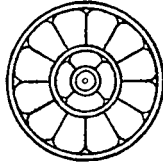


MOTHER INDIA

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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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No. 4

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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MEDITATION

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

9-2-1936

MYSELF : Raman Maharshi says that if one meditates for an hour or two every day, then the current of mind induced will continue to flow even in work. Of course he speaks of meditation "in the right manner."

SRI AUROBINDO : A very important qualification. If the meditation brings poise, peace, a concentrated condition or even a pressure or influence, that *can* go on in the work, provided one does not throw it away by a relaxed or dispersed state of consciousness. That was why the Mother wanted people not only to be concentrated at pranam or meditation, but to remain silent and absorb or assimilate afterwards and also to avoid things that relax or disperse or dissipate too much—precisely for this reason that so the effects of what she put on them might continue and the change of attitude the Maharshi speaks of would take place. But I am afraid most of the sadhaks have never understood or practised anything of the kind—they could not appreciate or understand her directions.

MYSELF : Is the current induced by the right manner of meditation something like charging a battery which goes on inducing an automatic current.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is not exactly automatic. It can be easily spoilt or left to run into the subconscious or otherwise wasted. But with simple and steady practice and persistence it has the effect the Maharshi speaks of—he assumes, I suppose, such a practice. I am afraid your meditation is hardly simple or steady—too much Kasrat and fighting with yourself.

THE VITAL PLANE

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

-3-1935

SRI AUROBINDO : The place where you were is as much a world of fact and reality as is the material world and its happenings have sometimes a great effect on this world. What an ignorant lot of disciples you all are ! Too much modernisation and Europeanisation by half !

These things are meetings on the vital plane, but very often in the transcription of what happened some details get in that are contributed by the sub-conscious. The rest seems all right. The writing on the forehead means of course something that is fixed in you in the vital plane and has to come out hereafter in the physical consciousness.

26-8-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : You are too physically matter of fact. Besides you are quite ignorant of occult things. The vital is part of what European psychologists sometimes call the subliminal and the subliminal, as everybody ought to know, can do things the physical cannot do—e.g. solve a problem in a few moments over which the physical has spent days in vain etc. etc.

What is the use of the same things happening on both planes ? It would be superfluous and otiose. The vital plane is a field where things can be done which for some reason or other can't be done now on the physical.

There are of course hundreds of varieties of things in the vital as it is a much richer and more plastic field of consciousness than the physical, and all are not of equal validity and value. I am speaking above of the things that are valid. By the way, without this vital plane there would be no art, poetry or literature—these things come through the vital before they can manifest here.

FORCE

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

2-9-1935

SRI AUROBINDO : If I have knowledge of the play of the forces, why do you want me to ignore the play and work by violence or a miracle beyond the play of forces ? It is precisely the play of forces which brought him where he is.

2-10-1935

MYSELF : Do you think the Yogic Force will enable a doctor, even if he is not trained, to do things like cutting off an appendix or a cataract ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Good Heavens, no !...The Force has to prepare its instrument first—it is not a miracle-monger. The Force can develop in you intuition and skill if you are sufficiently open, even if you did not have it before—but not like that. That kind of thing happens once in a way but it is not the fixed method of the Divine to act like that.

17-4-1937

MYSELF : When we were discussing a certain Spanish General you used the words : “with the right Force.” Why did you say “right” ? Is there also a wrong Force ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Don't remember exactly what I wrote — can't say very well. But of course there can be a wrong Force. There are Asuric Forces, rajasic Forces, all sorts of Forces. Apart from that one can use a mental or vital Force which may not be the right thing. Or one may use the Force in such a way that it does not succeed or does not hit the General on the head or is not commensurate with the opposing Forces. (Opposing Forces need not be Asuric, they may be quite gentlemanly Forces thinking they are in the right. Or two Divine Forces might knock at each other for the fun of the thing. Infinite possibilities, sir, in the play of the Forces.)

What is a mistake ? Evidently the Force used is always the Force that was destined to be used. If it succeeds, it does its work in the whole and if it fails it has also done its work in the whole. ন তএ সোঁচতে বৃষ্ণঃ¹

In what way ? A Force may be applied without any intuition—an intuition can come without any close connection with a Force, except the Force of intuition itself which is another matter. Moreover a Force may be applied from a higher plane than that of any Intuition.

¹ The wise man grieves not over that

THE THREE STAGES OF HUMAN SOCIETY

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Niranjana from the Bengali original in "Bibidha Rachana")

HUMAN knowledge and power take various forms in their evolution. We see three stages of their development; the primitive stage, predominantly physical and governed by the vital; the higher middle stage, predominantly intellectual; the highest and the final stage, predominantly spiritual.

The predominantly physical man, governed by the vital, is a slave of desire and interest. He knows only simple selfishness, ordinary instinct and impulses; he likes whatever seems convenient to him, any arrangement brought about by the sequence of circumstances arising out of the clash of desire with desire, interest with interest. He designates a group of such few or many arrangements as Right Law. Traditional, tribal and social customs compose the religion of this type of inferior and primitive stage. The primitive man can have no idea of liberation because he is not yet aware of the Self. An unrestricted field for the free play of his unfettered propensities of body and life is his imaginary paradise. He cannot rise in his thought to that other thing. To go to heaven at the fall of the body is his liberation.

The predominantly intellectual man always attempts to control his desire and interest by thought. Where can desire and interest find its highest fulfilment? Among so many different interests, which one should be given importance? What is the ideal form of the ideal life? What intellectual law can help us to find, even to fulfil that ideal? He is engaged in these speculations. The intellectual man would like to establish as social righteousness any systematic discipline of this ideal law and form. Such a law-abiding intellect is the conductor of the mentally enlightened higher society.

The predominantly spiritual man has discovered the secret Self beyond intellect, mind, life and body. On the Self-knowledge, he establishes the direction of his life. The predominantly spiritual man having understood that the liberation, and the realisation of the Self and the Divine, are the consummation of life, tends to orient all his movements towards that goal; a way of life, an ideal discipline suitable for realising the Self, anything that makes it possible to advance the wheel of evolution towards that end—all

THE THREE STAGES ON HUMAN SOCIETY

these he calls religion. The highest society is conducted by such an ideal, by such a religion.

From the predominantly vital to the intellect, from the intellect to what is beyond the intellect, to the Self, step by step, the human traveller climbs the ascending law on the Divine mountain.

In no society do we find only one single movement. These three types of men exist in almost all societies and the society of such a human collectivity is also of a mixed character.

