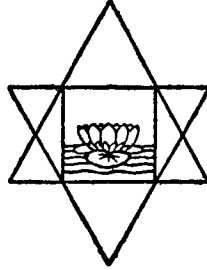


MOTHER INDIA

JANUARY 1956

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The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable...

I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth evolution.

SRI AUROBINDO

* * *

*A new Light shall break upon the earth,
a new world shall be born: the things that
were promised shall be fulfilled.*

Sri Aurobindo

TRANSLATED FROM THE MOTHER'S
"Prayers and Meditations."

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. VII

No. 12

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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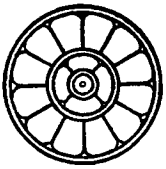
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THE MOTHER'S

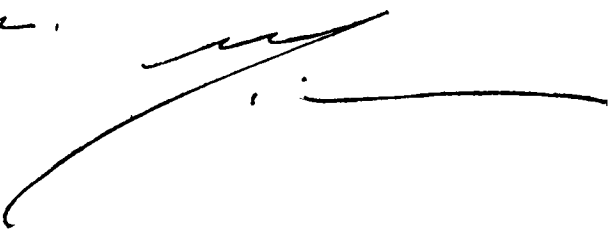
NEW YEAR MESSAGE



1956

*The greatest victories are
the least noisy.*

*The manifestation of a new
world is not proclaimed by
beat of drum.*



THE MOTHER'S TALKS

(To the Children of the Ashram)

THE NEW YEAR

Q. Will you explain your New Year Message a little? Does it imply a great spiritual victory this year?

It means perhaps a very simple thing—that it would be better to let things take place without our speaking of them. It is preferable to say nothing about what will happen before it has happened; else we do precisely the drum-beating I have mentioned—what one may call “tom-tomming”.

There are people who keep asking: “How will it all turn out?” They will indeed see how! Let them wait, at least some surprise should be there! And I reply to them: “I know nothing about it.” For I put myself immediately into the consciousness of the world as it is, the world which wants extraordinary events to be announced to it but which is altogether incapable of imagining them.

I have told you in the past that if one begins to imagine things it means that they are already there. In order that one should be capable of imagining them it is necessary that they should exist: otherwise no imagining is possible.

Yes, in our higher being, we can have a very clear, very exact, very luminous perception of whatever is. But if we come down into the material consciousness, we are obliged to say: “Well, I don't know anything.” When the event will occur, I shall tell you how it will occur—and I shall probably not even need to tell you, you will yourself see it. I hope you will be among those who can see it—for there will be people who cannot.

And what is the good of saying to such people, “There it is, it is like this”? They answer, as in the play you once acted—“But I see nothing”. Do you remember the piece? It was entitled *The Sage*. There was in it a messenger who said, “The Divine is there, hearing you—the Divine is present before you.” And one of the people replied: “But I don't see Him.” The situation is just like that.

Sometimes visitors come to the Ashram and declare: “There is no spiri-

tuality here.” But how can they see it? With what organ? I have, however, a good deal of hope that when something manifests, you will be capable of perceiving it. Of course, if all of a sudden there were luminous apparitions or if the outer physical forms changed completely, even a dog or a cat or anything whatever would, I believe, observe them. But such matters will take time, they are not of the immediate future, they are pretty far, a good deal later. A lot of great things will happen before them and, take note, they will be much more important. For, those will be only the flower which blooms, but, before its blooming, there must be the principle of its existence within the root and the plant.

Q. If there is some manifestation, will it be purely spiritual and will only the doers of Yoga see it? Or will there be some result in the present-day world?

My child, why do you refer to the future? Already for several years there have been extraordinary and fantastic results in the world. But to see them a bit of knowledge is required: otherwise one will take them to be quite normal and ordinary—because one will not even know how they came about. It is exactly the same for the future. There can be formidable changes, fantastic actions and yet, my God, one may say: “Well, this, naturally it is so”—since people do not know how it has all taken place.

A constant action is going on in the world. It is spreading and it is effective everywhere. Everywhere it gives new pushes, new turns, new ideas, new will-formations. But as one does not know how it works, one thinks that it is what one calls “quite natural”.

And indeed it is quite natural—but of another naturalness than that of the ordinary physical Nature.

Fundamentally, it is logical enough to say that to perceive the Spirit’s working we need to be conscious of the Spirit. Because you are not aware of its working and because the result of what the Spirit does is necessarily material in the material world, you find it quite natural. What do you know of all that Nature does and what do you know of all that is done by the Spirit? Of all that Nature does—I am speaking of material Nature—one knows very little, almost nothing, because all the time one has to recognise things which upset all that one believed was known before.

And, then, how is Nature’s work to be distinguished from the Spirit’s work through Nature? You must know the way they are to be distinguished, the one from the other. But can you expect to distinguish them, recognise the Spirit and see its action, when you do not possess a consciousness absolutely limpid and certain of what the Spirit is? This is a logic quite simple.

THE MOTHER'S TALKS

The world goes on. Things keep happening. And there are perhaps a handful of men who know how they happen.

And if just now you were suddenly precipitated, without any transition, into what the world was, let us say two or three thousand years ago or at the least one or two thousand years—the comparison would be so suffocating that few indeed would be able to stand it. But with what admirable graduality of Nature everything has occurred! Even the fantastic changes are found natural and you hardly even perceive them.

It is no mere image, no mere literature to say that when you enter into the true consciousness, when you transform your consciousness, the whole world itself changes for you. This is not just an appearance or impression: you really see something else than what you used to see in the ordinary consciousness: the relations are different, the causes are different, the effects are different. No longer is there a perceiving of something that is not transparent—behind which one cannot see: bare surface and crust are all that is seen now, one does not even view what moves it and what makes it exist. All this gets inverted and all this comes then to look artificial, unreal, almost inexistent. And it is when one sees things in this way, in a normal manner—without forcing oneself or being obliged to make any meditation or concentration and strenuous efforts to see things like that—it is when such vision is normal and natural that one understands everything in a way totally different, and naturally at that time the world is different.

There is a short preliminary passage that is indispensable, and for those who make this little journey there are all sorts of things, all sorts of speculations and question that are not necessary to confront any more.

To return to our subject: what I wish to say is pretty simple. One day I was asked for a Message, I was told “Oh, we wish to print it, can't you give it to us?” What was I to do? I looked at the coming year: in order to speak anything about it I must look at it first. I did look, and while looking I saw at the same time all the imaginations and speculations and inventions of people about the happenings in this so-called marvellous year. In seeing them I saw also what the year would be like, what it was like already in advance—some part of it shows itself in that way. I realised immediately that the better course was to say nothing about how it would turn out.

And when people were waiting for a lot of fanfare and proclamation, I said what I have said. That is all, nothing more. All that I have said is just that it is preferable to keep quiet instead of making a noise about the year, for noise is never helpful. Let things happen! according to a more profound law, without the bewilderment of those who are ignorant and stare at what is happening.

And, above all, do not come and say: “You know, it will be such and such” —because it is this that makes the whole thing more difficult. I have not said

MOTHER INDIA

that what ought to be will not be. But it will be with perhaps a lot more difficulty if it is spoken of. Hence it is better to let things shape themselves.

And, after all, if one wishes to be very sober, one has only to ask oneself: "Well, in ten thousand years, this realisation which we are on the way to bring about, what will it be?" An imperceptible point in the march of time, a preparation, a trial for future realisations. Oh it is so much wiser not to be carried away! Let us do all we can and hold ourselves in peace. That is all.

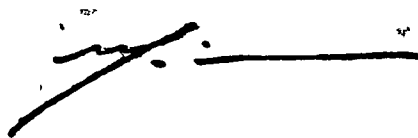
Now there are many who need some whipping up—as one whips up cream. But they must appeal to poets, not to me. I am not a poet; I am content with doing. I love doing better than talking.

ANCIENNE LÉGENDE CHALDÉENNE

Il y a longtemps, fort longtemps, au pays aride qui est maintenant l'Arabie, un être divin s'était incarné sur terre pour y éveiller l'amour suprême. Comme de juste il fut persécuté par les hommes, incompris, soupçonné, pourchassé. Blessé mortellement par ses agresseurs, il voulut mourir solitaire et tranquille pour pouvoir accomplir son œuvre, et poursuivi, il courut; soudain, dans la grande plaine dénudée, un petit buisson de grenadier se présenta. Le Sauveur se faufila sous les branches basses, pour quitter son corps en paix; et aussitôt le buisson se développa miraculeusement, grandit, s'élargit, devint profond et touffu, de sorte que lorsque les poursuivants passèrent, ils ne se doutèrent même pas que Celui qu'ils poursuivaient était caché là, et ils continuèrent leur route.

Tandis que goutte à goutte le sang sacré tombait, fertilisant le sol, le buisson se couvrit de fleurs merveilleuses, écarlates, énormes, fouillis de pétales, innombrables gouttes de sang....

Ce sont ces fleurs qui, pour nous, expriment et contiennent l'Amour Divin.



AN OLD CHALDEAN LEGEND

LONG ago, very long ago, in the desert land that is now Arabia, a divine being had incarnated to awaken on earth the Supreme Love. As one would expect, the incarnation was persecuted by men, misunderstood, suspected, pursued. Mortally wounded by assailants, this being wished to die alone and tranquil so that the work might be accomplished; and, followed by them, fled. Suddenly, in the broad barren plain, a tiny bush of Pomegranate appeared. The Saviour stole under its low branches in order to give up the body in peace; and at once the bush unfolded as by a miracle, grew up, widened, became deep and luxuriant, with the result that when the pursuers passed by they did not even suspect that the One whom they were chasing was hidden there, and they continued on their way.

While, drop by drop, the sacred blood fell, fertilising the ground, the bush covered itself with marvellous flowers, scarlet, enormous—clusters of petals, innumerable drops of blood...

These are the flowers that, for us, symbolise and hold the Divine Love.

SOME MESSAGES

No material organisation, whatever its degree of preparation, is capable of bringing a solution to the miseries of man.

Man must rise to a higher level of consciousness and get rid of his ignorance, limitation and selfishness in order to get rid also of his sufferings.

21-2-1955.

*

*

If diplomacy could become the instrument of the Truth and the Divine Grace, instead of being based on duplicity and falsehood, a big step would be taken towards human unity and harmony.

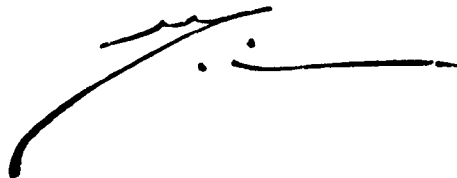
15-4-1955

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The closer you come to the Divine, the more you live under a shower of overwhelming evidence of His immeasurable Grace.

15-8-1955



TRANCE EXPERIENCES

(Continued from the last issue)

Q. Sometimes a strong pressure to go into sleep or samadhi is felt. It is so compelling that no physical or mental activity can be attended to; but when I lie down I can't sleep, nor do I go into samadhi.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is probably because there is a pressure from above but a contrary reaction comes from the waking consciousness and stops the sleep or samadhi.

Q. At night the working of the higher Force is rather strong; then another pressure is felt during this action which knocks the head, and the body feels an irresistible push to fall asleep.

SRI AUROBINDO: It interprets the new pressure as something to be met by going inside, I suppose, and the inward movement is sleep.

Q. In such circumstances, is it better to sleep or meditate?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on the nature of the sleep.

Q. I think, what my inner being wants is a complete separation from the outer being. But this it cannot have at this stage during the waking meditation, so it takes refuge in trance. It must be difficult to have trance in the waking state.

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you mean trance in a waking state? Trance is going inside away from the waking state. What corresponds to trance in the waking state would be a complete concentration indifferent to outward movements or else a silence of the whole being in Brahman realisation, the samata state of the Gita.

Q. Day before yesterday there was a prolonged tussle with the lower physical nature. I could not control these obscure forces so I left the outer being. To my surprise, in an experience of stillness, I saw myself as a huge globe which was as wide as the universe. Its top was the sky and its bottom the earth. In that ball my being began to expand and tended to be as vast as the globe itself. This widening movement was recorded up to my inner physical.

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SRI AUROBINDO: That is a symbolic experience of the cosmic consciousness—it is that widening which is still lacking in your experience of peace.

Q. During today's noon sleep, intense waves of love were flowing out from me towards the Mother while she was giving me an interview. The Mother was holding me close to her. What is it? a sleep or a samadhi?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it was sleep, you must have got into the vital plane or some supraphysical plane and met the Mother there.

Q. During the samadhi states it was noticed that the Mother's force was quite dense. During the waking state, however, the action induced in my being, right down to the body, a certain emptiness or voidness. I am unable to say whether it was in the subtle body or the outer that the density was felt.

SRI AUROBINDO: It must be in the subtle body, for it is that one feels in trance or sleep—besides, if it were the physical body, the density would usually last for some time after waking.

Q. Now the pressure for the samadhi comes at the usual time but not the samadhi. If it is due to the rising of inertia, how is it that I can concentrate and live in the higher consciousness without effort but can't withdraw into samadhi?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no answer to these hows and whys, except that your consciousness has sufficiently developed the capacity to ascend into the higher consciousness so as to be able to do it at will but has not to an equal extent developed the capacity of going into samadhi. But that is obvious and is simply the statement of the fact.

Q. You had once replied to the above question: "It is due to the stress of the physical inertia." If so, how could the ascent take place without the inertia pulling me down? It was due to this perplexity in understanding the matter that I raised the question.

