exist otherwise than in the meaningless guise of a first cause, which ceased to operate as soon as the mechanism was set in motion. The choice presented was that between God and matter as the efficient causes of the universe we see. But matter has now vanished from the ken of science. In its place we have to contemplate a four-dimensional background whence our physical universe has arisen by some magic which science makes no pretence of understanding. The man of science refers to it as space-time. The ordinary human being, following the example of all the generations that have preceded him, calls it God. He has as good a title to call it God as the physicists have to call it space-time. The controversies that raged over the question of "God or the machine" have been silenced by the discovery that the machine does not exist for science. It has never existed for the ordinary man.

Again, let us pursue this boast of the pursuit of truth a little further. We have seen that the new background of physics is a mysterious continuum which lies beyond the reach of science. But the scientific schools seem to be careful to keep this fact in the background. There is a scientific group which exists,

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GREEK GIFTS

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apparently, to prevent scientists from speculating about it. Its members call themselves Operationalists. Their main tenet is a pronouncement to the effect that no statement can be regarded as scientific which does not comply with two conditions. One is that it must refer to observable facts. The other is that it must be capable of being tested on lines which are indicated in its terms. But these same physicists use the four-dimensional equations, which are the main instrument for exploring the atom and its constituents, although the method implies a mysterious background which is unexplorable by science, because it is not and can never be observed by the methods of science. If this procedure deserves to be called the pursuit of truth, then the word has ceased to have Operationalist meaning. Of course the really great scientists, who combine scientific eminence with philosophic quality, such as Eddington, Jeans, Whitehead and a few others, pay no attention to the Operationalists.

Curiously enough the Operationalists are anxious to take from reason the claim to metaphysical quality. They have succeeded in showing that reason has no function or meaning outside the limits of the observable. Facts that we can observe by the use of our senses can be handled by reason. But, as soon as we dive below the observable limit, the facts which then emerge take on parodoxical features. In that super-sensory continuum space and time are merged in a mysterious matrix which fuses and confuses them both. In it particles become waves and waves particles. But the facts that can be observed arise out of the activities which take place in this strange continuum. Those activities must be bodiless because nothing in it can have form, location, or motion. Forms, locations and motions are produced by it, and, as it were, projected on the human screen of a physical universe that operates within the familiar limitations of space and time.

The old materialist scientists pictured a universe of the physical kind in which nothing that could not be observed by the human senses could be said to have real existence. The modern picture regards our physical reality as being related to a deeper and unpicturable reality, somewhat as the presentation on the screen is related to the films, the projector, and the operator who manipulates them. The figures that pass across the screen of our physical universe, that is to say human beings, have no more hope of picturing or understanding that background than their presentations in a picture palace have of picturing theirs, supposing that by some miracle they should become endowed with life.

The universe of the old science was three dimensional. It changes just as in a cinema the scene changes as film follows film at stated and rapid intervals of time. The universe of modern science exists in a dimensional scheme that is out of the reach, not only of science, but also of human faculty. Our scientists have learnt to make use of it in certain directions by the use of mathematical equations based on four variables. They have also learnt how to average its constituents in a manner which gives reason a basis for operating. The method is the same in all essentials as that employed by a social statistician or an insurance society. The individuals dealt with vary indefinitely, but, for practical purposes, they are treated as if they were alike. The statistical method does not attempt to explain anything. Its sole and sufficing *raison d'etre* is that it produces useful formulae which increase our power of handling the facts to which they relate. The social statistician who had to handle men as individuals could effect nothing. The same is true for the insurance statistician. For the scientist the method and its limitations are precisely the same. The end aimed at in each case is one—that of practical convenience. For the modern physicist the facts with which he deals are accepted as inexplicable. They are thrown upon the physical screen by some mystical process which he can call magic, or God, or indeed anything that occurs to him. The word used means nothing for science. For the ordinary human being, be he a scientist or merely the man in the street, it means a great deal when he describes the background mystery as God. That words throws a light on noumenal and aesthetic experience that science has never pretended to provide. The fact that the modern scientist now permits, even encourages, its use is surely glad tidings of great joy to minds that are still clouded by the doubts raised by the old materialism.