Intellectual and spiritual men can be found even in the primitive society. If they are few in number, not formed in a group or unsuccessful, then they have very little effect on the society. If a powerful personality is able to gather many to form a group, then by his hold over the primitive society, he succeeds in achieving some progress. But owing to the predominance of primitive men, the religion of the intellectual and spiritual men often deteriorates. The intellectual religion is metamorphosed into a convention; the religion of the Self-knowledge under the pressure of customs and outward observances, becomes oppressed, overwhelmed, lifeless and strays from its aim. This is the consequence we always witness.

When there is a sway of the intellect, then we see it assuming the leadership of the society, breaking and changing the ignorant taste and the mould of the society, in an endeavour to establish a Right Law illumined by the mental knowledge. The enlightenment of the West—liberty, equality and fraternity—is only a form of this attempt. Success in this line is impossible. For want of knowledge of the Self, the intellectual man by the pull of his mind, life and body corrupts his own ideal. It is difficult to escape from the hands of the lower nature. The middle stage? It is not stable; there is either a fall to the lower or an ascent to the higher. The intellect oscillates between these two pulls.

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US*

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER
(Continued from the previous issue)

(15)

HOPE OF THE HOPELESS

AT the end of 1943, suddenly I was attacked by a very bad type of typhoid. In those days there was no specific medicine for typhoid, like chloromycetine. The doctors and patients were practically helpless.

Our family physician, a retired major of the Indian Medical Service, was careful from the very beginning and was fully conscious of the gravity of the disease. He did all that was in his power to save my life, but my condition went from bad to worse and by the middle of the second week I practically lost consciousness. My fever was rising to 105 and falling to 101. My relatives became apprehensive and my colleagues in the local bar library discussed an eventual condolence resolution.

In one of my short lucid moments of wakefulness, I asked my mother to write to the Divine Mother at Pondicherry praying for my recovery. So far I had never gone to the Ashram and had read only Sri Aurobindo's book *The Mother*. My mother wrote, "My son X is swinging between life and death and I pray to you for his recovery."

The doctors of my home town had given me up as a lost case, although our family physician was bravely and kindly putting up a strong fight against the malady. He advised my mother to get some more experienced doctor from the city, a hundred miles far from my town, and keep him by my bedside for a few days as a measure of last resort. The necessary money was wanting. But quickly some few hundred rupees were collected and my brother-in-law was made ready to get a doctor from the city.

Early in the morning our family physician came to see me and stopped my brother-in-law from proceeding to the neighbouring city because he detected that my tongue was wet. My relative's departure was postponed by

* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or to the Compiler.

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

about six hours, so that if there was in me really some change for the better it might not be necessary to arrange for another doctor. That day my temperature rose to 104 and fell to 100. On this the idea of bringing another medical practitioner was temporarily abandoned.

On the next day, my temperature went down by one degree more, i.e. it rose to 103 and fell to 99. Next day it rose to 102 and fell to 98. On the fourth day there was another decrease of temperature by one degree : 101, 97. That morning, we received a letter from the Ashram, "The Mother sends you her blessings".

The letter was dated 4 days earlier, and the very day it had been posted in Pondicherry my fever had come down by one degree both ways. And since then it had fallen gradually by one degree every day till on the fourth day I was completely out of danger.

Within a week I was fully cured, though I was still very weak. This bent the entire course of my life towards the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Our family physician considered my recovery to be indeed a miracle and made it a "must" to see the Mother at Pondicherry at least once in his life, although not from the point of view of doing Yoga.

IN THE DUST AND DIN

IN the city where I stayed last, the only means of transport was rickshaws. There was a bus service, of course, but it was very unreliable and dirty so that often people avoided to avail themselves of it.

One morning a friend and colleague of mine who stayed in an adjacent flat came and told me, "Well, sir, how will you go to the office today ; there is a total strike of rickshaws and the buses too are not plying." The office was about four miles from our residence. I told him, "I'll ring my office up for the office car and, if even that is not available, I'll take leave. But I won't go on foot."

"Now perhaps your Mother may help you in this difficulty." There was shrewd sarcasm in his tone. "You depend so much on her ! Why, you can't ask her for a rickshaw ?"

I was cut to the quick. "Yes, that is also possible. Her Grace can work in any way." My faith retorted immediately in these words. But it was a little too much to pray for help in such a small matter. I dropped the subject and busied myself with my meditation. My friend left the house quite early to foot the whole distance to the office.

When I came out of my house to the rickshaw stand at the road-crossing, I found it deserted. Then I remembered the sarcastic words of my

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friend. For a second I thought of the Mother and the morning's incident. When I looked the other way, a rickshaw was there. Because of the strike, I could imagine that the rickshaw driver would charge exorbitantly. I was prepared to pay ten times the usual fare. I questioned him. I was surprised to hear him demand from me the usual ordinary fare.

When my rickshaw had gone about four furlongs from my house, I heard someone shouting my name. I made the rickshaw stop. Looking back I found my friend hurrying on foot. He was perspiring. After a word or two with him, I continued my journey.

While working in the office, I came to know from someone that my friend had been spending quite a good time in inquiring whether the strike was over and the rickshaws had started plying again. He felt surprised, disappointed and cooled down. In the afternoon, he came to me with tears of apology, for he felt that even though he understood next to nothing about the Grace, yet it could work at any time in any matter—and that it did work in the present case.

His enquiries had shown that between 7.30 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon when he came to me, not one rickshaw had plied on that road to my office. I was extremely grateful to the Mother and smiled at her ways.

PROTECTION AT A DISTANCE

I was staying in a suburb of Bombay before I joined the Ashram. The house that I lived in was on the slope of a hillock, and there were many snakes of the most poisonous varieties in the garden adjoining my bedroom. My bedroom formed part of a big verandah and the partition that was built to make this room had an open space of about four inches running all along at the bottom. If rodents or snakes wanted to enter they could do so very easily.

I lived in that room for eight full years but no snake ever entered the room.

The very day I gave up the house to come and settle in Pondicherry our landlord who wanted the house for his own use placed his own bed in exactly the same place where my bed used to be. The very first night when his wife entered the room, she found a poisonous snake (Russell's viper, to be exact) twined round the post of her husband's mosquito-curtain-frame. I learnt about this nearly a year and a half after I had come here. Only then did I realise how the Mother's protection worked around me and works even hundreds of miles away on all those who come within the aura of her Grace.

Compiled and reported by

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

DU MUTTER—YOU MOTHER

Du Mutter.