SRI AUROBINDO: The answer is there above. The stress of the inertia is the general obstacle; it may be overcome in one thing, it may not be overcome in another. Your physical mind applies conceptions in a much too stiff and narrow way. Mind and life do not move in set formulas. "The inertia is the obstacle in both cases, in one it has yielded so it ought to have yielded in the other" is not a logic that can serve—the balance of conditions in the two cases can be different so as to make the inertia effective in one case while it is overcome in the other. The same with the result of the suggestions; it depends on many things what the immediate result may be.

TRANCE EXPERIENCES

Q. In one letter you have written that the Mother sees always things when she goes into trance. Is it not natural for one to see things (have visions) in trance, even though in the waking state he does not see a single vision?

SRI AUROBINDO: Vision in trance is vision no less than vision in the waking state. It is only the condition of the recipient consciousness that varies—in one the waking consciousness shares in the vision, in the other it is excluded for the sake of greater facility and range in the inner experience. But in both it is the inner vision that sees.

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER XII

THE HERDS OF THE DAWN

THE Seven Rivers of the Veda, the Waters, *āpaḥ*, are usually designated in the figured Vedic language as the seven Mothers or the seven fostering Cows *sapta dhenavaḥ*. The word *āpaḥ* itself has, covertly, a double significance; for the root *ap* meant originally not only to move from which in all probability is derived the sense of waters, but to be or bring into being, as in *apatya*, a child, and the Southern Indian *appa*, father. The seven Waters are waters of being; they are the Mothers from whom all forms of existence are born. But we meet also another expression, *sapta gāvaḥ*, the seven Cows or the seven Lights, and the epithet *saptagu*, that which has seven rays. *Gu* (*gāvaḥ*) and *gau* (*gāvaḥ*) bear throughout the Vedic hymns this double sense of cows and radiances. In the ancient Indian system of thought being and consciousness were aspects of each other, and Aditi, infinite existence from whom the gods are born, described as the Mother with her seven names and seven seats (*dhāmāni*), is also conceived as the infinite consciousness, the Cow, the primal Light manifest in seven Radiances, *sapta gāvaḥ*. The sevenfold principle of existence is therefore imaged from the one point of view in the figure of the Rivers that arise from the ocean, *sapta dhenavaḥ*, from the other in the figure of the Rays of the all-creating Father, Surya Savitri, *sapta gāvaḥ*.

The image of the Cow is the most important of all the Vedic symbols. For the ritualist the word *Gau* means simply a physical cow and nothing else, just as its companion word, *Aśva*, means simply a physical horse and has no other sense, or as *ghṛta* means only water or clarified butter, *vīra* only a son or a retainer or servant. When the Rishi prays to the Dawn, *gomad viravad dhehi ratnam uṣo aśvāvāt*, the ritualistic commentator sees in the invocation only an entreaty for "pleasant wealth to which are attached cows, men (or sons) and horses". If on the other hand these words are symbolic, the sense will run, "Confirm in us a state of bliss full of light, of conquering energy and of force of vitality." It is therefore necessary to decide once for all the significance of the word *Gau* in the Vedic hymns. If it proves to be symbolic, then these other words,—

aśva horse, *vīra*, man or hero, *apatya* or *prajā*, offspring, *hiraṇya*, gold, *vāja*, plenty (food, according to Sayana),—by which it is continually accompanied, must perforce assume also a symbolic and a kindred significance.

The image of the Cow is constantly associated in Veda with the Dawn and the Sun; it also recurs in the legend of the recovery of the lost cows from the cave of the Panis by Indra and Brihaspati with the aid of the hound Sarama and the Angirasa Rishis. The conception of the Dawn and the legend of the Angirasas are at the very heart of the Vedic cult and may almost be considered as the key to the secret of the significance of Veda. It is therefore these two that we must examine in order to find firm ground for our inquiry.

Now even the most superficial examination of the Vedic hymns to the Dawn makes it perfectly clear that the cows of the Dawn, the cows of the Sun are a symbol for Light and cannot be anything else. Sayana himself is obliged in these hymns to interpret the word sometimes as cows, sometimes as rays,—careless, as usual of consistency; sometimes he will even tell us that *gau* like *ṛtam*, the word for truth, means water. As a matter of fact it is evident that we are meant to take the word in a double sense, “light” as the true significance, “cow” as the concrete image and verbal figure.

The sense of “rays” is quite indisputable in such passages as the third verse of Madhuchchhandas’ hymn to Indra, I. 7, “Indra for far vision made the Sun to ascend in heaven: he sped him all over the hill by his rays”, *vi gobhir adrim airayat.*¹ But at the same time, the rays of Surya are the herds of the Sun, the kine of Helios slain by the companions of Odysseus in the Odyssey, stolen by Hermes from his brother Apollo in the Homeric hymn to Hermes. They are the cows concealed by the enemy Vala, by the Panis; when Madhuchchhandas says to Indra, “Thou didst uncover the hole of Vala of the Cows”, he means that Vala is the concealer, the withholder of the Light and it is the concealed Light that Indra restores to the sacrificer. The recovery of the lost or stolen cows is constantly spoken of in the Vedic hymns and its sense will be clear enough when we come to examine the legend of the Panis and of the Angirasas.

Once this sense is established, the material explanation of the Vedic prayer for “cows” is at once shaken; for if the lost cows for whose restoration the Rishis invoke Indra, are not physical herds stolen by the Dravidians but the shining herds of the Sun, of the Light, then we are justified in considering whether the same figure does not apply when there is the simple prayer for “cows” without any reference to any hostile interception. For instance in 1.4.2 it is

¹ We may also translate “He sent abroad the thunderbolt with its lights”; but this does not make as good and coherent a sense, even if we take it, *gobhir* must mean “radiances” not “cows”.

said of Indra, the maker of perfect forms who is as a good milker in the milking of the cows, that his ecstasy of the Soma-Wine is verily "cow-giving", *godā id revato madaḥ*. It is the height of absurdity and irrationality to understand by this phrase that Indra is a very wealthy god and, when he gets drunk, exceedingly liberal in the matter of cow-giving. It is obvious that as the cow-milking in the first verse is a figure, so the cow-giving in the second verse is a figure. And if we know from other passages of the Veda that the Cow is the symbol of Light, we must understand here also that Indra, when full of the Soma-ecstasy, is sure to give us the Light.

In the hymns to the Dawn the symbolic sense of the cows of light is equally clear. Dawn is described always as *gomatī*, which must mean, obviously, luminous or radiant; for it would be nonsense to use "cowful" in a literal sense as the fixed epithet of the Dawn. But the image of the cows is there in the epithet; for Usha is not only *gomatī*, she is *gomatī aśvāvātī*; she has always with her cows and her horses. She creates light for all the world and opens out the darkness as the pen of the Cow, where we have without any possibility of mistake the cow as the symbol of light, (I.92.4.). We may note also that in this hymn I.92, the Ashwins are asked to drive downward their chariot on a path that is radiant and golden, *gomad hiraṇyavad*. Moreover Dawn is said to be drawn in her chariot sometimes by ruddy cows, sometimes by ruddy horses. "She yokes her host of the ruddy cows"; *yuñkte gavām aruṇā-rām anīkam* (I.191.5),—where the second meaning "her host of the ruddy rays" stands clear behind the concrete image. She is described as the mother of the cows or radiances; *gavām janitṛī akṛta pra ketum* (I.124.5.), "the Mother of the cows (radiances) has created vision", and it is said elsewhere of her action, "vision" or "perception has dawned now where nought was"; and again it is clear that the cows are the shining herds of the Light. She is also praised as "the leader of the shining herds", *netṛī gavām*, VII.76.6; and there is an illuminating verse in which the two ideas are combined, "the Mother of the Herds, the guide of the days", *gavām mātā netṛī ahnām*. Finally, as if to remove the veil of the image entirely, the Veda itself tells us that the herds are a figure for the rays of the Light, "her happy rays come into sight like cows released into movement"—*pratī bhadṛā adṛkṣata gavām sargā na raśmayah*. And we have the still more conclusive verse, VII.79.2, "Thy cows (rays) remove the darkness and extend the Light"; *saṁ te gāvas tama ā vartayanti, jyotir yacchanti*.¹

But Dawn is not only drawn by these shining herds; she brings them as a gift to the sacrificer; she is, like Indra in his Soma-ecstasy, a giver of the

¹ It cannot of course be disputed that *gau* means light in the Veda e.g. when it is said that Vritra is slain *gavā*, by light, there is no question of the cow; the question is of the use of the double sense and of the cow as a symbol.

Light. In a hymn of Vasishtha (VII.75) she is described as sharing in the action of the gods by which the strong places where the herds are concealed are broken open and they are given to men; "True with the gods who are true, great with the gods who are great, she breaks open the strong places and gives of the shining herds; the cows low towards the dawn,"—*rujad dṛḍhām dadad usriyāṇām, prati gāva uśasam vāvaśanta*. And in the very next verse she is asked to confirm or establish for the sacrificers *gomad ratnam aśvāvāt purubhojaḥ*, a state of bliss full of the light (cows), of the horses (vital force) and of many enjoyments. The herds which Usha gives are therefore the shining troops of the Light recovered by the gods and the Angirasa Rishis from the strong places of Vala and the Panis and the wealth of cows (and horses) for which the Rishis constantly pray can be no other than a wealth of this same Light; for it is impossible to suppose that the cows which Usha is said to give in the 7th verse of the hymn are different from the cows which are prayed for in the 8th,—that the word in the former verse means light and in the next physical cows and that the Rishi has forgotten the image he was using the very moment it has fallen from his tongue.

Sometimes the prayer is not for luminous delight or luminous plenitude, but for a luminous impulsion or force; "Bring to us, O daughter of Heaven, luminous impulsions along with the rays of the Sun," *gomatīr iṣa ā vaha duhitar divaḥ, sākaṁ sūryasya raśmibhiḥ*, v.49.4. Sayana explains that this means "shining foods", but it is obviously nonsense to talk of radiant foods being brought by Dawn with the rays of the Sun. If *iṣ* means food, then we have to understand by the phrase "food of cow's flesh", but, although the eating of cow's flesh was not forbidden in the early times, as is apparent from the Brahmanas, still that this sense which Sayana avoids as shocking to the later Hindu sentiment, is not intended—it would be quite as absurd as the other,—is proved by another verse of the Rig Veda in which the Ashwins are invoked to give the luminous impulsion that carries us through to the other side of the darkness, *yā naḥ pīparad aśvinā jyotiṣmatī tamas tiraḥ, tām asme rāsāthām iṣam*.

We can perceive from these typical examples how pervading is this image of the Cow of Light and how inevitably it points to a psychological sense for the Veda. A doubt, however, intervenes. Why should we not, even accepting this inevitable conclusion that the cow is an image for Light, understand it to mean simply the light of day as the language of the Veda seems to intend? Why suppose a symbol where there is only an image? Why invite the difficulty of a double figure in which "cow" means light of dawn and light of dawn is the symbol of an inner illumination? Why not take it that the Rishis were praying not for spiritual illumination, but for daylight?

The objections are manifold and some of them overwhelming. If we assume

that the Vedic hymns were composed in India and the dawn is the Indian dawn and the night the brief Indian night of ten or twelve hours, we have to start with the concession that the Vedic Rishis were savages overpowered by a terror of the darkness which they peopled with goblins, ignorant of the natural law of the succession of night and day—which is yet beautifully hymned in many of the Suktas,—and believed that it was only by their prayers and sacrifices that the Sun rose in the heavens and the Dawn emerged from the embrace of her sister Night. Yet they speak of the undeviating rule of the action of the Gods, and of Dawn following always the path of the eternal Law or Truth! We have to suppose that when the Rishi gives vent to the joyous cry “We have crossed over to the other shore of this darkness!”, it was only the normal awakening to the daily sunrise that he thus eagerly hymned. We have to suppose that the Vedic peoples sat down to the sacrifice at dawn and prayed for the light when it had already come. And if we accept all these improbabilities, we are met by the clear statement that it was only after they had sat for nine or for ten months that the lost light and the lost sun were recovered by the Angirasa Rishis. And what are we to make of the constant assertion of the discovery of the Light by the Fathers;—“Our fathers found out the hidden light, by the truth in their thoughts they brought to birth the Dawn,” *gūḍham jyotiḥ pitaro anvavindan, satyamantrā ajanayann uṣāsam*. If we found such a verse in any collection of poems in any literature, we would at once give it a psychological or a spiritual sense; there is no just reason for a different treatment of the Veda.

If, however, we are to give a naturalistic explanation and no other to the Vedic hymns, it is quite clear that the Vedic Dawn and Night cannot be the Night and Dawn of India, it is only in the Arctic regions that the attitude of the Rishis towards these natural circumstances and the statements about the Angirases become at all intelligible. But though it is extremely probable that the memories of the Arctic home enter into the external sense of the Veda, the Arctic theory does not exclude an inner sense behind the ancient images drawn from Nature nor does it dispense with the necessity for a more coherent and straightforward explanation of the hymns to the Dawn.

We have, for instance, the hymn of Praskanwa Kanwa to the Ashwins (I.46) in which there is the reference to the luminous impulsion that carries us through to the other shore of the darkness. This hymn is intimately connected with the Vedic idea of the Dawn and the Night. It contains references to many of the fixed Vedic images, to the path of the Truth, the crossing of the rivers, the rising of the Sun, the connection between the Dawn and the Ashwins, the mystic effect and oceanic essence of the Soma Wine.