I am, however, being too optimistic. The scientific schools of the present day do not generally, or often, encourage their students to speculate on the transcendental lines which modern science authorises. For most of them the old traditional teaching, which arose in the era of material thinking, is still in vogue. It takes a somewhat modified form. In the last century it was aggressively contemptuous of the aesthetic and religious values. The contempt is now very generally left out, but the implications of the new scientific knowledge are seldom referred to. A course in science is still, a process of teaching which assumes that the moral, religious, and aesthetic experiences of life are matters with which science has nothing to do. Scientific students are still turned out to face life with minds that are unprepared to accept the morals and faith of their neighbours as having value. This is a grave handicap. It has also its dangers for the society on which these amoral intellectuals are turned loose. Of course, most of them end by adapting themselves to their surroundings, but some of them remain unbalanced, and are apt to be caught up into dangerous and treasonable groups. Such unbalanced young men are, for example, often drawn into Communist circles.

Here we have a further grave indictment of present-day scientific instruction. It lacks the courage to impart or to publicise knowledge which is of the utmost importance to society. Science has replaced the physical universe of the last century by a brand new reality, which is certainly not physical, and is, presumably, noumenal. It permits the acceptance of the religious and moral structure of society on which civilisation depends. It is also the structure on which the spiritual and practical comfort of the average man depends. To allow this discovery to remain unannounced, and to permit the youth of a nation to be instructed on lines which conceal its implications, are crimes against society which may result in its obliteration.

III

Science and religion are the two greatest forces operating in the civilised nations of to-day. No reason now exists against their working together to uphold the social and religious convictions which are the cement that keeps civilised societies from relapsing into a savagery of servitude. The modern scientist can share the functions of the priest, and the priest those of the scientist, without either of them abating a jot of the convictions appropriate to his main calling.

It must be noted that the scientists are already paying a penalty for their neglect. One of the distinguishing features of the modern man of science in a given department is that he refuses to criticise the scientists of other departments. We are thus faced with the spectacle of learned physicists consenting, through silence, to the acceptance of philosophies based on reasoning that they would not dream of using in their own work. They have discarded the materialistic background, but carefully abstain from calling attention to the fact that the Freudian assumes its existence. The same holds good for the Behaviourist, and the Darwinian evolutionist.

The scientist of the last century regarded himself as publicist and priest of a calling that had the function and privilege of interpreting the universe to man. He made a mess of the business with results that in the present threaten our civilisation with annihilation, and that in the past brought untold hardship and misery on multitudes of his fellowmen. He proclaimed cosmic truth in a universe in which later scientists have satisfied themselves that cosmic truth is, for the scientist, undiscoverable. The modern scientist realises that the truths of science are simply no more than formulae or recipes for facilitating the business of living. The scientist is a man who devotes his energies to discovering such aids, or, in the event of his being a teacher, to instructing his pupils in the past attainments of science with a view to equipping them to carry on its function. He is in the position of, let us say, a highly trained cook. The cook's recipes correspond to the scientist's formulae. His truths are truths because they enable men to taste better cooked and more tasty dishes. Neither cook nor scientist professes to understand why the facts with which he deals behave as they do, or even why they exist at all. If we choose to ascribe priestly quality to the scientist's work we must do the same for the cook's. The method of science is simply the method of man in his dealings with his physical surroundings. The scientist's function is not priestly but practical. It is a higher calling than that of, say, a cook or an engine driver, because the scientist has to undergo a more intellectual and exacting preparation for its exercise than men who engage in occupations that require less preparation, and less mental ability.

When teachers of science come to recognise this they will turn out better scientists and better human beings to carry on the business for which science exists. On the recognition of this truth hangs the destiny of man.