Du, weil Du bist — bist Gnade;
Weil Du auf dieser Erde gehst, ist sie geweiht.
Du gabst ihr die verlorene Grösse wieder,
Du bringst mit Dir den Duft vergessener Paradieses-Lieder.

Niemand beugt sich wie Du auf unser Wesen nieder.
Niemand hat wie Du das Licht herabgebracht.
Niemand gab wie Du den Blumen neue Namen.
Niemand hat wie Du das Ziel uns klargemacht.
Niemand sät wie Du den goldenen Samen.

Dein Lächeln gibt langem Sehnen süsse Ruh;
Dein Blick der Seele neues Leben;
Deiner Hände sanftes Auferlegen,
 deckt heisse Wunden mit kühler Heilung zu.
Dein Dasein nur, ist Segen — Segen.

You Mother.

You are Grace because you are.
Because you walk on Earth, she is consecrated.
You gave her back her lost greatness.
You bring with you the fragrance of lost paradise songs.

Nobody bends down over our beings like you.
Nobody has brought down the Light like you.
Nobody has given names to flowers like you.
Nobody has made clear the goal like you.
Nobody has sown the golden seeds like you.

Your smile gives sweet rest to long yearning.
Your glance gives new life to the soul.
The soft laying on of your hands covers our
 wounds with cool healing.
Your very being is blessings, blessings.

MEDHANANDA

TWO POEMS

FRENCH MARIGOLD

POOR plucked flower-head
Cut off from Earth,
What is your gold crown worth
So soon devalued and dead ?

Emblem of Consciousness,
For your short hour,
Earth-born sun-aspiring flower—
Such transience is not valueless.

And when your petals
Come to me from the Mother
I would wish no other
Blessing—none in more lasting metals.

MEDITATION

MARCHING is over and the Gym has emptied,
The lights go out, all but the moon and stars.
Music begins, persistent melody
Searching and yearning, threaded focus of sound,
While on the sand hundreds sit,
White-draped, anonymous at this hour,
Silent—silent as the sand.
The overture ceases.
Now only the susurrus
Of waves on the distant beach,
The high flash of the light-house lamp
And the night-wind touching our faces.

DICK BATSTONE

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Continued from the previous issue)

(15)

V. SELF-FATHOMING AND SOUL'S STRUGGLE

(Continued)

35. THIS THIRTY

THIS thirty strikes a sad note on my mind,
The sweetest prime now bids adieu to me,
Little have I of what I strove to find,
At my sky-daring chuckles Infinity.
Could ever a child snatch at his father's brain,
A handful of dusty flesh in-bear the Unborn,
A brittle bowl contain the limitless Main
Or a freak ray of lamp herald the morn ?
But such was my youth-urge, such my first cry.
Had I but realised a portion of it !
To my noble faith, my will has proved a lie—
Fate was more potent than all my moments lit.
O future, prove not one more step to the tomb,
Make me not wish this thirty had never come !

36. CIRCLED BY DOOM I TURN TO THEE

When in Thee I have laid my sole dependence,
When Thou, O Love, in plenitude art here,
Then why not with faith shakeless do I shear
Dread of self's foes for good, obtain ascendance
Over darkness, pain and strife, and the abundance
Of rooted falsehood, arrogances that bear
My luminous path to Thee, O Mother dear,
And freeze my fire to win life's free transcendence?
Whatever be the trials, whatever odds,
I'll tear all veils, I'll whip away all frauds.
Circled by doom, to Thee I turn, O Power,
Let one hope-ray brighten this crucial hour !

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

RABINDRANATH THE ARTIST*

TO-DAY we just want to study Rabindranath the man and not the poet Rabindranath. The poet may raise a slight objection—he may say that if we want truly to evaluate him we must consider him as a poet. What he has done or not done as a man is insignificant; he has stored up in his poetry whatever eternal and everlasting was there in him, in his true being and real nature. The rest is of no real significance or value. In that respect he may not have a good deal of difference from others, any marked speciality. The greatest recognition of a poet lies in his poetical works. To give prominence to his other qualities is to misunderstand and belittle him.

But in dealing with Rabindranath the man we are not going to concern ourselves with his worldly and household life. We are going to study the real man in him whose one aspect has manifested in the poet Rabindranath. Perhaps that real man may have had his best and greatest manifestation in his poetry; still the truth, the realisation, the achievement of the inner soul that wanted to reveal themselves through that manifestation are our topic.

Beauty is the chief and essential thing in the poetic creation of Rabindranath. He appreciates beauty and makes others do the same in a delightful manner. He has made his poetical work the embodiment of all beauties culled from all places little by little, whether in the domain of nature or in the inner soul, or in body, mind and speech. Beautiful is his diction. Mellowness of word and the gliding rhythm have perhaps reached their acme. Charming is his imagination. Varied and fascinating are the richness and intricacy of thought and the fineness and delicacy of feeling. The themes of his narratives are attractive in themselves. He has made them more beautiful and decorative by clothing them in the most graceful words of subtle significance.

The mango buds fall in showers,
The cuckoo sings.
Intoxicated is the night,
Drunk with moonlight.
“Who are you that come to me,
O merciful one ?”

* The 98th Anniversary of Tagore's birth fell on May 6 (Editor).

RABINDRANATH THE ARTIST

Asks the woman.
The mendicant replies :
"O Vasuvadutta, the time is ripe
To-night; so to you I come."

Or

The stars drop in the lap of the sky
From the chain hanging down to your breast.

The heart is overwhelmed with ecstasy
In the core of Man's being:
Blood runs riot in his veins.
Suddenly your girdles gives way
On the horizon, O naked beauty !

What a visionary world of matchless and unique beauty is unveiled before the mind's eye ! That is the true Rabindranath, the creator of such magic wonders. Perfect perfection of beauty is inherent in the nature of his psychic being. The advance he has made in respect of knowledge and power has been far exceeded by that of beauty. Knowledge and power have a subordinate place in his consciousness. They have been the obedient servitors of beauty. Rabindranath's soul seems to have descended from the world of the Gandharvas, who are the divine Masters of music. This Gandharva saw the light of day to express and spread something of real beauty in the earthly life. His mission and performance were to manifest beauty in all possible ways. Many have contributed to the creation of beauty in poetry and there are works which are supreme in poetic beauty. There is no doubt that Tagore is one of the foremost among them. But the especiality of Rabindranath lies in the fact that the poet in his inner soul permeated his whole being. Even if he had not written any poetry his life itself would have been a living work of beauty. He himself was handsome in person. Sweet was his speech. Attractive was his decorous demeanour. Beauty was stamped on his inner nature and outer activities.¹ He was all along creating beauty around him and proceeding from beauty through higher beauties towards the supreme Beauty.