“Lo, the Dawn than which there is none higher, opens out full of delight in the Heavens; O Ashwins, the Vast of you I affirm, ye of whom the Ocean is

the mother, accomplishers of the work who pass beyond through the mind to the felicities and, divine, find that substance by the thought.—O Lords of the Voyage, who mentalise the word, this is the dissolver of your thinkings,—drink ye of the Soma violently; give to us that impulsion, O Ashwins which, luminous, carries us through beyond the darkness. Travel for us in your ship to reach the other shore beyond the thoughts of the mind. Yoke, O Ashwins, your car,—your car that becomes the vast oared ship in Heaven, in the crossing of its rivers. By the thought the powers of Delight have been yoked. The Soma-powers of delight in heaven are that substance in the place of the Waters. But where shall you cast aside the veil you have made to conceal you? Nay, Light has been born for the joy of the Soma;—the Sun that was dark has shot out its tongue towards the Gold. The path of the Truth has come into being by which we shall travel to that other shore; seen is all the wide way through Heaven. The seeker grows in his being towards increasing manifestation after manifestation of the Ashwins when they find satisfaction in the ecstasy of the Soma. Do ye, dwelling (or, shining) in the all-luminous Sun, by the drinking of the Soma, by the Word come as creators of the bliss into our humanity. Dawn comes to us according to your glory when you pervade all our worlds and you win the Truths out of the Nights. Both together drink, O Ashwins, both together extend to us the peace by expandings whose wholeness remains untorn”.

This is the straightforward and natural sense of the hymn and its intention is not difficult to follow if we remember the main ideas and images of the Vedic doctrine. The Night is clearly the image of an inner darkness; by the coming of the Dawn the Truths are won out of the Nights. This is the rising of the Sun which was lost in the obscurity—the familiar figure of the lost sun recovered by the Gods and the Angirasa Rishis—the sun of Truth, and it now shoots out its tongue of fire towards the golden Light;—for *hiranya*, gold is the concrete symbol of the higher light, the gold of the Truth, and it is this treasure not golden coin for which the Vedic Rishis pray to the Gods. This great change from the inner obscuration to the illumination is effected by the Ashwins, lords of the joyous upward action of the mind and the vital powers, through the immortal wine of the Ananda poured into mind and body and there drunk by them. They mentalise the expressive Word, they lead us into the heaven of pure mind beyond this darkness and there by the Thought they set the powers of the Delight to work. But even over the heavenly waters they cross, for the power of the Soma helps them to dissolve all mental constructions, and they cast aside even this veil; they go beyond Mind and the last attaining is described as the crossing of the rivers, the passage through the heaven of the pure mind, the journey by the path of the Truth to the other side. Not till we reach the

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highest supreme, *paramā parāvat*, do we rest at last from the great human journey.

We shall see that not only in this hymn, but everywhere Dawn comes as a bringer of the Truth, is herself the outshining of the Truth. She is the Divine Dawn and the physical dawning is only her shadow and symbol in the material universe.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

MEDICAL SECTION

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SEX ENERGY

3-12-1935

NIRODBARAN: The other day we had a discussion about the possibility of the atrophy of sex-glands as a result of sex-abstinence. Yogis say that tejas and ojas can only be produced by such abstinence.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is correct. The whole theory of brahmacharya is based upon that by the Yogis. If it were not so, there would be no need of brahmacharya for producing tejas and ojas.

It is not a question of vigour and energy per se, but of the physical support—in that physical support the ojas produced by brahmacharya counts greatly. The transformation of retas into ojas is a transformation of physical substance into a physical (necessarily producing also a vital physical) energy. The spiritual energy by itself can only drive the body, like the vital and mental, but in driving it it would exhaust it if it had not a physical support—(I speak of course of the ordinary spiritual energy, not of the supramental to be which will have not only to transmute retas into ojas but ojas into something still more sublimated.)

NIRODBARAN: How is it then that scientists attach no value to sex energy except its use for procreation? The current theory is that sex is a physiological necessity.

SRI AUROBINDO: You mean the doctors. But even all doctors do not agree in that; there are many (I have read their opinions) who say that sex-satisfaction is not an absolute necessity and sex-abstinence can be physically very beneficial and is so—of course under proper conditions.

As for scientists, the product of the sex-glands is considered by them (at least so I have read) as a great support and feeder of the general energies. It has even been considered that sex-force has a great part to play in the production of poetry, art etc. and in the action of genius generally. Finally, it is a doctor who has discovered that sex-fluid consists of two parts, one meant for sex-purposes,

the other as a basis of general energy, and if the sex action is not indulged the first element tends to be turned into the second, (retas into ojas, as the Yogis had already discovered). Theories? So are the statements or inferences of the opposite side—one theory is as good as another. Anyhow I don't think that the atrophy of the sex-glands by abstinence can be supported by general experience. X's contention is however logical if we take not individual results but the course of evolution and suppose that this evolution will follow the line of the old one, for these useless organs are supposed to disappear or deteriorate. But will the supramental evolution follow the same course as the old one or develop new adaptations of its own making—that is the uncertain element.

NIRODBARAN: Artists and poets? Isn't it said that they are as a class rather loose and lavish in their sex economy? If they indulge much in sex, how can their sex-force produce great things?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have not understood. I was answering the statement that scientists don't attach any value to sex-gland product and think it is only of use for an external purpose. Many scientists on the contrary consider it a base of productive energy; among other things it plays a part in artistic and poetic production. Not that artists and poets are anchorites and Brahmacharis but that they have a powerful sex-gland activity, part of which goes to creative and part to (effectual or ineffectual) procreative action. On the latest theory and Yoga theory, the procreative part would be retas, the creative part the basis of ojas. Now supposing the poet or artist to conserve his retas and turn it into ojas, the result would be an increased power of creative productivity.

NIRODBARAN

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

SRI AUROBINDO

It is true that the sex centre and its reactions can be transformed and that an Ananda from above can come down to replace the animal sex reaction. The sex impulse is a degradation of this Ananda. But to receive this Ananda before the physical (including the physical vital) consciousness is transformed, can be dangerous; for other and lower things can take advantage and mix in it and that would disturb the whole being and might lead into a wrong road by the impression that these lower things are part of the sadhana and sanctioned from above or simply by the lower elements overpowering the true experience. In the last case the Ananda would cease and the sex centre be possessed by the lower reactions. (18-4-1938)

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It cannot be said that it is either bad or good in a general way. It depends on the person, the effects and many other things. As a general rule, all these affinities have to be surrendered to the Divine along with the rest of the old nature—so that only what is in harmony with the Divine Truth can be kept and transformed for its work in you. All relations with others must be relations in the Divine and not of the old personal nature. (6-2-1933)

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(What is the true relation between sadhaks and sadhikas in our Ashram? Are they like brothers and sisters or just comrades?)

They are simply fellow sadhaks.

(If a boy comes here at an early age, will he be free from the difficulties that usually go with sex?)

It is not automatically true—it is only possible—but on condition he gets fully into the influence of the Mother, is not too open to the atmosphere of other sadhaks who have it, does not get upset at the initial age and also does not

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upset himself by reading erotic literature etc. There is no one who has been able to do all that yet. (8-11-1933)

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If your body is aching after the work, it may be that you are doing too much for your physical strength and straining the body. When you work, the Force comes down in you, takes the form of vital energy and supports your body so that it does not *at the time* feel the strain; but when you stop, the body goes back to its normal condition and feels the effects—it has not yet been sufficiently opened to keep the Force. You must see whether this effect (of pain) continues; if it passes away, it is all right; otherwise you must take care and not overstrain yourself by doing too much. (1932)

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It is owing to the good psychic condition in which you are that this lightness and power of work comes into you; for then you are open to the Mother's Force and it is that that works in you, so that there is no fatigue. You felt the fatigue formerly *after* the work was over because your vital was open and the vital energy was the instrument of the work, but the body consciousness was not quite open and had some strain. This time the physical seems to have opened also. (1932)

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The pain, burning, restlessness, weeping and inability to work which you feel, come when there is some difficulty or resistance in some part of the nature. When it comes call on the Mother and reject these things; turn to her for the peace and quietude to return to your mind and settle in the heart, so that there shall be no place for these other things. (1932)

POEMS

NEW YEAR

The old and fading year draws to a close,
“Draws to a close” says the awakening sky with a shower,
With a shower of celestial grace that greets the sun-rose,
The sun-rose awaiting long its fateful hour,

The fateful hour of a florescent dream,
A florescent dream sweeping all the horizons vast...
All the horizons vast will kiss the petals gold that gleam,
The petals gold that gleam effacing the silent past,

The silent past drops as goes the morning-dew,
The morning-dew at the touch of fire-rays bright and clear,
Bright and clear is fashioned time’s vision of the supernal hue,
The supernal hue ends the old and fading year.

ROBI GUPTA

THE WATERS OF SUPERMIND

UPBEAR my being boundless on thy waves,
O mighty Sea!
Free from the rock-bound isles of listening caves
Moaning eternally—
Free from vain chatterings that become a bar
To thy distant shore:
Nocturnal birds that beat their wings for a star,
Then are no more.
Come, widen my heart, O sky! O limitless Vast,
Raise up my soul!
Bear me on wings of song free from the past
Towards the goal
Of the Sun-Roads where the White Birds soar into air
Of onyx gold—
Where brilliant beings of Light weave an atmosphere
Prismic, cold,
That challenges the purity of mind—
Let body sleep,
But free my spirit from passion-plays that blind,
That make men weep.
Playthings I need not, all that I desire
Rests now with thee:
A heart upflaming with immortal fire
To Purity;
To rage through an eternity of hours,
Here to invoke
The gods on high to rouse their sleeping Powers,
And then you spoke,
O silent Waters, and came flooding down
From heights above—
Golden like the morning Sun to crown
The One I love—
Softly touched the slumbering earth to kiss
Her Secrecy,
That mortal life might wake to feel the bliss
Of Immortality—

POEMS

And human darkness know the flaming vast
Of Supermind.
Sure, inevitable footsteps trample the Past,
One Soul to find.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THE SONG OF THE TRAVELLER

The fastened doors of Love and Light
Will surely open to thee,
O human soul in Nature's night,
Groping helplessly,

Thy call has reached the regions high;
Hold on a little more;
The promised help is coming nigh
To take thee safe ashore.

To change our ordained destiny,
The silent gods now bring
Bright gifts of immortality
Where macabre agonies ring.

Within thy self and everywhere
Inaudible voices speak
Of Love and Beauty's native sphere,
Of the joyful luminous peak.

No mighty clouds can keep thee bound,
No veil can ever bind,
Soul's hidden treasures will be found,
And knowledge bathe thy mind.

The struggles growing daily tense,
The longings of thy heart,
Finding at last their proper sense
Will play their cosmic part.

SALLEN

THE KEY TO THE SUPREME TREASURÉ

THE Treasure is big and vast but the key is very small. You walk over the Treasure, by the side of it and within it also, still it is not seen and remains veiled before you. The ways to possess it are long and complex and sometimes dangerous too. A guide is required to show the safe and short way to it. The keys are there to open the Treasure. Long threads are tied to these keys which are spread from light to the darkest jungles so that from anywhere one can pull the threads and march towards the keys. Search the keys in earnest and with sincerity and with a strong will to go through all the ordeals of the path and possess the vast Treasure.

The Master of the Treasure also wants you to share in His Wealth but He awaits your fitness and capacity lest you should tumble down and vanish under its Glory and Light.

The main key is only one, but to acquire it you require to obtain five others. The first is "Complete Surrender to the Master", and to acquire it you have to start with "Aspiration, Faith, Devotion, Sincerity, and Rejection of Falsehood".

No other knowledge is necessary except your sincere will. It is so simple as that.

Just resolve and start in earnest. As you proceed, the Master will clear the ways, however complex they may be.

The Master, by His compassion, has also become like one of us and stays in our midst to make our approach easy and to give guidance.

Arise, O Sleeping Soul!

Seek the victorious Light for thy sufferings.

5-II-1955

"SADHAK"

MAN, ANGEL AND GOD

RAINER MARIA RILKE'S POETIC VISION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

(Continued from the October issue)

II

THREE spheres of reality speak to us out of Rilke's poetry. One is the world or the "outward", another the immanence of the world-inner-space. That he lays all emphasis of his expression on the unity of these two is understandable, as his consciousness received from them the most concrete impressions. Yet such a unity is only realisable out of a third region of being; therefore this region is the implicit foundation of all pure expression of Rilke.¹ Even for those beings in whom, according to him, this unity proves to be accomplished—the "Angels"—the unity is not their own as a self-creation. There is a greater reality, the transcendence, out of which the Angels once stepped forward and whose human equivalent is the soul belonging immediately to it as its pure representative—a reality that has willed and effected them as beings of that unity. Only with the presupposition of this third depth of being is it possible to understand the significance and the place of those luminous beings of the intermediate region that is the world-inner-space, beings who got hold so mightily of Rilke—

Who, if I cried, would hear me among the angelic
Orders? and even suppose one took

¹ For elucidation of some new concepts used as a basis for interpreting and systematising Rilke, see Sri Aurobindo's writings.

(Editor's Note :—Essentially a poet, Rilke works out no philosophic vision of whatever spiritual truths he intuits. Nor perhaps can it be said that he intuits a sufficient number of them to indicate on their own one specific spiritual philosophy. There have been several schemes into which Rilkeans have sought to fit them. But it seems that their richest suggestion can be discovered if we attempt to read and connect them in the light of the knowledge on which Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is built and with the help of some of his concepts and terms. This does not mean that they are a direct fore-glimmer of this knowledge and that Rilke was somehow moving in the direction of its light. Also, the suggestion they yield in our re-viewing of them does not go beyond a certain point in the Aurobindonian vision of life-transformation. Still, it is Rilke's distinction that in a general way his poetic sight can be taken up into the greater context of significance with considerable ease.)