DEMOCRACY AND DECENTRALISATION

To the Editor, "Mother India"

Sir,—It was very interesting to read in your last issue *A Fully Planned Economy* by "Chanakya". It is a great problem before the world: Is freedom possible under planning? How can these two be reconciled? Decentralisation in the economic and political field is the only solution of the problem. For this the masses must be educated. This can be done by making them responsible for their own affairs. A gradual shifting of the social, political and economic activities to the local bodies will make the people fully competent to run the New Democracy.

The Village Panchayats will be the most important factor in this task, because ours is a country of villages. It is a great truth that Panchayats formed by the political parties for winning the election are a farce, as has been proved by the experience of Congress Panchayats.

But the Panchayats formed by the Government can be converted into real organs of democracy. At present any public body, not having the sanction of Law behind it, will be impotent. In our village we formed a Panchayat in 1924. It was to manage the roads, sanitation, street lighting, etc. A unique way of collecting money was evolved. It functioned smoothly up to 1943. But it had to be dissolved owing to the fact that the persons who were made the Agency of Collection refused to co-operate. There being no legal sanction behind the Panchayat, they could not be forced to do so.

The Panchayats formed by the Government should not merely be treated as the machinery for performing certain tasks of the Government. All the social activities must be carried out through the Panchayats. They must be made fully responsible for the material and spiritual good of the masses.

The question of District Boards also requires a great consideration. These bodies could not perform the above-mentioned tasks up to this time although created long ago.

Today they collect taxes from the rural population. They get a subsidy from the States. They are supposed to carry out the same tasks which have been allotted to the Village Panchayats. But no provision has been made for the Panchayats being helped financially by the Boards.

Both these institutions created to perform the same tasks are existing together. The Boards have got rid of the local problems after the Panchayats had been established. To carry out their work the Panchayats have to impose new taxes. This is a huge burden on the already burdened masses. This may make the Panchayats unpopular and the present-day enthusiasm may be finished very soon.

Therefore it is very essential for the success of the Panchayats that all the local responsibilities of the Boards are transferred to them and the income of the Boards is shared by the Panchayats. There should only be one tax. The Boards must function only as co-ordinating centres. The ideal of economy and efficiency can be achieved in this way.

Faced with the responsibilities and being directly responsible to the people the Panchayats will make the real solid foundation of the Democratic State.

BRAHM DUTT,
President,
Enfield Gram Panchayat,
Chohar Pur,
Dehradun.

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

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when we enter the ranges of the psychical and spiritual being and can from there work for the discovery of greater secrets of the physical or at least of the psycho-physical world. Indian Yoga founds itself on that great process, and there, though as in all true science the object is an assured method of personal discovery or living repetition and possession of past discovery and a working out of all the thing found, there is too a high final intention to hold the truth, the light found in our inner power of being and turn it to a power of our psychical self, our spirit, our self of knowledge and will, our self of love and joy, our self of life and action. This too, though not the same thing in form, is akin to the higher work of poetry when it acts, as the ancients would have had it consciously act, as a purifier and builder of the soul.

"The initial function of religion again is to make clear the approaches of the soul to the Highest, to God. And it does that at first by laying on the mind a scheme of religious knowledge or guiding creed and dogma, a taming yoke of moral instruction or purifying law of religious conduct and an awakening call of religious emotion, worship, cult, and so far it is a thing apart in its own field, but in its truly revealing side of intuitive being and experience we find that the essence of religion is an aspiration and adoration of the soul towards the Divine, the Self, the Supreme, the Eternal, the Infinite, and an effort to get close to and live with or in that or to enjoy in love and be like or one with that which we adore. But poetry also on its heights turns to the same things, in ourselves and the world, not indeed with religious adoration, but by a regarding closeness and moved oneness in beauty and delight. The characteristic method and first field of all these things is indeed wide apart, but at their end when they come into their deepest spirit, they begin to approach each other and touch; and because of this greater affinity philosophy, psychic and spiritual science and religion are found in the ancient Indian culture woven into one unity, and when they turn to the expression of their most intimate experience, it is always the poetic word which they use."