It has been already said that Rabindranath's inner Being was a creator of beauty. But this beauty he has expressed more through the vibrations

¹ Here we are reminded of the words that Rabindranath himself used in his eulogy of Ramendra Sundar. "O Ramendra Sundar ! beautiful is your heart, beautiful your speech and beautiful your smile."

MOTHER INDIA

of rhythm than through the cut of form. We notice that the greater stress of his fine art has been laid on movement than on static beauty and more on the gesture of limbs than on their limned outline. We find that his poetic creation has been more akin to the art of music and of the dance than that of sculpture and architecture. He has attained to sheer beauty through movement and not through immobility; not so much through sight as through sound. The poet eagerly wants to listen to and seize upon the tunes of rhythms that overflow in a silent urge behind the eternal forms or structures, the life-vibrations that have manifested in the creation echoing with sounds. The poet wants to bring out the suggestiveness behind the significance of words, the incorporeal import comprised in the sentence otherwise framed in ordinary words.

The poet says :

His Face my eyes have not met,
Nor have I heard his Voice.
At each hush do I hear
The sound of his footsteps.

Further :

He who is beyond the flight of mind,
His Feet through my songs
Do I barely touch,
But myself I lose in the ecstasy of melody.

We note that even where he has given a definite form to beauty he has not put it forward as a fixed point of concentration. He has set forth beauty in its moving liquid form. For example—

The showers come rushing to the fore,
The tender paddy plants move to and fro
With no respite.

The dance, the rhythmic movement have given whatever form beauty has. On the whole we can describe the goddess of poetry of Kalidasa as standing, in his own words, 'immobile like a movement depicted on a picture,' but in the creation of Rabindranath we see that 'the singing nymph passes by breaking the trance—.'

In every turn of all these varied forms of cadence and vibration there is an ecstasy, the dying curve of a soft tune that gathers in its fall all the sweetnesses that the movement was carrying—the whole merging as it were into a sea of rich peace and silence. The poet's eloquence is most intimately

RABINDRANATH THE ARTIST

married to his silence. On one side, his vital being, athirst for delight, is overwhelmed with the mass of Nature's wealth, luxuriant in colours and smells, in peals of laughter and rhythms of dance ; his senses enamoured of beauty are eagerly prone to hug the richness of external things ; he wants to seize upon the Self, God, through the embrace of the senses and the fivefold life-force. Still, there is the other side where through all these varied vicissitudes his aim finally settles in "the vast peace that lies in the core of peacelessness."

In the midst of his play with the world of action and commotion in which gross words play about loudly and ruthlessly, often he leaves them behind and in his ideas and suggestions he climbs up to a subtler plane where the rhythm, the tune, not the vocable comes to the forefront. The music, the pure music fills up the background and is not overwhelmed by the concatenation of words and phrases that lead perhaps to a physical preciseness but also to a certain grossness. That music has in it a purity, serenity, lightness, sweetness and beauty that uttered syllables have not.

For, there

Unheard voices innumerable
Exchange their whispers in the void.

In their silent clamour
Unformed thoughts move forward
Band by band.

So the aspiration of the poet is :

I would go with the lyre
Of my life to the One
In whose measureless halls
Songs not audible to the ear
Are sung eternally.¹

There is something here like what the ancient Greeks used to call the music of the spheres.

We discover almost the primal urge of beauty and the fount of rhythm, It seems we are at the point when the creation began to assume forms at

¹ Here we may recall : "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter."

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the first vibrations of life—all proceed from the vibrant life—*Sarvam pranam ejati nihsritam*—this mantra of the Upanishad was very dear to Rabindranath and he cited it very often. Rabindranath was a worshipper of Brahman, but more of the Brahman as the primal sound, the original wave, the vibrating note that is to manifest in creation. And the unique success he attained in the cult of this Deity of his heart is the speciality and glory of his poetical creation. In the following mantra Rabindranath depicts the image of his Deity in trance.

The note has ceased
But it would linger still ceaselessly,
The lute plays on although in silence,
Although without necessity.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the original Bengali in "Rabindranath".)

THREE FAIRY TALES

I

COURAGE AND CAUTION

JYOTINDRA was not pleased with himself. He had come to the unhappy conclusion that he was something of a coward because he found it difficult to participate in rough games where he might get hurt, such as football or boxing or baseball. Even table-tennis made him a little apprehensive because he would wonder what it would feel like if that little white ball caught him smack in the eye.

Nevertheless he did play those games along with the others, but the strain of pretending to like them was very great ; and when the whistle blew or the bell rang or the ball burst, ending the game, he was always secretly glad.

He would read about great heroes, past and present, and wistfully wonder why he couldn't be like that too. But it was no use. Even when someone clapped him in a friendly fashion on the shoulder, he would wince a little in fear, as if expecting an assault.

He became quite miserable about himself.

One morning, while he was shaving, a small fairy alighted on his right ear. He looked at her reflection in the mirror he was using and waited to see what would happen next. She was three inches tall, had pretty blue eyes and kept twinkling all over. She carried a little starry wand, which, as we know, all fashionable fairies favour.

She smiled at him through the mirror and, leaning down into his ear, said :

“I will give courage,
Valour and dare,
But season the mixture
With kindness and care.”

Then in a burst of star-dust she disappeared.

The first thing Jyotindra did was to get paper and pencil to write the message down so as not to forget it.

As the weeks went by he discovered, much to his delight, that he was becoming fearless. There were now few games in which he did not happily

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take part, and quite often he was chosen to be Captain. His energy seemed limitless and he rapidly developed muscles as big as small melons.

It was now he who went around heartily slapping people on the shoulders and feeling immensely satisfied if they winced, which indeed they often did because of his phenomenal strength.

Unfortunately he must have lost the piece of paper with the message, because he became something of a braggart who would often "rush in where angels fear to tread." He began to dominate others, and if he lost an argument he would puff out his chest belligerently as if to say : "You may have won there, but I can intimidate you any moment I choose." In short, he became quite reckless, throwing all caution to the winds and expanding his chest more frequently than a pouter-pigeon.

One of the sports in which he excelled was swimming, and as a diver there were few who could beat him. Of course, he had completely forgotten that some time ago he had been mortally afraid to dive from the lowest board, but now he delighted in diving from the topmost. And a magnificent diver he was—a stylist if there ever was one.

One bright and sunny morning, on rising, Jyotindra decided to go for a quick swim. He hadn't much time to spare, so he hurried as quickly as possible.