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Me suddenly to his heart: I would vanish by his
stronger being.

There stands in the first lines of the *Elegies*, far and overmighty, the power of its "great unity" of the Here and the Beyond. ("Angels—it is said—would often not know if they moved among the living or the dead.") Glorious on their summits of creation they are to us human beings "almost deadly birds of the soul."

Should the Archangel now, the dangerous one, behind the stars,
take one single step downward and hereward:
beating high up, our own heart would slay us. Who are you?

The angelic being is too magnificent. We cannot receive it. "Each Angel is terrible" for us, a power which must destroy our life. And such all beauty is—that little part which we have from the overwhelming beauty of the Angel and which we "endure"—nothing

but the beginning of the terrible that we still barely endure,
and we admire it so because it serenely disdains
to destroy us.

The pure increase of beauty in its force becomes as dangerous for our existence as the stream of fluid gold for the earthen vessel. Only the fact that the Angels disdain us—we to whom they are indifferent—saves us.

Do not believe that I woo you,
Angel, and even if I wooed you! You would not come. For my
invocation is full of way-thither; against so strong
a streaming you cannot stride. Like a stretched
arm is my calling. And its hand open upwards
to grasp remains before you open, like defence and warning,
unimaginable one—spread out.

Is such ambitendence my whole happening before the Angels: wooing and warning, grasping and defence, calling and obstructive streaming? "And still, woe be to me, unto you I sing", for it cannot be otherwise than that the folk of the valleys strive towards the hills, than that the god inborn in man, against all predominance, presses still towards his own light. High upon the superconscious heights of the "world-inner-space" dwell mighty subjective forces: the Angels: "early achieved ones", the first-born and "favoured ones, of the Creation," themselves "mountain-ranges, auroral ridges of all beginning." They are the "pollen of the blossoming godhead", the seeds of which the divine bloom lets

itself be ravished by huge cosmic winds, that there may be world. They are the great "hinges of light", that quality of pure spiritual being of which they themselves consist, and so the ability is their own, to change the direction of the light which they are, according to the law of the hinge innate to them. This ability is the in-standing godhead of their pure light-being, who entering on its way of involution starts to assume, as "hinges of light" in Angels, the first individual forms. They are "corridors", leading channels through which the light, not overshadowed or dimmed by any self-will, flows on in exactly determined streams; "stairways", steps out of the highest divine Namelessness into the involution towards the chaotic depths of the unconscious Nihil; "thrones" of the Godhead, "spaces of essence", greatest cosmic encompassings of manifested being, configured Will in pure relatedness to the Highest; "shields of felicity", they hold themselves protectively before the blissful godhead, stifling in their own delight all suffering, all falsehood and inferiority which dares to rise out of the lower spheres up into them;

tumults

Of stormily rapturous feeling, and suddenly, separate,
mirrors: drawing up their own
 outstreamed beauty back into their faces again,

"in the whirl of their return to themselves." In this way nothing escapes them. They do not diminish. What they put forth they absorb back as their own, indestructible but wholly dissolved in movement. In this too they are superior to us; for we "evaporate; alas, we breathe ourselves out and away." Yet whatever escapes me, may it be! "Angel, to you I still show it, here! In your up-looking may it stand safe at last, now finally upright." So may the Angel receive what escapes us, the "most evanescent ones": a "smile", "pillars", "a disappearing town". In his region, under his wing it yet becomes at the end essential and stands there erect and only now "real".

To illuminate the relation between Angel and man, Rilke uses the image of the marionette stage. Here the "doll" is dancing and is, with "its face of mere appearance", the prototype of pure contentless form, an outside without inside. It is "full" seemingness, is wholly and only doll. It does not even try to deceive us as being "less than a thing". Different is man when he dances: he is "costumed" and throws his little unripe will again and again into the dress, so that he may be the "dancer". Yet this does not last long "and he becomes a bourgeois and goes through his kitchen into his apartment". He is not pure. A self-centred will tries to determine the ego which he is. But he is not able to conceive that his will belongs to another region of being and that this ego with which he identifies himself is only a "doll", only "appearance".

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Since long he has known that the value of a doll is conditioned only by the content which the child introjects into it and through which it then signifies this or that to the child. But that his ego too is "less than a thing" without those contents which find themselves introjected into it out of his sphere of "world-inner-space", to grasp this he lacks courage. But, because it is thus, because both doll and ego are meaningless without the introjections which justify their being, their value must be measured by these which dance their movements on the stage of the "outward". As spectator the ego is not useful any more. Instead of looking at itself it acts the conditionless expression of deeper vibrations. Yet a being follows its own play: the soul, the inmost self.

...If I am in the mood
to wait before the marionettes' stage, no,
to look so completely at it that, to outweigh
my seeing, at last as player
an Angel must come there, who plucks up the husks,

what has happened? Something grand: I have become the seeing one. I have withdrawn myself into the soul out of the action in which I was involved in the ego, and I am only the seeing henceforth. I do not act any more, I live a vision: an Angel must in my place carry on the play. For, that there may be world, the play must go on. I leave my ego to the Angel. He is the magnificent cosmic player. He holds innumerable strings in his hands.

Angel and puppet: then at last there is play.
Then comes together what we constantly
separate by being here. Only then originates
out of our seasons the circumference
of the whole changing. Over and across us
then plays the Angel.

Far out at the margin of "existence" plays the Angel with our ego that we, when we had chosen it for our dwelling-place, we had sought to withdraw from his influence which seemed to us "almost deadly" and which has belonged already to him, the super-mighty one, since eternity. To his play we surrender our ego; and beyond us, overpassing all our narrowness, our anguish and our smallness, he plays his play glorious and real.

In the image of the marionette-stage Rilke proves himself again a revealer of true humanhood. For this is certain: so we must live: deep in our own soul, safe and free from the play of the cosmic powers. To him who may be anxious

about his earthly existence the poet says "Angel and puppet: then at last there is play". Quickly the doubter will learn that all activity and movement whose originator he believed himself life-long to be, rests eternally in the hands of the Angels who, as no ego overshadows them, cannot do otherwise than serve divine order. To leave his actions to them is the demand put by Rilke.

What follows now is, doubtless, the crowning of the visionary poetry of Rilke—a demand following the previous one in the opposite direction: "So not only is it necessary not to look down upon all the Here and degrade it but these phenomena and things, especially for their temporariness which they share with us, shall in an inmost understanding be conceived and transformed. Transformed? Yes, for it is our task to imprint this temporary and frail earth so deeply, with such pain and passion, that its essence 'invisibly' resurrects in us. *We are the bees of the Invisible. We gather ecstatically the honey of the visible in order to amass it in the great golden hive of the Invisible.* Earth has no other escape than to become invisible: *in us who, with a part of our being, share in the Invisible, and who can increase our possession of invisibility while being here,—in us alone this intimate and constant transformation of the visible into the Invisible which no longer depends on being visible and graspable can accomplish itself just as our own fate constantly becomes in us at the same time more present and invisible....*The Angel... has nothing to do with the angel of the Christian heaven. The Angel,...is that being which stands security for conceiving in the Invisible a higher range of reality.—Therefore 'terrible' for us because we, lovers and transformers of his, are still hanging on to the visible.—All worlds of the universe plunge themselves into the Invisible as their next deeper reality: *some stars increase themselves immediately and vanish in the infinite consciousness of the Angels—others are dependent on beings who slowly and laboriously transform them, in whose terror and delight they reach their next invisible realisation. We are...these transformers of the earth, our whole being, the flights and the plunges of our love, all that enables us to perform this task (besides which no other essentially exists).*"

The visionary seeing of the soul gains its significance as precondition for the transformed state. For the earth is "dependent on beings who slowly and laboriously transform" it and only we human beings can be these "transformers of the earth". For we alone are able to live, behind the cosmic process, in our soul, what has proved to be a necessary condition for a true transformation. Entangled in the more or less lower movements of our nature, it is impossible to reach a realisation. And this realisation is Rilke's concern: no change shall be effected but a transformation—that means a great work: what has been visible shall become invisible, the objective wholly recede into the subjective world and thus get realised. This each one has to accomplish alone in himself.

The call is there to enlarge the human consciousness to the cosmic consciousness. This is the claim which Rilke feels and according to which he strove to live as best he could. The knowledge (not a mental taking for granted but a consciousness living deep in the inward) of the identity of our own being with all universal existence, to experience oneself in all things and all things in oneself, to bridge the gap between the ego and the non-ego so that everything may configure itself to a harmonious unity, no longer containing anything foreign or unknown: this is the sign of the beginning of cosmic consciousness. The human desperation in front of such conglomeration of one's own and not one's own, which one thinks one has to fear as a dissolution of individuality, has its origin in our ignorance of the soul. The ego is conceived as the centre of personality and, where such opinion rules, an enlargement of the ego, amounting almost to a dissolution must naturally lead to terror and resistance. But we know that the centre of man is not his ego—a "puppet" wholly made "out of appearance"—but his self, the true individuality of the soul. When one lives in it the dissolution of the ego loses all its terror. On the contrary: the consciousness of an infinite enrichment, of a liberation from an anguished personality's narrow limits, of a great understanding and happy intimacy, the feeling of vibrant participation in all life, of being at home in an infinite community, yes, even to experience all this with such intimate "inliness" that it can be called one's own—this wins its profound joy out of the safety in one's own soul, the indescribable security of the soul's peace which it grants and the absolute knowledge deeply imbedded in it of the high beautiful value of such a spiritual experience. This transformation is to Rilke so great a necessity and duty that, for him, beside it "no other essentially exists". Its fulfilment seems to him in his life-long wrestle for a pure subjective universality the summit of all striving. And thus the Angels must serve him as an example, these masters of the original unity of the Here and the Beyond. But now it is easy to conceive why the Angels in just this situation have to step back behind man. For, although the realisation is accomplished in them, has been there from all beginning, yet they, as pure beings of the "world-inner-space" and the "outward", who by being typical and not evolutionary are in the proper sense soul-less, and therefore lack immediate relatedness to the transcendence, cannot fulfil the transformation of the earth. What happens in the spheres below does not concern them. It is their task to accomplish the unity of both regions in enormous movements from moment to moment always anew. As the greatest cosmic forces they keep up the condition whose high presence is indispensable for every lower effort for its realisation. They are the preservers attesting from all eternity the unity of the entire universal existence—guaranteeing gods of the cosmic consciousness.

(To be continued)

JOBST MÜHLING

T. S. ELIOT

T. S. ELIOT, however one may differ with his theories about poetry and its diction and subject-matter, has done a good deal in widening the horizon of the creative writer as well as the literary critic. One most significant contribution of his poetry is the health he brings to it by reaffirming values of the Spirit to a culture that is decaying because of the spiritual drought that prevails everywhere. And his other important service to literary thought is the stress he puts on the truth that the pattern of life is ever new-revealed. His profoundest work, *Four Quartets*, again and again returns to this theme which has leavened also his critical writings and his plays.

Is it not a fact that each day that rises unfolds to us a novel pattern of life as a whole, and we have to make readjustments and change our appraisals of men and events made in the light of the design so far discerned? Take the life of the individual. If we look back at our past now, we shall give values to its circumstances as they have helped or hindered our present sense of progress. But if we begin to pursue other ideals, then our evaluation of things that have happened will undergo a sea-change. In History this truth is even more palpable. Each new historian accounts for the past according to the pattern that *he* discovers in the universal march of events. If you look up the chronological table at the end of that once-popular book by a historian whose views have fallen into desuetude, H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, and glance at the "great events" of the world in the year 1926, you will find this: "General Strike in Great Britain arising out of a coal lock-out. The French franc fell to a value below the English penny, but its fall was arrested, its value restored to twopence by a coalition government, formed to face the crisis. Fall of Abd-el-Krim." If any crank had had the audacity to put in the suggestion to include among these "most significant events" the descent of the Divine Consciousness into Sri Aurobindo and the birth of the Ashram, we are sure Wells would have chuckled derisively even though he was peevish by temperament. But we may now legitimately expect the historian of tomorrow to give the greatest importance to this event and not even mention those strikes and monetary problems.

History, during the last century, has successively unfolded different patterns. There was the Marxian pattern which showed the whole passage of History as the struggle of man for his economic well-being and this naturally gave prominence to those events which show man at his lowest; for, in this

interpretation even his vital urges of ambition and power fade into thin air and lose all their reality. Spengler, after Nietzsche, saw human history as the no-quarter battle of the will-to-power and man merely as a degenerated beast of prey except in such races where savagery runs riot without any qualms of conscience. There is, according to him, no goal of History and no continuity in it because every culture is a biological entity which is born, and grows into adolescence and then matures into old age and finally sinks into the primal dust. Toynbee has discovered a religious pattern in History and, according to him, cultures draw their sustenance from their religious sap and die of inanition when they cut themselves adrift from their souls. Whereas for Spengler the decline and ultimate extinction of the West is an ineluctable destiny, for Toynbee Europe can be resuscitated by the fusion of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. He echoes what Sri Aurobindo saw in his spiritual vision many decades back. Sri Aurobindo wrote: "We must go back to the one thing needful, take up again Christ's gospel of purity and Mohammad's gospel of perfect submission, self-surrender and servitude to God, Chaitanya's gospel of the perfect love and joy of God in man, Ramakrishna's gospel of the unity of all religions and the divinity of God in man, and, gathering all these streams into one mighty river, one purifying and redeeming Ganges, pour it over the death-in-life of a materialistic humanity...so that there may be a resurrection of the soul in mankind and the Satyayuga for a while return to the world."