K. G.

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LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(28)

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many important questions which arise in the minds of thoughtful persons all over the world. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not only a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in various spheres of life and thought. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it directly applicable to the problems that present themselves to an observing intelligence, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers directly taken from Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in thes e columns.

Q: 1. I. A. Richards in his book "Science and Poetry" tries to establish that the aim and function of science are altogether distinct from the aim and function of poetry. Science is concerned with the seeking of truth, but poetry has nothing to do with the finding or expression of truth. He attaches very high value to the aesthetic experience which poetry yields but does not admit that it can in anyway reveal to us truth. Is this true? As the poet can express in his own peculiar manner the truth of philosophy and religion, can he not also reveal in his distinct fashion the truth which the scientist discovers in his special field?

A: "Infinite Truth has her many distinct ways of expressing and finding herself and each way must be kept distinct and the law of one must not be applied to the law of another form of her self-expression; and yet that does not mean that the material of one cannot be used as the material of another, though it must be cast by a different power into a different mould, or that all do not meet on their tops. Truth of poetry is not truth of philosophy or truth of science or truth of religion only because it is another way of self-expression of infinite Truth so distinct that it appears to give quite another face of things and reveal quite another side of experience. A poet may have a religious creed or subscribe to a system of philosophy or take rank himself like Lucretius or certain Indian poets as a considerable philosophical thinker or succeed like Goethe as a scientist as well as a poetic creator, but the moment he begins to argue out his system intellectually in verse or puts up a dressed-up science straight into metre or else inflicts like Wordsworth or Dryden rhymed sermons or theological disputations on us, he is breaking the law. And even if he does not move so far astray, yet the farther he goes in that direction even within the bounds of his art, he is, though it has often been done with a tolerable, sometimes a considerable or total success, treading on unfirm or at any rate on lower ground. It is difficult for him there to maintain the authentic poetic spirit and pure inspiration."

Q: 2. What is the reason of this difficulty? Is it not possible for the poet to overcome this difficulty and present to us, though in a different way, the same essential truth of science, religion and philosophy?

A: "This is another cult and worship and the moment the poet stands before the altar of the Muse, he has to change his robes of mind and serve the rites of a different consecration. He has to bring out into the front that other personality in him who looks with a more richly irised seeing eye and speaks with a more rapturous voice. The others have not normally the same joy of the word because they do not go to its fountainhead, even though each has its own intense delight, as philosophy has its joy of deep and comprehensive understanding and religion its hardly expressible rapture. Still it remains true that the poet may express precisely the same thing in essence as the philosopher or the man of religion or the man of science, may even give us truth of philosophy, truth of religion, truth of science, provided he transmutes it, abstracts from it something on which the others insist in their own special form and gives us the something more which poetic sight and expression bring. He has to convert it into truth of poetry, and it will be still better for his art if he saw it originally with the poetic insight, the creative, intuitive, directly perceiving and interpreting eye; for then his utterance of truth is likely to be more poetic, authentic, inspired and compelling. This distinction between poetic and other truth, well enough felt but not always well observed, and their fusion and meeting place are worth dwelling upon; for if poetry is to do all it can for us in the new age, it will include increasingly in its scope much that will be common to it with philosophy, religion and even in a broader sense with science, and yet it will at the same time develop more intensely the special beauty and peculiar power of its own insight and its own manner. The poetry of Tagore is already a new striking instance of what differently seen and followed out might have been a specifically philosophic and religious truth, but here turned into beauty and given a new significance by the transforming power of poetic vision."

Q: 3. What is the essential difference between the pursuits of the poet and the artist and those of the philosopher, the scientist and the religious seeker?