While combing his hair in the mirror he was again visited by the little fairy. She sat on top of his left ear and seemed a trifle annoyed. Tiny blue sparks were shooting off all around her and she was stamping her little foot in frustration.

She was saying something and he strained to hear it :

"Take care, take care !
Caution and halt,
Or your foolish frolics
Will end with a jolt."

Jyotindra was indignant. How dare she talk to him like that ! Foolish frolics indeed ! He was captain of the football team and had won two certificates. Frolics !

Irritably he brushed her off his ear and told her to go and mind her own business. Meddlesome fairies, he said, always fussing and fluttering about people's ears. All they're good for is polishing buttercups and gilding the lilies—or something.

Quickly he finished combing his hair, snatched up his towel and swim-suit and off he went to the pool.

THREE FAIRY TALES

The morning air was crisp and clear and Jyotindra knew the water would be refreshingly cool.

There seemed to be very few people at the pool, he noticed, and this he felt was something of a pity because they wouldn't see his wonderful diving. But on the other hand, he would have the place all to himself.

Quickly he changed into his swim-suit and had a preliminary shower. He decided he would begin by diving from the very top ; a swallow-dive. It would be good to practise that. When it was done correctly it always looked impressive.

As he climbed the steps leading to the top, he was astonished to find the old fears flow back into him. He had never liked heights really, and now a cold sweat broke out on his forehead. It was as if some strange force were trying to keep him back.

With an effort he pulled himself together. Stupid imagination, he said. Yet he noticed that his knees shook a little. Damn that fairy ; it was all suggestion, that's all.

He reached the top and for a moment stood there inhaling deeply and gazing out into the blue sky ; then he tensed himself for the dive. The fears had gone.

He took off. His superb body, glistening in the sun, formed itself into a splendid arc. It was when he was half-way down that he noticed they had emptied the pool for cleaning.

GODFREY

TOWARDS UNITY

III

THE nation has grown out of the débris of empire. This explains in part the time taken for it to form, a thousand years or more in the majority of cases.

The process of nation-building can be most conveniently studied with reference to the history of Europe and America. It is there that the nation-idea has taken firm root ; it is from there that the contagion has spread in recent times to the older peoples of Asia and now seems to influence tribal Africa as well. In this process there have been distinct stages, marked roughly by the Renaissance and the upheaval of the Reformation in the first place, next by the French Revolution, and last by the first Great War which had far-reaching effects on national sentiment all over the world.

The period from the fall of Rome to the Reformation era in the sixteenth century saw the growth of Spain, Portugal, England, France, Switzerland and Russia to the position of nation-states, each independent of other states and dominated except in the case of Switzerland by an autocratic monarch. The power of the monarch varied from country to country but there was a common tendency towards centralisation and uniformity in administration. This process of unification was almost complete by the end of the French Revolution as far as these nation-units were concerned. The post-Revolution period saw the birth of new nations under conditions which need special examination ; the post-War era presents still more novel features which will be studied in their place.

One of the first results of the fall of Rome was that the peoples of western Europe suddenly found themselves without a master. The Romans had virtually abdicated. They had withdrawn their troops and resigned their right to intervene in the defence of their erstwhile possessions. Even when the Britons sued for help against the barbarians from the north and the east, in regard to whom they said, "they drive us to the sea and the sea drives us back to them," the Roman was helpless and sent no aid. The Britons had to invite the pirates from Jutland and Saxony to fight their battles and thus lose their freedom. Gaul lay helpless while a swarm of foreign hordes, the Alani, the Suevi, the Visigoths and the Vandals from beyond her borders pillaged the old Roman province, till one of these tribes, the Franks, finally

settled in the land and gave France its modern name. In Spain, the Romans themselves sought the help of the Visigoths to drive out the Vandals and the rest who had crossed over from Gaul, and they handed over the country to these Goths to rule in their place.

The immediate result of the barbarian incursions was chaos. The cities which the Romans had founded were allowed to decay, the roads and bridges had no vehicles to ply on them, in many cases the monasteries were sacked and precious treasures of the Graeco-Roman civilisation were lost to posterity. For the barbarians had no use for city-life or the usual amenities of civilisation. They were a race of warriors and they loved the countryside in preference to the anaemic life of cities. They also brought with them certain definite ideas as to how government and society should be constituted. These they applied to the remnants of the old system. What emerged finally was the great feudal order of the Middle Ages.

In its essence, the feudal order was the very antithesis of the Roman system. The Roman empire had been built on the idea of the state as the supreme authority in the land. Caesar owed allegiance to none ; he was in fact the very personification of the Deity and was the source of all power. A Caesar could say with absolute justice that he was the state. Under the new system which the barbarians introduced in western Europe, there was no Caesar, and hardly even a state. What kept the polity in being was the personal loyalty of the vassal to his hege-lord. The vassal owed obedience only to the lord to whom he had given his oath of fealty ; he recognised no other lord, not even the king. And he considered himself bound by no other law than the strict letter of his oath. Thus, when the English king Edward I commanded a recalcitrant earl to accompany his soldiers to France while the king himself went to Flanders, —“By God, Sir Earl, thou shalt go or hang”—the earl could coolly reply, “By God, Sir King, I will neither go nor hang”, and the king had to swallow the retort.

What saved the feudal system from lapsing into anarchy was the old Roman tradition of a sovereign king. The barbarians could not somehow get rid of this tradition. At first they made their kings elective, the choice depending upon the powerful nobles of the realm. Gradually, the title became hereditary even though the formality of a choice continued. Then the Church stepped in and claimed the privilege of anointing the king at coronation and thereby bestowing on him the sanction of God. When about the 13th century, the universities of Bologna and Paris began to study the Roman law, the idea of *imperium* or the right to rule came to be firmly attached to the king. The king came to be regarded in feudal theory as the suzerain of all the lords, however powerless he might be in making his authority felt. In actual fact,

many of the great lords on the continent wielded more power than their king. Still none would dare challenge his position as the highest in the realm.

Individual kings, and sometimes whole dynasties like the Plantagenets of England and the Capets in France, made full use of their title and gradually secured real domination. In their attempt to become the true sovereigns, they became the symbols of national unity. It was around the person of the king that the nation took shape.

But the task was not easy. The king had to contend against two very powerful rivals, the aristocracy and the church. He had to take as his allies the third estate, that is, the growing body of merchants and other city-people of wealth and then crush their opposition to his autocratic rule. The battle continued over the centuries. Sometimes it was the king who seemed to win, sometimes it was his opponents. Finally, the king emerged victorious. He had subdued the rest and made them into instruments of his will. In him the nation found an idol and the idol was worshipped for a short while. Afterwards, the idol was broken or cast aside, but by then the king's task had been done : the nation had attained full self-consciousness and was secure against the danger of disruption from within or from outside attack.