The greatest, most comprehensive, lofty and global in sweep is the pattern of man's collective life as seen and lummously developed by Sri Aurobindo. He has taken up the multitudinous trends of human history and shown how even through collisions and clashes an all-seeing Eye, by its imperial will, drives man towards a Life Divine on earth which will mean the fulfilment of all his visions of the Age of Gold. Man's Art, Poetry, Science and ethical pursuits, all are pointers that their culmination lies in their spiritual plenitude and fulfilment. There is a spiritual Beauty whose vague hints a poet like Shelley envisioned in his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. Science also, as it is approaching the borders of the physical domain, finds itself face to face with a supra-rational mystery from which the mind can receive intuitive intimations or into which it can grow by "deeper ways" but which cannot submit itself to his instruments as a material entity. How can a consciousness greater than the human be known by human ways of knowledge? The *summum bonum* too exists far from human ethical laws and moral rules of conduct. Sri Aurobindo has shown how the different trends in English poetry are woven in a pattern which manifests by and by the spiritual vision of Divine Truth in its aspect of Beauty. It is the presence of this Truth that Eliot senses, and against its background he

tries in his dramas to suggest the real significance of the ubiquitous boredom and weariness that dogs the extrovert life of modern man. Sri Aurobindo, in his book *The Human Cycle*, traces the spiral of man's progress and marks in it certain distinct stages each shading off inevitably into another, thus deepening, heightening and widening man's consciousness. There was, to begin with, the symbolic age and then the conventional age and then the age of Reason and Individualism. Today the subjective age is the precursor of the spiritual age. The individual, grown conscious of his inner world, discovers his complete isolation from others and with a transparent gaze sees through the falsity and illusion of human relationships of love which do not bring even the most well-suited companions close together but merely create an illusion that they are bound by the ties of love. Each individual appears to be a sort of monad with no windows by which he can communicate with others. Within himself he discovers a teeming world full of desire, passions, dreams and ideas that come and go sometimes at random like birds of passage and sometimes are called in by willed concentration.

The subjectivism that we see in modern literature stops short of the true subjectivism which will disclose to us behind this concourse of thoughts and desires our true self which is eternal, all-pervasive and not the ego which blocks us off from others. But as a stepping-stone to that high state of knowledge it is essential and also an augury that the human consciousness should tend to withdraw from the froth on the superficies and go deep down and make an exploration of the whole subjective universe. So long as the individual lives on the surface and there meets others, he is cocksure of his appraisals, but as he goes within himself deeper he finds that he knows nothing about others precisely because he does not know anything about himself. He knows very little about his own real motives behind his actions, much less those of others.

In Eliot's play *The Confidential Clerk* Sir Claude makes these remarks:

There's a lot I don't understand about my wife.
 There's always something one's ignorant of
 About anyone, however well one knows them;
 It's when you're sure you understand a person
 That you're liable to make the worst mistake about him.
 As a matter of fact, there's a lot I don't know
 About you, Eggeron, although we worked together
 For nearly thirty years.

And Eggeron replies:

Nearly thirty one.
 But now you put it so convincingly,

MOTHER INDIA

I must admit there's a lot that *I* don't understand
About my wife.

And then Sir Claude clinches the matter:

And just as much
She doesn't know about you. And just as much
You don't know about me—I'm not sure of that!
My rule is to remember that I understand nobody,
But on the other hand never to be sure
That they don't understand me—a good deal better
Than I should care to think, perhaps.

I propose to study some of Eliot's plays as indicative of the new trend in human consciousness.

The Cocktail Party, as the title suggests, opens with a cocktail party where all the guests are in a state of utter boredom, listlessness and ennui. Time hangs heavy on their hands and they are anxious to beguile it by some light and purposeless talk and yet no one is in a mood to pay heed to what the other is recounting. Life is aimless and therefore an irksome burden. This boredom is also indicative of the growing subjectivism, when the individual in the midst of gaiety feels a brooding sadness weighing him down and shadowing his life. The hero has suddenly come to know that his wife has left him for good. It has come to him as a staggering blow and now the ground is rocking under his feet. This buffet prompts in him not so much a sense of having been betrayed and the shocking discovery "Frailty thy name is woman" but the feeling of being roused from an illusory world of make-believe! The subject discovers in a flash that he is also an object. That is how the Doctor diagnoses his bewilderment:

...There's a loss of personality;
Or rather, you've lost touch with the person
You thought you were. You no longer feel quite human.
You're suddenly reduced to the status of an object—
A living object but no longer a person.
It's always happening; because one is an object
As well as a person...

Then there follows a simile classical in its simplicity and clarity:

Or take a surgical operation.
In consultation with the doctor and the surgeon,

In going to bed in the nursing home,
In talking to the matron, you are still the subject,
The centre of reality. But, stretched on the table,
You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop
For those who surround you, the masked actors;
All there's of you is your body
And the 'you' is withdrawn...

Here is not only a deep insight into the human consciousness but also the seizing hold of an occult law. The blows fall on us from time to time so that we are shaken out of our complacency in which we are liable to take things for granted. At each step man wishes to believe that he has reached the summit of wisdom and that his appraisals of men and events are just and right, but then some shock, some disillusionment wakes him from that subjective dreamland and he turns his gaze inwards and studies himself as an object in order to make the necessary readjustments with his surroundings. The effect of such clashes is that we become aware of our own limitations and sometimes the pendulum swings from the extreme of vanity to the extreme of humiliation and then the balance is struck at true humility. Edward, the hero of the play, feels that his wife's desertion has made him 'contemptible' in the eyes of his friends but the Doctor who is present all the while as an unidentified guest and who is a spiritual healer tells him:

You will find that you survive humiliation.
And that's an experience of incalculable value.

This experience of humiliation is valuable not because vanity and pride are unseemly blemishes but because it helps one to know one's true subjective self better. Edward is keen to get back his wife because for the first time he finds that he knows nothing about her and he is anxious to know what has actually happened during these five years of their married life. Now only it is dawning on him that they were never what they have been appearing to each other. He will know himself through her because she has seen him objectively. He says:

I must find out who she is, to find out who I am.
And what is the use of all your analysis
If I am to remain always lost in the dark?

And the Doctor replies:

There's certainly no purpose in remaining in the dark
Except long enough to clear from the mind
The illusion of having ever been in the light.

MOTHER INDIA

The effect of this conversation is that Edward has been smitten awake from his illusory identification with his lower nature—known as *Prakriti* in Indian philosophy and constituted of mental, vital and physical movements.

That is an important point; for man, to start with, merely drifts along the current of his desires, passions and mental ideas. But then some shock jogs him and he pulls himself up and begins to watch dispassionately the nature of his own subjective being. He finds here an endless multitude of memories, dreams surging up and then winging off and leaving in their trail a caravan of associations. Like the external world, this also teems with a mingled stuff. There are the finest emotions, spontaneous play of the fountains of love, wide sympathies and lofty ideals but also there are the benighted creatures full of the muck of jealousies, lusts and wraths. Sometimes the eye falls on the brighter regions and sometimes on the grubby lanes. Again some human beings relish more the grub than the clover. For instance, in *The Confidential Clerk* Lucasta says to Colby:

It's awful for a man to have to give up
A career that he's set his heart on, I'm sure:
But it's only the outer world that you've lost:
You've still got your inner world—a world that's more real.
That's why you're different from the rest of us:
You've your secret garden; to which you can retire
And lock the gate behind you.

About herself she says:

No, my only garden is...a dirty public square
In a shabby part of London—like the one where I lived
For a time, with my mother. I've no garden.

And the next lines are most significant because, as already pointed out, so long as a person identifies himself with his superficial consciousness he goes about swimmingly with a false idea of his personality. But when he goes within himself he discovers that this is no personality but merely a floating mass. This discovery precedes the other discovery of the psyche which is the real person behind this conglomeration. Lucasta says in effect:

I hardly feel that I'm even a person:
Nothing but a bit of living matter
Floating on the surface of the Regent's Canal.
Floating that's it.

That is the beginning of the effort to give a shape to this chaotic mass in the light of a central idea. For that, the first necessity is, as we have seen, to draw back from the flux and become a witness; only then shall we be able to lay our will on it and direct its movements. Reverting to *The Cocktail Party*, when Peter, who also believes that his loved one has cold-shouldered him, meets Edward and seeks his advice, then it is another Edward we encounter. Edward instead of sympathising with the jilted lover congratulates him on his being roused from that sleep-waking state. But, as yet, he finds himself in a state of suspense; for, though the old things are beginning to lose their hold on him, the new have not yet filled the void. He says pathetically:

That is the worst moment, when you feel that you have lost
The desire for all that was most desirable,
And before you are contented with what you can desire;
Before you know what is left to be desired;
And you go on wishing that you could desire
What desire has left behind...

He begins dimly to be aware of the two selves in man—not the good and the evil angel, but the one lower involved in the time-movement and tied to the spur of the moment and the other, silent, free and immutable because it is not the blind ego at the mercy of the tricky winds of passion but self-possessed, cosmic and divine. This higher self standing back from the swirls and eddies of the lower nature is yet its true Lord, its guardian. Edward glimpses it faintly when he says:

The self that can say 'I want this—or want that'—
The self that wills—he is a feeble creature;
He has to come to terms in the end
With the obstinate, the tougher self; who does not speak,
Who never talks, who cannot argue;
And who in some men may be the guardian...

And for the ignorant ego the best course is to follow its dictates and surrender its will to its Supreme Will which is one with divine knowledge. The willing self can, in Eliot's words:

only flourish
In submission to the rule of the stronger partner.

(To be continued)

R. N. KHANNA

COMPETITION IN YOGA

SPIRITUAL life is not a life of competition; on the contrary it demands an entire self-giving to the Divine. The secret of success in Yoga lies, says Sri Aurobindo, in giving oneself and not in demanding or acquiring. Each one has to give himself according to the best of his power and capacity but that should not lead one to do things in a competitive spirit. All competition arises from desire, jealousy, and egoistic motives like running down others and making oneself either dominant or famous. These motives have to be strictly eschewed in Yoga. Yoga is not done for any personal profit in the egoistic sense. The first thing in the ascension of consciousness from the ordinary human to the divine or spiritual status is the attainment of universality and impersonality. Without this attainment, we remain bound to our narrow egoistic personality, to overcome which is the whole object of the spiritual life.

If we want to be a true doer of divine works, says Sri Aurobindo, we must first be free from all desire and self-regarding ego. All stress of egoistic choice, all hankering after personal profit, such as power, position, authority, must be extirpated from our nature. Even when we have made considerable advance towards achieving this universality and impersonality, we cannot pander to our limited ego by such thoughts as I am a better sadhak than such and such, I know better than others, I am more advanced etc. etc.—thoughts which naturally come to the ego when it looks at things from a competitive standpoint. It goes without saying that the least of any such vanity will vitiate the spiritual effort. Moreover all work done in a competitive spirit, however good it might be from the worldly standpoint, will lead to intrigue, falsehood, jealousy and thus away from the spiritual path. In Yoga each one has to strive his best to make an effort for a whole-hearted dedication, but that must be done quietly, peacefully, silently according to one's own *swabhava*, *swadharma*. When one follows one's own nature in self-giving to the Divine, the question of following another's line of action (*Parodharma*) or of imitating or competing with others, does not arise. It is the foundation of the spiritual consciousness that is the first object in the evolution of the spiritual man. It is the one thing needful that has to be done by each, says Sri Aurobindo, on whatever line is possible to him,—by each according to the spiritual capacity developed in his nature. To do otherwise is to deviate from the spiritual path and even invite great perdition (*Mahati Vinasthi*).

COMPETITION IN YOGA

As for work in the spiritual life, it is best to remind us from time to time of what Sri Aurobindo says: "The work here is not intended for showing one's capacity or having a position or as a means of physical nearness to the Mother, but as a field and an opportunity for the Karma Yoga part of the integral yoga, for learning to work in the true yogic way—dedication through service, practical selflessness, obedience, scrupulousness, discipline, setting the Divine and the Divine's work first and oneself last, harmony, patience, forbearance etc. When the workers learn these things and cease to be ego-centric, then will come the time for work..." "We should guard ourselves against rajasic over-eagerness in work as much as against tamasic inertia and indifference. Here is what the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have respectively said on the matter. "The power of the vital should be mistrusted, it is a tempter on the path of the work, and there is always a risk of falling into its trap, for it gives you the taste of immediate results; and, in our first eagerness to do the work well, we let ourselves be carried away to make use of this power. But very soon it deflects all our actions from the right course and introduces a seed of illusion and death into what we do."—"Carelessness and negligence and indolence she abhors; all scamped and hasty and shuffling work, all clumsiness and *à peu près* and misfire, all false adaptations and misuse of instruments and faculties and leaving of things undone or half done..."

It follows then that there is no scope for any competition or rivalry, any ambition, deceit or falsehood in the spiritual work where the only object in action "shall be to serve, to receive, to fulfil, to become a manifesting instrument of the Divine Shakti in her works," leading to the growth of the true divine consciousness in us.