A: "The difference which separates these great things of the mind is a difference of the principal, the indispensable instrument we must use and of the appeal to the mind and the whole manner. There is a whole gulf of difference. The philosopher sees in the dry light of the reason, proceeds dispassionately by a severe analysis and abstraction of the intellectual content of the truth, a logical slow close stepping from idea to pure idea, a method difficult and nebulous to the ordinary, hard, arid, impossible to the poetic mind. For the poetic mind sees at once in a flood of coloured light, in a moved experience, in an ecstasy of the coming of the word, in splendours of form, in a spontaneous leaping out of inspired idea upon idea, sparks of the hoof-beats of the white flame horse Dadhikravan galloping up the mountain of the gods or breath and hue of wing striking into wing of the irised broods of Thought flying over earth or up towards heaven. The scientist proceeds also by the intellectual reason but with a microscopic scrutiny which brings it to bear on an analysis of sensible fact and process and on the correct measure and relation of force and energy as it is seen working on the phenomenal stuff of existence, and joins continually link of fact with fact and coil of process with process till he has under his hand at least in skeleton and tissue the whole connected chain of apparent things. But to the poetic mind this is a dead mechanical thing; for the eye of the poet loves to look on breathing acting life in its perfected synthesis and rhythm, not on the constituent measures, still less on the dissected parts, and his look seizes the soul of wonder of things, not the mechanical miracle. The method of these other powers moves by the rigorously based and patiently self-assured steps of the systematising intelligence and the aspect of Truth which they uncover is a form measured and cut out from the world of ideas and the world of sense by the eye of the intellectual reason. The brooding philosopher or the discovering scientist cannot indeed do without the aid of a greater power, intuition, but ordinarily he has to bring what that nearer more swiftly luminous faculty gives him into a more deliberate air under the critical light of the intelligence and establish it in the dialectical or analytical way of philosophy and science before the intellect as judge. The mind of the poet sees by intuition and direct perception and brings out what they give him by a formative stress on the total image, and the aspect to which he thrills is the living truth of the form, of the life that inspires it, of the creative thought behind and the supporting movement of the soul and a rhythmic harmony of these things revealed to his delight in their beauty. These fields and paths lie very wide apart, and if any voices from the others reach and claim the ear of the poetic creator, they must change greatly in their form and suit themselves to the warmth and colour of his atmosphere before they can find right of entry into his kingdom."

Q: 4. But are these great pursuits of the human mind entirely different and separate? Is there no point where they meet?

A: "Their meeting is not here at the base, but on the tops. The philosopher's reasoning intelligence discovers only a system of thought symbols and the reality they figure cannot be seized by the intelligence, but needs direct intuition, a living contact, a close experience by identity in our self of knowledge. That is work not for a dialectical, but a bright revelatory thinking, a luminous body of intuitive thought and spiritual experience which carries us straight into sight, into vision of knowledge. The first effort of philosophy is to know for the sake of pure understanding, but her greater height is to take Truth alive in the spirit and clasp and grow one with her and be consciously within ourselves all the reality we have learned to know. But that is precisely what the poet strives to do in his own way by intuition and imagination, when he labours to bring himself close to and be one by delight with the thing of beauty which awakes his joy. He does not always seize the very self of the thing, but to do so lies within his power. The language of intuitive thinking moves always therefore to an affinity with poetic speech and in the ancient Upanishads it used that commonly as its natural vehicle. 'The Spirit went abroad, a thing pure, bright, unwounded by sin, without body or sinew or scar; the Seer, the Thinker, the Self-born who breaks into being all around us, decreed of old all things in their nature from long eternal years'. 'There sun shines not nor moon nor star nor these lightnings blaze nor this fire; all this world is luminous only with his light'. Are we listening, one might ask, to the voice of poetry or philosophy or religion? It is all three voices cast in one, indistinguishable in the eternal choir. And there is too and similarly a pure intuitive science which comes into the field

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