It was this danger from outside that gave the king his real chance. So long as the country was safe from foreign attack, the feudal lords might play at war among themselves and ignore the king. Thus in the England of the Heptarchy from the fifth century to the middle of the ninth, we hear of Saxon chiefs constantly at loggerheads among themselves. There were attempts at hegemony under the Northumbrian, the Mercian and the Wessex kings, but none lasted long enough to give England a united government. Then the Danes from across the sea began their marauding raids and seemed for a time to oust the Saxons completely. It was to meet this danger that the West Saxons under Alfred rallied to his banner and helped him create the first national kingdom in England. The Normans who came as conquerors inherited the West Saxon tradition. The necessity of maintaining a united front against a hostile population in occupied country gave the feudal Norman organisation a unity of purpose which almost from the first raised the king to a position of supremacy. It was certainly challenged more than once by the turbulent barons but could never be wholly destroyed.

In France patriotic feeling was born of the Hundred Years' War. The barons of Aquitaine could never tolerate the insolence of the Black Prince who ruled south-western France in the name of the English king after the victory of Crécy and Poitiers. The barons rose in a body, appealed to the French king for help and finally drove out the English from their territory. The civil war that broke out later gave the English another opportunity and Agincourt

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seemed to seal the fate of the French monarchy. According to the terms of the treaty, the son of the English king was to be the future ruler of France. The English occupied Paris, had the whole of northern France under their control and were on the point of occupying Orleans which would have opened the gates to the south. At this moment, Jeanne d'Arc appeared on the scene. She created such enthusiasm for the national cause that Orleans was saved, the Dauphin was crowned at Rheims in the very heart of occupied territory, and the English were finally left with hardly a foothold in France. Out of Jeanne's ashes arose a national feeling that made the path clear for French monarchy.

In Spain the foreign menace was much more serious. The bickerings among the Visigoth chiefs had given the Arabs their chance. Early in the eighth century the Muslims overran the whole country and set up their rule in Cordova. For three centuries Spain remained under Muslim rule, and the old aristocracy had to take refuge on the northern borders. The presence of the infidel on Spanish soil could never be accepted by the Christian kings and their nobles. From the beginning of the eleventh century when the Muslim power in Spain showed signs of breaking up, they continued to wage a crusade which led to the final expulsion of the Moor from his last stronghold in Granada by the end of the fifteenth century. The Moor had enriched Spanish culture in a variety of ways, but the one great political result of the Moorish occupation was to inflame national pride and help in the growth of monarchy.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the foreigners had shaped the destinies of these nations, but they had certainly helped a good deal in creating a need for unity. The rest was the work of monarchs.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

THE NEW WORLD UNION

THE time has come to introduce to all who consciously belong to the family of the Divine Mother at Pondicherry a movement which enjoys her inspiration and guidance and which concerns her wider family, the whole of humanity. We refer to the New World Union, a movement for world peace on a spiritual foundation. It may also be described as a movement for world integration through the integration or self-realisation of individuals, and through the united action of these spiritual workers and the societies of spiritual outlook to which they belong.

The New World Union bears the stamp of a divine birth. Its conveners did not dream it up, much less scheme it out. It simply came upon them, it grew irresistibly. The Divine Mother said concerning this movement, "It is good; it is useful; it is necessary; it will grow as a strong movement and will be successful...I will guide you."

As the origin of N.W.U. has been in the divine Will and initiative, so its conveners have a deep sense of appointment to this work by a clear inner Call. Theirs not to carry out a mental plan but to discern the unfolding Will, and to be—in some sort, and by sheer Grace—faithful instruments, always alert for corrective guidance.

This movement was born, in part, out of the unpremeditated experiences of Anil Mukherjee at the World Festival of Youth in Moscow in 1957. As Secretary of the Bengal Youth Conference, he was invited, through the External Affairs Ministry of the Union Government, to represent India at that vast gathering of tens of thousands of youth from over one hundred lands. At first he declined; then there came an inner intimation that he should go, in order to discover whether the root of spiritual life and interest was still in the people of Russia, despite a generation of effort by the ruling party to eradicate religion and inculcate materialism. En route to Moscow, there came to him a vision of India's role among the nations. Flying over the Hindu Kush, he saw India as the temple of the world, in which there were two figures—the Himalayas representing the Master, and the Ganga the Mother. This vision of India's divine mission was heightened by his reading of Sri Aurobindo's August 15th 1947 Message over All-India Radio.

During the fortnight of the Youth Festival, the theme of innumerable speeches in seminars and debates was: *How Peace Can Best Be Attained*. Struck

by the superficiality of the solutions proposed—stopping of nuclear tests, disarmament, *Panch Shila*, etc.—Anil declared that only on the basis of the oneness of all creation and the essential unity of all mankind that flows from this oneness can peace be established. *Panch Shila* is but a skeleton, a wax-work, without the living flesh, unless this principle is at its heart. Quoting Sri Aurobindo concerning the irresistible onward march of human unity, he declared, “Only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it, but these cannot stand forever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will.” “A time will come,” he said, “when this spirit will take hold of the entire human race.... The problems which have troubled mankind can only be solved by this feeling of oneness of all souls that inhabit this Mother Earth, ‘not alone by harnessing the forces of nature to the service of comfort and luxury but by mastering the forces of the intellect and spirit, by vindicating the freedom of man within as well as without, and by conquering from within, external nature.’”.

Anil received the first prize gold medal, and then the offer of a talk over Moscow Radio. Here he sounded the same theme, with much quotation from Sri Aurobindo’s “five dreams” of the Aug. 15, ’47 Message : The freedom and unity of India, the resurgence of Asia, a world union, the delivery of India’s spiritual gift to the world, and the new human race.

There was a significant response to this broadcast. In informal groups, with individuals from several countries, in seminars, this leader of Indian youth was given opportunities to pursue the theme of the oneness of creation and the essential unity of all mankind, as the key to peace and progress and the fulfilment of human destiny and the Divine Will. A responsive chord had been struck in many hearts, whether of Communist youth or the thousands of delegates from other countries. From many of them came the demand to form a world-wide movement for peace on this basis. This demand was followed up by correspondence after Anil’s return to India.