JIBENDRA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

City of Paradise and other Kulapati's Letters (Second Series) by *K. M. Munshi*. Publishers: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is perhaps the greatest attempt after the freedom of our Motherland to found an educational institution which aims at ensuring 'that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharata and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds. Vishwa Bharati, Benares Hindu University and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan stem from the growing realization on the part of those of her children who have seen the rubble behind the façade of the modern European culture, and have sought the Truth in the eternal verities uttered by our ancient seers. Thus 'the ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi'.

K. M. Munshi is the Kulapati thus reviving the ancient traditions of our education which was more formative than informative. 'Kulapati's letters' as the Publishers' note says, 'have grown into an institution. Fortnight after fortnight newspapers and journals, spread over the entire country, relay them to eager, expectant readers. These letters have acquired a certain indispensability in our cultural life by their peculiarly inspiring and ennobling qualities which stir in us a consciousness of our rich heritage and an urge to prove worthy of that heritage.'

Munshi has a facile pen and his English style is one which can be safely recommended to Indians writing in English. It is simple, fluent, graphic and very perspicuous. He is a master in the art of narrative and the reader is gripped till he has run through the book from cover to cover.

The first letter is dated May 31, 1953 and sets out to give a vivid description of the great city of Hyderabad—a city which has been the stage of a most historic drama in recent Indian History and in which Munshi himself played a historic role. He stayed there as a representative of the Indian Government during the stormy days of the police action. The letter not only describes those days but also ferries us back to the remote past and forth to our own times,

skimming over a very colourful history. He writes about the history of the State: "It played a great part in the evolution of India as a political and cultural unit. Warring armies passed and repassed over it; various language groups and different ways of life had met here and evolved new values; faith had clashed with faith. Here conflicts had been resolved by adjustments; the adjustments led to a synthesis—a synthesis, not of splinters, but of whole cultures, creating, with every century, a synthesis at a new level. The meeting of forces in this Region of Fate resulted in a sort of equilibrium of energy which was reflected in the outburst of the creative spirit in Ajanta and Ellora and the intellectual spirit, no less than in the wonderful toleration of multi-lingual and multi-cultural groups. Even the impact of Islam resulted in its cultural trends fitting into the pattern already existent." The author describes each historical place, giving delectably its historic background.

The second letter is most significant; for, it gives us an insight into the spiritual quest of the author. How right from his childhood he felt the humdrum life as most unsatisfying and yearned to overpass his mortal self. He assiduously pored over the different sciences but found they leave man where and what he is, and do not point the way by which he can exceed himself. Says he: "There was no doubt that science had acquired considerable knowledge about the outside world, moreover it had some knowledge of how the mind worked. But it did not have any idea of how I worked and lived; how I yearned for something higher and more satisfying; why in my memory, a face or a figure would seize me; how I had the ceaseless urge to reach beyond normal experience; why and how my mind went back again and again to *Vasishtha*, *Vishwamitra* and *Vyas*, making me feel more of myself." Our minds recall the words of Sri Aurobindo regarding this feeling in modern man "...today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last,—God, Light, Freedom, Immortality." The author has been from his adolescence struck by the grand personality of Sri Aurobindo who kindled in him first the fire of true patriotism and then stood out before him as the creator of the Integral Yoga. He writes: "I had seen before my eyes the evolution of Sri Aurobindo; the way in which *Yoga* fascinated him; the sudden change in his life; his swift transformation into a centre of the manifest Spirit." His description of the creative process is very instructive and thrilling. He says: "First, my mind would concentrate upon a character or a situation: then, thought, emotion and will would throb in unison with it; that led to creative concentration. The product was always an unexpected achievement, a satisfying creation, making me feel different, better than before—more myself." The whole account is worth reading. Some of the other letters are full of deep thought and radiate the glow

of a highly sensitized personality full of warmth and love. The portrait of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel is reminiscent of the days when the present pilots of our destiny were law-breakers and had often to undergo long terms in gaols. Sardar Patel rises to our eyes as a bronze figure inflexibly firm of will and indomitable and steadfast in his determination.

The last letter bearing the title "Matter and Life—the 'Thinking' and the 'Higher Minds'—the Land of the Spirit" embodies the spiritual outlook of the author and traces his spiritual evolution. He has never been able to lend countenance to Mayavada which reduces the world of our experience to Illusion. The world having been created by God, he comes to the logical conclusion: "The world is about us, as real as real can be, though its reality is passing through or rather is in a state of flux; it is also an expression of something very real and abiding. And if this something is God, He must, somehow or other, manifest Himself in the world of mind and matter; whether He descends as an *avatar* or manifests Himself in highly sensitive human instruments is a matter of little consequence." He leaves the significance of the manifestation of God vague. Do we not get it in Sri Aurobindo deftly crystallised in a comprehensive sentence? "To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution."

The author ends the book with these words which point the way towards a synthetic spiritual ideal: "When a race or a culture ignores or scoffs at the 'higher mind' or the spirit in order to emphasise intellectual power, all things which give meaning to individual life and a sense of mission to collective existence lose their value. The moral sense becomes blunted; the spirit withholds its inspiration. Man sinks into a unit of living matter and has nothing to look forward to but total uselessness."

The letters are very inspiring and range over an enormous field and are bound to instil in the minds of the readers a love for their Motherland which is free from all jingoism and parochialism but wide enough to embrace the whole of humanity. This is the need of the hour and we welcome the publication of the volume.

R. N. KHANNA

Essays and Studies: Edited by D.M.Low (John Murray, London. Pp. 114. Price 106)

THIS eighth volume in the New Series of Essays and Studies collected for the English Association keeps up the variety and high quality of its predecessors. In the first essay, 'Editing And Emending', John Crow says very modestly that he desires to discuss some of the problems of the editor and emendor of English texts "in a most elementary manner." But neither his discussion, nor that of the five other authors whose essays are in this volume, is merely elementary. All of them take up some important matter connected with literature and discuss it with learning and critical acumen. The essays are either comprehensive so far as the theme as a whole is concerned, or detailed so far as particular points of study are concerned.

Mr. Crow emphasises at the beginning some of the first principles connected with his topic. There can be no question of the view that "The editor of a text desires to come as close as he can to what the author wrote—not what he should have written." This appears so obvious and yet it had to be mentioned at the beginning because considering the emendations of passages in Shakespeare it would appear that many editors had forgotten this and aimed at improving Shakespeare. A good editor's aim should be to discover, whether good or bad, what the author wrote. The earliest edition may in many cases be the best. The errors of transcription may sometimes be clearly seen. The habits of thought of the author may be discovered and will be of use to discover what he must have written. In recent times careful research has revealed how certain words and ideas went together in Shakespeare's mind. Spaniels and sweetmeats and flattery and melting got together into Shakespeare's mind. An editor is much helped by an understanding of these things. His work is often not valued sufficiently; but the amount and variety of the knowledge and the powers and virtues of the mind he needs are considerable.

The second essay is a study of W.H.Mallock's 'New Paul and Virginia.' It is an essay which is both literary and philosophical. Mallock had gone to Jowett's Balliol in 1870, and lost his faith. But he got nothing in its place. Hence he felt a grudge as it were. He brought that out in his writings. 'The New Paul and Virginia' satirises the absurdities that had entangled him at Balliol, namely "the enthusiasm for humanity", "the passion for the welfare of posterity", and "the godless deification of domestic puritanism for its own sake". In conversations between typical characters the satire is well brought out. Here is an example:

"Yes, my dear curate," said the Professor, "what I am enjoying is the champagne you drink, and what you enjoy is the champagne I drink." The

hair-splitting, inconsistency and seeming wisdom of the sceptical thinkers is brought out in passages like the following:

An old woman whose son was drowned is comforted with the words:

“I announce to you that your son is alive....It is true I saw him sink...and he was then snapped up by a shark. But he is as much alive as ever in his posthumous activities. He has made your life wretched after him; and that is his future life. Become an exact thinker, and you will see that this is so. Old woman, listen to me—*You are your son in hell.*” By suitable quotations like these in the midst of his summary of the study, and by running comments, the author of the essay, P.M. Yarker, discusses many aspects of the thought of the positivists.

The next essay is largely biographical. Anna Gurney's story must be of great interest to all scholars. Born in 1795 she became a cripple when two months old on account of an accidental fall. But her keen mind asserted itself, and she became a great scholar in languages. Her great work was the translation of the Saxon Chronicles into English. By quotations from her work and that of Dr. Ingram, G.M. Garmonsway shows the superiority of her translation. But the essay is very interesting also as a sketch of life and character.

The study of Mallock's 'New Paul and Virginia' revealed, as it were, a satiric work in action. Mr. John Lawlor in his essay on 'Radical Satire and the Realistic Novel' makes a survey of the wide field of satire. Dryden and Butler, Langland and Addison, Swift and Flaubert are all subjected to careful scrutiny. The destructive and constructive in satire, the relation between criticism and characterization in satiric works, all these are touched upon. In the same way A.E. Dyson in his 'Interpretation of Comus' has produced a fine critical contribution. How 'Comus' is a delightful work in itself and how it is an introduction to Milton's later work are clearly shown. The discussion of the question of chastity is particularly interesting. Many wider moral questions are touched upon in this discussion.

Literary and philosophical perceptions enrich also C.B. Cox's study of 'Henry James and Stoicism'. He points out the similarity and difference between the stoicism of Epictetus and of Henry James. The earlier man relied on indifference while the later one relied on the appreciation of the real position of man on earth. In this way all the essays combine literary criticism and philosophy and it is this combination that gives real value to this book.

P. L. STEPHEN

Students' Section

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRÍ AUROBINDO

EXPERIENCES

2-1-1934—18-8-1934.

SELF: Quietness, calm and receptivity, creating a happy state, are increasing.

SRI AUROBINDO: If you have that experience it is very good—for it is the first step.

SELF: How can one be sure that what one takes to be an experience of calm and of inner contact with the Divine is really so?

SRI AUROBINDO: An experience is an unmistakable thing and must be given its proper value. The mind may exaggerate in thinking about it but that does not deprive it of its value.

SELF: How is it that the consciousness loses its activity of experience after a short while every day?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is often like that—the period of intense activity is limited to a particular part of the day and for the rest of the time there is a lull.

SELF: When it is possible to sustain an experience of inner silence and fire for long, can one have it continuously? Or is the being ready only for a prolonged experience?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it can have it now from time to time, but an absolutely continuous experience (it would no longer be an experience then, but an established condition) is not likely so soon.

SELF: The consciousness is indrawn and there is an inner fire, but the mind is unable to aspire at the time of the experience.

SRI AUROBINDO: Aspiration during the period of experience is not so necessary. It is in the intervals that it should be there.

MOTHER INDIA

SELF: One experiences Love and Ananda, but they disappear after a while.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is so with all spiritual experiences. The ordinary consciousness is not accustomed to hold them.

SELF: A fall in concentration is very upsetting.

SRI AUROBINDO: Fall of the concentration happens to everybody—it has not to be taken as if it were something tragic or allowed to be the cause of depression.

SELF: When the experiences which were coming at one time stopped and were followed by a sort of inertia which was greatly depressing, you spoke of the need for “a quiet and even basis of sadhana”. What does your phrase mean exactly?

SRI AUROBINDO: A quiet and even basis means a condition of the sadhana in which there is no tossing about between eager bursts of experience and a depressed inert or half inert condition, but whether in progress or in difficulty there is always a quiet consciousness behind turned in confidence and faith towards the Divine.

SELF: All sorts of experiences are, of course, valuable, but is it not true that unless the being is filled with peace, there is always a chance of falling?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes—if the peace is established, then the falls are only on the surface, and do not affect the inner consciousness.

SELF: In one's working time, one's self can experience peace and watch quietly, but mechanical thoughts of an obscure type can still keep running. Is it the vital being that is non-cooperating in the sadhana?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is for you to observe. There are usually parts of the vital and physical which do not take great interest in the sadhana—until the whole being is converted.

SELF: When one concentrates, one sometimes gets the experience of gathering different lights or forces in the head at one and the same time and the head does not keep steady—and there is also difficulty in paying attention to the things of the exterior plane.

SRI AUROBINDO: I suppose the physical consciousness is not accustomed to the play of lights or forces. But when you concentrate what is the need of attending to the things of the exterior plane?

SELF: What is the value of “visions” in spirituality?

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO: Visions are not indispensable—they are a help, that is all, when they are of the right kind.

SELF: There is at times a strong concentration at the forehead centre and one feels as if something were flowing down into one from there. And yet one has a feeling of resistance to the pressure of the descending light.

SRI AUROBINDO: The feeling of resistance may be the result of the effort at response. When there is the free flow there is neither effort nor resistance.

SELF: If the feeling of resistance may be the result of the effort at response, is it wrong to make an effort—e.g. to aspire for the light that is pressing to descend?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. But when you make the effort you will naturally become conscious of whatever resistance there may be to the effort.

SELF: The Mother's Force, instead of descending through the head, seems to come at times through the forehead.

SRI AUROBINDO: It can come in anywhere but the normal way of descent is through the head.

SELF: In silence sometimes one gets the experience of something entering the forehead centre and fixing the concentration there. Is the Force ascending to that point?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why ascending? What enters the forehead comes usually from above or from around.

SELF: You have said: "It is through the spine that in the Tantric sadhana the Kundalini rises." Can we have Tantric experiences here?

SRI AUROBINDO: One can feel the experiences of any sadhana as a part of this one.

SELF: Was the experience of the Mother's Force interfered with by the lower vital's depression because that Force entered this part of the being?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may have been—but very often the lower Nature pushes these things across an experience in opposition to the working of the force.

SELF: Is it the Mother who stops a certain line of experiences in order to make the consciousness attend to something else?

SRI AUROBINDO: The experiences stop because the consciousness is defective.