In his quest for help, Anil was led into contact with the Ashram, and the Mother appointed Jay to collaborate with him. As their collaboration grew, the theme which had been sounded in Moscow was elaborated and deepened, particularly by the present emphasis on the importance of the deep, inner, spiritual *realisation* of “the oneness of all creation, etc.” *A Call to a New World Umon*, the basic statement of the movement, was drafted and submitted to the Mother, who approved it with minor changes.

N.W.U. proceeds from the insight that there is a single sovereign answer to the two biggest questions of any man’s life :

- (1) How can I fulfil the purpose of life, realise my destiny as an individual, develop the utmost potentialities of my being ?

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- (2) How can I, as a world citizen, contribute substantially to the solution of the prime collective problem of war, and help to attain a just and lasting peace ?

The answer (as we have offered it in *More Light on the New World Union*) is : Advanced research by foremost social scientists into the causes and cure of war, and pioneering research into the inner world of man by psychologists and yogic explorers, point to the same momentous conclusion : human society can fulfil its cherished dream of an era of enduring peace and progress only when sufficient individuals awaken to self-discovery and grow into self-fulfilment. The fulfilment of the inner potentialities of the individual is the key to the fulfilment of the aims of society. Individual integration—the unity and harmony of all the elements of one's nature—is the way to world integration, and *there is no other way to an enduring peace.*

Is this not eminently reasonable ? It shows that we live in a self-consistent universe and not a chaotic “multiverse”. The tides of life and history will lift this dynamic truth into the consciousness of the forward-looking men and women of our time with ever increasing emphasis. Let every person who takes seriously his responsibility as a human being and as a world citizen in this age of supreme crisis come to grips with this saving truth.

The increase of human unity, on which the very survival of the human race depends, can be attained only as we realise within ourselves that deep truth of our being, *the oneness of creation and the essential unity of all mankind*, and live out its implications in all of our relationships. It is within ourselves that we shall find the springs of creative altruism, or resourceful brotherly love. There also we shall discover and release the psychic powers to make this spirit and purpose of oneness effective in world-changing action.

As we ponder the frustrations that have haunted the councils of the world's statesmen in their quest for a stable peace, we conclude that peace has been perilously elusive, not because nations are grossly hypocritical, as their Cold War opponents are apt to charge, but because their approach to the problem of world peace has been too superficial. This has been the case with governments generally and with non-governmental organisations which work for world peace, as well.

The stark necessity of increasing human unity in this age is acknowledged by all sane men. Why, then, do we witness a tragic failure to achieve it ? Is it not because mere mental acknowledgment of the necessity of unity, or sentimental endorsement of the ideal of unity, or even good socio-political schemes and projects are a thoroughly inadequate foundation for human unity ? Has history not proved this to the hilt ? These are the old superficial approaches, not based on Reality, mere bubbles on the Stream of Life, that mighty current

that has borne us on its bosom through countless millenniums to this point in our evolutionary career. We must now plunge deep into the stream, below the superficialities of mind and vital impulse and moral sentiment and social service and political contrivance—deeper even than religion, as commonly conceived and practised—and discover the secret of human unity and a new world in the spiritual foundations of our being. In our quest for unity we must substitute for views and sentiments a *dynamic experience*; we must develop the deeper, the *unitive consciousness, learning from the great spiritual pioneers and explorers how to do this.*

India's providential preparation for this great hour in human history, this "Hour of God", becomes clear at this very point. An impressive succession of spiritual giants, explorers and experimenters in the inner world of man, pioneers in the development of the *experience* of the unity of all life in the Divine, have distinguished India's cultural history, not only in the ancient past but in the present age as well. Is not this divine knowledge our Motherland's most potent and creative resource, her priceless contribution to modern man in his predicament?

But outside India too, there is currently a certain awakening to this neglected resource. Possibly the most significant research project in this postwar era has been the one conducted for the past decade by Dr. Pitirim A. Sorokin of Harvard University, and his fellow sociologists of the "Research Centre in Creative Altruism." Not long after "Hiroshima", they began to put under the sociological X-ray the leading measures proposed for the prevention of war, and to test them by the relentless standard of adequacy. They concluded from their searching study that all of the proposed remedies for war—whether political (*e.g.* democracy, United Nations or "world government") or economic (capitalism, communism or "democratic socialism") or religious (the religions as they have actually functioned for centuries) as well as the leading educational, scientific and other proposed solutions—are inadequate to prevent war and the destruction of the human race, because they have not demonstrated their ability to generate in their followers that "creative altruism", or dynamic concern for the welfare of others, which these social scientists see as the only cohesive force or social cement which can prevent human society from disintegrating under the divisive pressures of our time.

Surveying the whole range of human life and history, Dr. Sorokin and his collaborators have found but one hopeful source of creative altruism—in the lives of the saints and sages and avatars and prophets and geniuses of mankind, of whatever age or religion or even of no religion, in certain cases. These research associates, after studying the lives of hundreds of spiritual giants, have come to the conclusion that the source of the dynamic unselfish-

ness which has been so notable in them has been not in their ordinary consciousness and not in their "sub-conscious" but rather in the "super-conscious" part of their being, the level of consciousness above their ordinary consciousness.

Dr. Sorokin concludes, in *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, "Genuine creativeness demands something more than the operation of our conscious egos. This 'something more' is the inspiration or intuition of the *superconscious*. It is unimportant how we designate it, as 'the superconscious', 'genius', 'the grace of God', 'divine madness', or what not. Whatever the name, it is something irreducible to any 'unconscious' factor, even rational consciousness." And now we come to a statement of profound meaning for us who face the challenge to adequacy : "If the, as yet, largely unknown 'fission forces' of the superconscious are revealed and fully exploited, they can become the most decisive agency of man's self-control, as well as of the control of others, and of all the known and unknown forms of the inorganic, organic, and conscious energies in man and the universe. Their neglect by sensate science has been one of the chief reasons for its failure in the fields discussed. What is needed is a concentration of humanity's efforts on unlocking the secrets of the superconscious as the realm of the most powerful, most creative, and most ennobling forces in the entire universe. The more man becomes an instrument of the superconscious, the more creative, wiser, and nobler he grows, the more easily he controls himself and his unconscious and egoistic conscious energies; the more he comes to resemble God as the supreme ideal. In the *superconscious* lies our main hope, the road to humanity's 'promised land' of peace, wisdom, beauty and goodness."

It is precisely the function of the New World Union to stimulate in individuals an earnest quest for these indispensable inner resources, in the conviction that—as the researches of these social scientists for a decade indicate—this is *the only way to world peace*, as it is *the only way to our self-fulfilment*. We seek individual integration as the indispensable foundation for a real and enduring world integration. If we seek genuine peace, and are not content to wrestle on the brink of the volcano in the name of "co-existence", nothing short of true world integration must be our goal.