NAGIN DOSHI

POEMS

DUSK

The day now fades with weary glare
Upon the shore where sun withdraws;
From depths of far slow dreaming air
The dusk a poem of dimness grows.

A vague and giant stillness falls
Upon the mighty-murmured wood,
Earth's heart of changing passion-calls,
And sea's inhuman solitude.

On heights where shadows have unfurled,
A jewelled vigil has begun—
With dark and silence of the world
Speech-flowering of the Voiceless One.

DHANANJAY

POEMS

THE BIRTH OF THE INFINITE

The golden dawn of the Cosmos rapt in trance,
Awaits the Birth of the All.

The seven worlds' delight tortures her heart
With august and sun-vast call.

Slowly the Peak unmeasured of rapture-fire
Climbs down to our human cry.
His diamond vision's deathless Will leans low
Our mortal frames to dye.

Suddenly life's giant somnolence is stirred.
His all-embracing Wing
Declares, "I come to end your eyeless fear,
To me alone now cling.

No fleeting dreams are traced by your teeming births:
Now own my infinite Bloom.
In me the flood of immortality!
Nowhere shall be your doom."

CHINMOY

MOTHER INDIA

HOME AND THE MOTHER

I scaled Heaven's pinnacle all in white
And saw that not one shred of my life
Was left below in abysmal night;
Mere soul had rushed not to a lone escape.

Above me still was my native clime,
Watching me stood the Mother of Stars.
To reach her heart I wrestled with time:
My love could bear separation no more.

“I shall lift thee when thy god-hour beats,
Till then stay on with my Light below.
Let its force prepare thy earthly sheaths
And mould them for my Apocalypse.”

Then changed the vision on a sudden:
All vanished into oblivion vast—
She and the sight of my home and heaven
Were now but sensations echoing sweet.

Yet soul on earth was in bliss at last,
It had seen its source and its Mother Divine
Eclipsed from the memory for aeons past;
Zeal-fired it plunged to its toil again.

NAGIN DOSHI

“CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

*(An expansion of Notes given to the First Year Poetry Class at the
Sri Aurobindo International University Centre)*

III

WHEN we turn to Romanticism we need to make two capital distinctions. We have not only to mark Romanticism off from Classicism. We have also to mark off two Romanticisms one from the other—and in a sense in which we do not mark off the various phases of the Classical. Differentiating Romanticism from Classicism, R.A. Scott-James labels as Classical the virtues and defects which go with the notions of fitness, propriety, measure, restraint, conservatism, authority, calm, experience, comeliness and in contrast he labels as Romantic those which are suggested by excitement, energy, restlessness, spirituality, curiosity, troublousness, progress, liberty, experiment, provocativeness. If Scott-James is accepted superficially, Classicism would seem to be a pretty tame affair and Romanticism rather hectic, even the spirituality attributed to it appearing dubious by being sandwiched between restlessness and curiosity. No doubt, the qualities mentioned are there, but in isolation from several others they look somewhat haphazard.

Thus it is a mistake to confine energy to Romanticism. If Homer and Aeschylus, Lucretius and Milton are not energetic, then one does not know what energy can mean. Only, theirs is an energy more contained, more organised than in the Romantics. Again, to give spirituality to Romanticism without granting anything analogous to Classicism is to forget what a living sense of powers beyond the human is at work in the Greek poets as well as in Dante and Milton: Classicism is hardly a secular poetry in the ordinary sense of secularity. Also, we must guard against the misconception that a poet writing with restraint and calm and comeliness is debarred from being spiritual. Spirituality is possible to all temperaments and in all manners. Further, Romanticism cannot be spiritual by simply cultivating the excitement and liberty which are supposed to be absent in Classicism. If it becomes spiritual it is precisely by ceasing to be nerve-ridden or merely defiant of authority and by drawing upon possibilities of a subtle inner force and a subtle inner freedom. All we can say is that Classicism, as we historically know it, has been religious rather than spiritual

because of the particular plane of consciousness within which it has functioned.

Historically, Classicism may be fully defined by three categories together. In manner of articulation, it is unornamented, measured, finished, attentive to the total effect. In turn of mind, it is systematic, lucid, beautifully general, broadly keen—its spirit is, as Sri Aurobindo says, “to bring out what is universal and subordinate individual expression to universal truth and beauty.” In range of vision, it is mostly restricted to the intellect’s power of seeing and comprehending: what is beyond the intellect it does not intimately or directly touch: it goes by a religious thought and feeling rather than a spiritual perception close to the supra-intellectual reality. In that sense it is not “visionary”. But, because it is not thus “visionary”, it does not work by a process of intellect: as Sri Aurobindo reminds us, it works just as much as Romanticism by a large vision and inspiration, else it could be no more than pseudo-Classical, mere aesthetised intellectuality and not creative and interpretative art. On the other hand, all Romanticism is not visionary in the spiritual connotation. What can be called visionary in it is its soaring off easily into fantasy and wonder: its attraction towards the fantastic and the wondrous, however, keeps it more free than Classicism to exceed the limits of outer reality and develop an acuter inner sight and tend towards spiritual visionariness. Its power to do this comes from its source’s lying not in the creative Intelligence that is Classicism’s plane or at least not in that part of this Intelligence where Classicism sees and comprehends. And the range of vision it enjoys is articulated in a manner that is coloured, expansive, wilful, enamoured of parts and particulars. Its turn of mind is saltatory and insatiate, strangely suggestive, passionately gripping, breaking onward from point after intensely seized point—its spirit is, as Sri Aurobindo declares, “to bring out what is striking and individual, and this it often does so powerfully or with so vivid an emphasis as to throw into the background of its creation the universal, on which yet all true art romantic or classical builds and fills in its forms.”

Apropos setting forth the universal or throwing into relief the striking and individual, Sri Aurobindo, with his wonted integrality of outlook, continues: “In truth, all great art has carried in it both a classical and a romantic as well as a realistic element,—understanding realism in the sense of the prominent bringing out of the external truth of things, not the perverse inverted romanticism of the ‘real’ which brings into exaggerated prominence the ugly, common or morbid and puts that forward as the whole truth of life. The type of art to which a great creative work belongs is determined by the prominence it gives to one element and the subdual of the others into subordination to its reigning spirit.” The prominence, we may add, is itself determined by the plane of consciousness from which a poet habitually writes, and the plane keeps him Classical

or Romantic in essence despite the opposite strain which to some degree is always there.

So much for marking off Classicism and Romanticism from each other. What of the two Romanticisms we have mentioned? No doubt, they have more themes and moods in common than Classicism shares with either. However, we must not be careless of a basic dissimilarity between the two manifestations of the Romantic—basic because, while the several manifestations of the Classical differ within the same plane, the early Romanticism belongs to a plane quite different from that of the later.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the historical mainspring of the early Romanticism is, paradoxically, the event known as “the Classical Renaissance”. This phrase has led astray many a literary generalisation. It got coined because the event to which it applies occurred when the scholars of Classicism whose centre was Constantinople were scattered all over Europe with their precious manuscripts after the fall of that city to the Turks in 1453 and, by giving the right direction, completed a movement which had already started sporadically and on a small scale before them. These scholars and their books are said to have brought about a rebirth of the Graeco-Roman spirit: hence the noun “Renaissance” and the adjective “Classical”. There is truth in both adjective and noun, but we should beware of taking them too naively. Lucas appears not to see them in the correct light. And he is partly misguided because, after defining Romanticism as fantasies and feelings that arise from dream-levels of the subconscious and break through the control of the reason, either healthily or morbidly, he applies even this somewhat narrow definition in a rather restricted way.

He looks upon the Middle Ages as the Golden Age of Romanticism and there the goldenest height is for him the romance-cum-fantasy of Aucassin and Nicolette with its deification of love at once intensely, tenderly, unsophisticatedly. A testament of Romanticism to Lucas is also Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur* where the essence of the tradition of Chivalry is distilled, though with less lovely art. The Renaissance he cannot consider Romantic because it “tended to look scorn on the rags of medieval romance.” He sees in it merely a few attempts here and there to make a compromise between the “old Romance” and the “new Classics”. But, he remarks, “these Renaissance attempts show the self-consciousness that besets all literary revivals” and “any self-conscious bookishness proves particularly deadly” when the half-conscious dream-levels have to find utterance. “In Tasso, or Spenser, or Sidney’s *Arcadia* there is a sickly taint of the factitious, of pastiche....Even Ariosto, who shields himself behind a mocker’s grin, with his interminable necromancers and magic steeds gives too much the impression of a grown man in a green garden playing at bears. And

even in Shakespeare's *Tempest* Prospero's wand, I feel, has already cracked a little before he flings it from him; his magic volume grown a little dog-eared, before he closes it for ever. Prospero is too close a cousin to Polonius, without being aware of the relationship; and his daughter remains a pretty poppet, beginning to fade into a Spenserian decline."

We need not deny Romanticism to the Middle Ages. As Lucas has noted, the very word "Romance" was born in that period. It is in the eighth century that there grew up, beside official Latin which was called *lingua Latina*, a vernacular known as *lingua Romanica*. From its adverb *Romanice* comes the noun "Romance", applied first to old French (*romanz*), then to Provençal (*romanço*) and Spanish (*romance*), later still to the other Latin tongues. The word, from meaning the French vernacular, came to denote also the fictitious stories in verse or, afterwards, in prose that used to get composed in that vernacular. From denoting "fiction" it came to signify any fantastic statement. In the seventeenth century it developed the further suggestion of "strange and dreamlike". In the eighteenth it attached itself, as Lucas remarks, "to Gothic ruins, wild landscapes, and other delightful mixtures of terror and sublimity, such as banditti". Its literary sense, as opposed to "Classical", first appeared in T. Wharton (1781-82), still attached to the Gothic but, as Lucas does not seem to know, also related to notions like "rough", "giant" "yore", "sombrous imagery", "magic", "visionary rapture".¹ In 1801 the German philosopher of art, Schlegel, argued that it could appropriately be applied to work of mediaeval inspiration by contrast to that which is "Classical", in the same way as "Romance", the language evolved by the barbarian invaders, was opposed to the Classical Latin of the Empire. But if we take the group of poets at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, who belong to what is called "the Romantic Revival", not only is simple mediaevalism exceeded but a host of new associations typical of modernism arise and there is too some affinity of interests and seekings with the Elizabethans, reminding us of J. Wharton's reference to the Romantic as far back as 1753 in *The Adventurer* (No. 93): "Shakespeare has carried the romantic, the wonderful, the wild, to the most pleasing extravagance."²

¹ See T. Wharton's poem on his conversion to "the classic page" caused by Reynolds' window for New College Chapel

² For the reader's interest the origin of the word "Classical" may be mentioned. Lucas tells us "In Latin *classis* (perhaps from the same root as 'call') meant originally a 'host', military as well as naval. Good King Tullius divided his citizens into five grades, according to the arms they could afford. The richest, providing the cavalry and the heavy-armed phalanx (*classis*), were called *classici*, the rest were *infra classem*. But *classicus* is not transferred metaphorically to writers until, seven centuries later, under the Empire, Aulus Gellius contrasts *classicus scriptor* with *proletarius*—'a first-class, standard writer' with 'one of the rabble'. At the Renaissance the fact that the 'standard' writers of Greece and Rome

“CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

In all this we are pretty distant from *Aucassin et Nicolette* and other fictions of the Middle Ages. But, of course, they can be granted Romanticism. There is the play in them of the fabulous, the fantastic, the dreamily amorous that Lucas considers the whole of Romanticism and that is no doubt Romantic though surely not all that the Romantic may connote. However, even where it or anything else we deem Romanticism does occur we may say it becomes characteristically Romantic not unless it is projected from another plane than the creative Intelligence of Classicism or at least another region of the plane on which Classicism functions. That is why the Romantic elements we may discern in the poetry of ancient Greece and Italy are always faint and elusive. That is also why the fictions of the Middle Ages are Romantic. But these fictions are hardly typical of that period: they are a side-product and there is a certain childlike prattle in them showing that the Romantic has not yet come into its own. Because they are such, Lucas is led to put them more or less on a par with the Romanticism he traces in Graeco-Roman literature: what he labels as an affinity between the two manifestations of the Romantic—“the healthy day-dreaming of a young imagination”—is really his unconscious reading of the essential truth that has nothing to do with health or disease but simply with the absence, in two different ways, of the full force of Romanticism. The full force can arise only when a plane, or a portion of a plane, that is not the Classical creative Intelligence asserts itself as the basic determinant of existence and expression. To judge whether the Renaissance can be called Romantic and, if it can, what the total content of its Romanticism is, we must ask whether it was governed by the Classical mind and, if not, what did govern it.

“Self-conscious bookishness” there certainly is in this period, but is it really the dominant feature? Again, is the bookishness such that it would inevitably interfere with the true nature of fantasy and feeling and of whatever else may be Romantic? The talk about scholars from the capital of the Greek Empire and about the study of the ancient Classics is apt to incline one to think of intellectuality and pedantry inhibiting the play of the spontaneous being. But the truth is that the Renaissance in full flush, though its creative enthusiasm was fired by Antiquity with example on glowing example of great literature such as the Middle Ages rarely provided, was not notable for its intellectuality—least for a revival of the Graeco-Roman intellect.

were read *in class* at school seems to have helped by confusion to produce that other sense of ‘classic’, as applied to any Greek or Roman writer, whether first-class or not. Thus ‘classical’, meaning ‘standard’, dates in the *Oxford Dictionary*, from 1599 (‘Classicall and Canonically’), meaning ‘Greek or Latin’, from 1607 (‘classicall Authors’). Thence the epithet adapted itself to anything supposed to conform to the standards of classical antiquity.”

What the return of Classical literature fundamentally did is stated with accuracy by Sri Aurobindo. "The Renaissance meant many things and it meant too different things in different countries, but one thing above all everywhere, the discovery of beauty and joy in every energy of life. The Middle Ages had lived strongly and with a sort of deep and sombre force, but, as it were, always under the shadow of death and under the burden of an obligation to aspire through suffering to a beyond; their life is bordered on one side by the cross and on the other by the sword. The Renaissance brings in the sense of liberation from the burden and the obligation; it looks at life and loves it in excess; it is carried away by the beauty of the body and the senses and the intellect, the beauty of sensation and action and speech and thought,—of thought hardly at all for its own sake, but thought as a power of life. It is Hellenism returning with its strong sense of humanity and things human, *nihil humani alienum*,¹ but at first a barbarised Hellenism, unbridled and extravagant, riotous in its vitalistic energy, too much overjoyed for restraint and measure."

The Renaissance is a revolt against the Middle Ages by way of explosion of the Life Force, an explosion effected by a revival of certain qualities prevalent in Classical Antiquity. The freedom of thought and feeling, the aesthetic response to the loveliness of the natural world and to the human body's vibrant vigour, the large interest in individual self-expression and in earthly concerns—it is these features of ancient Greek culture that proved potent to release the suppressed sensuous vitality of Europe. The mind of the time was stirred also in its own proper nature by the mind of Hellas, but the Renaissance was so drunk with life, with the glory of the senses and emotions and passions expanding themselves in an opulent freedom, that it could not easily recover the lucid orderly intellect of the Classics. No doubt, the awakening of the mind of the time showed itself in the development of physical science with its stress on the study of Earth as against the stress on the contemplation of Heaven and Hell and Purgatory that had characterised the mind of the Middle Ages. But the new science itself was at the beginning borne along on a gust of the Life Force more than on a zest of the pure intellect. It was part of the same overbrimming and wide-faring vitalistic energy that inaugurated the sailing of the seas and the sweeping over unknown lands. Copernicus who charted the skies in a novel way was but another avatar of the same exploratory vitality that drove Columbus across the Atlantic and Magellan around the globe. The Life Force bursting out in all directions, towards the "Crystalline Sphere" above as over the *orbis terrarum*, impelled the scientific mind. This mind as a power on its own, together with other intellectual powers that are sometimes associated with it but

Nothing human is alien to me.

often separated from it, had already had its initiation in Europe in the figure of Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo was not only an artist but a supreme intellectual and he stands at the head of the Renaissance for the rebirth of the Graeco-Roman civilisation in its intellectual aspects: he summarised the seeds of a new European intellectuality taking up the work of that civilisation in new life-moulds. But the vitalistic energy set free from the grip of the Middle Ages assumed the lead in the Renaissance and brought it to its full flush, and it was some time before the new intellectuality that had found its initial growth in Leonardo started to emerge. It was fostered by Francis Bacon, yet it may be said to have emerged in a recognisable form only with the advent of Galileo and to have reached a world stature, so to speak, not prior to Newton. Hand in hand with its development went the rise of a new Classicism—the Miltonic, the French and the pseudo-Augustan. And by the time this happened the tide of the Renaissance had started ebbing.

As part of the Renaissance's *élan* of the Life Force we have the literature of the first Romanticism and this literature is at its most expressive in Elizabethan poetry, both more powerful and more disorderly than the corresponding poetry in other countries. Sri Aurobindo speaks of the poetry of the life-spirit as the pure and genuine Romanticism. The poetry of the subtle-physical plane or of the creative Intelligence may contain a Romantic strain and, of course, all poetry of the life-motive (to quote another term of Sri Aurobindo's) is not necessarily Romantic any more than all poetic production from the plane of the Intelligence is bound to be Classical: still the real Romanticism springs from vital passion and power, the joy and pain, wonder and terror and beauty of the life-soul feeling, thinking, imagining, and turning everything into the values proper to its own drive of desire. The poetic work done in the beginning of the nineteenth century and usually called Romantic is entitled to that name because of complex factors at play which are lacking in the creations of the subtle-physical or of the Classically mental plane and Sri Aurobindo does refer to it as “Romanticism of the modern type”; yet for him the specifically Romantic remains a certain sight and sensibility and speech of the vital energy such as we find amongst the Elizabethans.

Even Tasso and Ariosto whom Lucas criticises are not really Classical: they are Romantic but quasi-Romantic and open to criticism because something in the Italian spirit mingling with the Graeco-Roman cannot altogether express the soul of Romanticism as it can the soul of Classicism. Sri Aurobindo has well said: “An Italy with the Graeco-Roman past in its blood could seize intellectually on the motives of catholic Christianity and give them a clear and supreme expression in Dante, while all Germanised Europe had only been stammering in the faltering accents of romance verse or shadowing them out in

Gothic stone, successful only in the most material form of the spiritual. In another direction, when it seized upon the romantic life-motive, the meeting-place of the Teuton and the Celt, we see it losing entirely the mystically sentimental Celtic element, italianising it into the sensuousness of Tasso, and italianising the rest into an intellectualised, a half imaginative, half satiric play with the superficial motives of romance,—the inevitable turn of the italianised Roman spirit.”

Wherever this spirit would be at work in the Renaissance literature of England we should have in Romanticism what Lucas terms “the taint of the factitious, of pastiche.” But the English spirit is a mixture of racial strains opening it to possibilities of a plenary Romanticism and the censure directed against Tasso or Ariosto would hardly apply to Spenser’s poetry on the whole or to Shakespeare’s *Tempest* or any other play. The Teuton and the Celt whose meeting-place is, according to Sri Aurobindo, Romanticism are part and parcel of the rich composite English spirit in which, we may add with Sri Aurobindo, French and Latinistic influences have also had a say, reshaping a Teutonic Anglo-Saxon tongue and giving it “clearer and more flowing forms” and turning it “into a fine though difficult linguistic material sufficiently malleable, sufficiently plastic for Poetry to produce her larger and finer effects, sufficiently difficult to compel her to put forth her greatest energies.” The Teuton element makes for that “constant tendency of the spirit of English poetry, which loves to dwell with all its weight upon the presentation of life and action, of feeling and passion, to give that its full force and to make it the basis and the source and, not only the point of reference, but the utility of all else.” This element can, of course, find articulation on various planes, colouring each with its own genius. On the subtle-physical, it would create a poetry teeming with an externality of observation, like Chaucer’s. On the mental, its creation, except rarely as with Milton in the main, would not be “a clear, measured and intellectual dealing with life, things and ideas” and a replacing of the external presentation of life by “an interpretation, a presentation in which its actual lines are either neglected or subordinated in order that some inner truth of it may emerge.” From the Teutonic mind we would have “poetical thinking or even poetical philosophy of a rather obvious kind, sedate, or vigorous, prompt and direct, or robustly powerful”: examples can be drawn from the work of Dryden and Pope, Cowper and Scott and Browning. On the vital plane the Teutonic element would be far more at home poetically than the Latin, for nervous vehemence and energy of character and rush of incident are natural to its objective and dynamic bent; but the Romanticism it would achieve would be of an external kind, “sensational and outward, appealing to the life and the senses.” Such Romanticism is “the ground-type of the Elizabethan drama”. What prepares that drama for sup-

reme poetic moments is the opposite element, submerged, half-insistent, in the English spirit: the Celtic.

The pure Celtic genius “seems to care little for the earth-life for its own sake, has little hold on it or only a light and ethereal hold, accepts it as a starting-point for the expression of other-life, is attracted by all that is hidden and secret.” While the Teutonic genius goes by a strong vital instinct rather than by clear intellectual thought or force of imagination or intellectual intuition, the Celtic has a quick and luminous intelligence, a rapid and brilliant imagination, and also a “natural love of the things of the mind and still more of those beyond the mind, left to it from an old forgotten culture in its blood which contained an ancient mystical tradition”. Here is “not the fine, calm and measured poetical thinking of the Greeks and the Latin races which deals sovereignly with life within the limits of the intellect and the inspired reason, but an excitement of thought seeking for something beyond itself and beyond life through the intensities of poetical sight.” When in English poetry the Celtic genius emerges from under the weight of its Teutonic companion and acts with it from the plane of the Life Force it casts into Teutonic Romanticism its own Romanticism of the delicate and beautiful, the imaginative and spiritual. “It awakens...a vein of subtler sentiment, a more poignant pathos, it refines passion from a violence of the vital being into an intensity of the soul. modifies vital sensuousness into a thing of imaginative beauty by a warmer aesthetic perception” and, throwing its force and fire and greater depth of passion across the drama, “makes it something more than a tumultuous external action and heavily powerful character-drawing”. The nature of the plane through which it acts limits its inherent mysticism—and especially the Teutonic drive with which it coalesces in the Elizabethan drama makes it function with a somewhat embarrassed power, but the authentic Romanticism which springs to birth from that plane is by its help rendered again and again a plenary blaze.

No other critic has been so acute as Sri Aurobindo in analyses and distinctions. But several have recognised Elizabethan poetry as Romantic. Thus Scott-James speaks of the “unruly Romanticism” which Ben Jonson resisted because, though he appreciated the fire that burned in his contemporaries, he saw that the very greatness of what Scott-James calls the “romantic splendour” of the age had its grave dangers. It is surprising that Lucas should fail to note that, whatever the tinge of “bookishness” in certain sections of Renaissance literature, the release of those parts of human psychology which, according to him, the Classical writer mostly keeps under control or at least prevents with the help of the “super-ego” and the “reality-principle” from wholly rushing out in their own rights is never so expressive as in Elizabethan poetry which not only gives English speech a new extraordinary intensity but is also full of the dis-

order and excess of new formation. Sri Aurobindo aptly describes it: "It springs up in a chaos of power and of beauty in which forms emerge and shape themselves by a stress within it for which there is no clear guiding knowledge except such as the instinctive genius of the age and the individual can give. It is constantly shot through with brilliant threads of intellectual energy, but is not at all intellectual in its innate spirit and dominant character. It is too vital for that, too much moved and excited; for its mood is passionate, sensuous, loose of rein; its speech sometimes liquid with sweetness, sometimes vehement and inordinate in pitch, enamoured of the variety of its notes, revelling in image and phrase, a tissue of sweet or violent colours, of many-hued fire, of threads of golden and silver light."

If here is not a voice strongly charged with—among other and greater things beyond it—what Lucas, following Freud, terms the "Id", the desire-soul in us, and considers the essence of the Romantic, it is difficult to say what else can be so regarded. Occasionally he lets himself refer to Elizabethan poetry as Romantic, as when he writes about Schiller adapting in Classical mood "the Romantic pages of *Macbeth*" or when he tells us that the Romantic pursues violent feelings and that, "like an Elizabethan dramatist, he may find them in the crudities of reality as well as in the fantasies of dreams" and that "dreams themselves can be at times only too realistic". He has also described Aeschylus's imagination as Romantic because it "ranges like Marlowe's among the echoing names of the far countries of the world". Then he has remarked apropos Euripides's *Andromeda*: "We who possess *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* cannot share the rage of Aristophanes at this first staging of romantic passion." Finally, he has the observation: "There is much, then, that is 'romantic' in classical Greek literature: yet it would be easy to exaggerate. Homer is never unreal as Spenser is; Aeschylus never outrages common sense or common taste like Marlowe." It is evident that Lucas is not unaware of Romanticism in Elizabethan poetry. Still, no whole-hearted and clear-eyed acknowledgment is forthcoming. Partial glows of the Romantic seem to be all he is prepared to grant, for his idea is that the Renaissance killed the Middle Ages and, in doing so, killed the truly Romantic until the latter was revived in a less healthy form several centuries after. Adventitious elements appear to have biased Lucas's judgment in relation to the poetry of the Elizabethans.

Even where he grants, as with Shakespeare, some play of the truly Romantic he yet makes reservations and talks of at most a successful compromise between Romanticism and Classicism. Shakespeare's allusions to Greek and Roman mythology, his adoption of Graeco-Roman themes in a few plays, his frequent laying of Plutarch's *Lives* under tax are only a thin veneer of Classicism over his utterly non-Classical verse: they are the tinges provided by the Renaissance's

“CLASSICAL” AND “ROMANTIC”

exultant interest in the literature of Greece and Rome, but the exultancy is predominantly Romantic at first and the Shakespearean poetry tinged by it is entirely so. We may deem Shakespearean Romanticism “self-conscious” if we like; it is not simple spontaneity; yet extreme spontaneity cannot be denied to it and the “self” of which it is conscious is basically the life-soul, the soul which is much more than the Freudian “Id” or “Libido” but which more than anything else in our psychological being has to do with impulse and passion.

Indeed, Shakespeare is the greatest Romantic poet in the world or, to be more precise, the greatest poet of Romantic drama. The only figure that approaches him in the same *genre* in English literature is his own contemporary Marlowe. Amidst the extremely rich but often patchy and disorderly poetry of the Elizabethan period, Marlowe, though mostly wanting in power of creating characters or of building up their interaction into a convincing whole, stands out by “his highly coloured and strongly cut style and rhythm” as well as by detached scenes and passages and culminating moments of dramatic force in which his true genius which is lyrical and epic breaks through the form of drama. His genius, however, is a narrow intensity. Only in Shakespeare does the poetry of the age display a consummate versatility and attain its perfect rondure.

(To be continued)

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