Only spirit-motivated creative altruism can adequately integrate human society and enable us to answer victoriously the ultimatum of the atomic age, "Unite or perish". It is timely to recall the prophetic words with which Sri Aurobindo ends his profound pioneering study, *The Ideals of Human Unity* :

"A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this is not meant what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed

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and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development.

“A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine spirit upon earth. By its growth within us, oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of co-operation, but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life.

“There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete. There must be the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded. There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself, so that it may be developed in the life of the race. To go into all that this implies would be too large a subject to be entered upon here; it is enough to point out that in this direction lies the eventual road.

“No doubt, if this is only an idea like the rest, it will go the way of all ideas. But if it is at all a truth of our being, then it must be the truth to which all is moving, and in it must be found the means of a fundamental, an inner, a complete, a real human unity, which would be the one secure base of a unification of human life. A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity, and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression; this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence.

“Could such a realisation develop rapidly in mankind, we might then solve the problem of unification in a deeper and truer way from the inner truth to the outer forms. Until then, the attempt to bring it about by mechanical means must proceed. But the higher hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realise this truth and seek to develop it in themselves, so that when the mind of man is ready to escape from its mechanical bent—perhaps when it finds that its mechanical solutions are all temporary and dis-

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appointing—the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection.”

Is not this precisely the point we have reached in this dawn of the New World era ? The birth and the growth of the New World Union are significantly related to the Divine Purpose for our day.

In the concluding part of this account of the origin and development of the New World Union, we shall indicate the shape the movement is taking, some account of its growth, as noted during the All-India tours of its conveners, and tentative plans and prospects for the Union's further development, including the conveners' world tour and the first World Conference of N.W.U. in February 1961 in Pondicherry. We shall note also the growing number of the divine corroborations of the timeliness and urgency of this cause.

(To be concluded)

JAY SMITH

Students' Section

TALKS ON POETRY

TALK FOUR

Now in the lines of Sri Aurobindo's we have put together for study—

I caught for some eternal eye the sudden
Kingfisher flashing to a darkling pool,...
And metred the rhythm-beats of infinity—

we come, from the poet who is the vision-catcher and from the eternal eye for which he acts the visionary, to what is caught, the thing visioned. It is "the sudden kingfisher". Technically we cannot help being struck by the way the adjective stands—at the end of the line. In poetry, lines are either end-stopped or enjambed. Enjambment (a French word) connoted originally the continuing of the sentence of one couplet into the next instead of stopping short. In general it connotes the running on of the phrase of one line into another instead of ending with the line's end or at least pausing there as a sort of self-sufficient unit. "Sudden" makes an enjambment and it makes it by what is termed a feminine ending. Lines have either masculine or feminine endings (rhymed or unrhymed) : the former close the line with a syllable that is stressed (heavily or lightly), the latter carry it beyond the stressed to an unstressed syllable. I do not know why this kind of termination is dubbed "feminine". Perhaps it is a hint of the feminine propensity not to stop speaking when one should stop, but to continue past the right limit ! The phrase "feminine ending" would then be a sort of paradox, a sarcasm as if to say that such an ending is really no ending except in feminine eyes. Enjambment itself may be designated as a feminine ending of another type—the line refusing to cease where it technically terminates but overflowing into the next.

Milton's blank verse is full of enjambment though not of unstressed syllables hanging out at the ends of lines. May we connect his line-overflows with the fact that he had several wives (in succession, of course) and many daughters—all of them rendering his house a place of interminable babble and by their overflow of talk setting him a pattern of blank verse in

which the lines very often push on and join up instead of properly pausing or concluding? At least we know that when Milton went blind he taught his daughters to read Greek and Latin to him without understanding what these languages said. He did not teach them the meanings of Greek and Latin words nor their syntactical structure but only how to pronounce them. The poor girls were bored with long hours of gibberish recitation to their papa. They must have frequently protested, but Milton was adamant. When one of his friends asked him why he had not taught them Greek and Latin properly, he tartly replied: "One tongue is sufficient for any woman."

He meant, of course, that a woman makes more than enough use of even one language and if she had more than one at her command she would—to employ a coinage of Milton himself—turn a house into a Pandemonium ("an abode of all demons, a place of lawless violence or uproar, an utter confusion"). One may wonder whether Milton's celebrated laments over his blindness did not have an unexpressed undertone of regret that he went blind rather than deaf. According to Herbert Grierson, his most moving—that is, most tragically poignant—line is the one in which the blind Samson under the open midday sky cries out:

O dark, dark, dark amid the blaze of noon!

Well, if Milton had been deaf and not blind, his most happy line would have been an utterance under his own roof when his womenfolk got up at sunrise:

O hush, hush, hush amid the uproar at dawn!

In the interests of literary history I may say that Milton's womenfolk must have themselves had a trying time with the poet. One of his wives is reported to have run away from him. He was not exactly an amiable person. He had the typical Puritan's low opinion of human nature (other people's human nature) and the censorious lip and even the heavy hand. He was a lifelong believer in the birch for young people. And if he and each of his wives had a cat-and-dog life, it could not have been only because she was categorical but also because he was dogmatic.

Enjambment and the feminine ending have taken us a little off the track. Let us return to our "sudden". The positioning of it at the end of an enjambed line carries a host of suggestions far subtler than any to do with feminine talk. The first effect is to startle us by the occurrence of an adjective without its noun, an occurrence besides at so marked a place in the line as its very close. Technically the meaning of this adjective is reinforced by its separated terminal position. But there are still other effects. One is in relation to the

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verb "caught". Suddenness suggests a quick movement which takes one by surprise and which may be thought to be uncatchable. So we have here the unexpected phenomenon of the uncatchable being caught, a tribute to the catcher, a hint of the mobile miracle that is the artist mind, a mind that can overtake anything and make an imaginative capture of it. Do you remember—

The Kangaroo ran very fast,
But I ran faster.

Well, here you may read between the lines :

The kingfisher was sudden,
But I outsuddenly him.

How sudden the bird was is told us in the next line where it is said to be "flashing". Even something as rapid and fleeting and momentary as a flash can be seized by the poet's pursuing eye. And a further shade of the miracle comes out with the word "eternal". We took this word to mean both an eternity of time and an eternity of timelessness, the memorable everlasting value poetry gives to a mortal thing as well as the value which a Divine Consciousness holds as the eternal archetype of a thing that happens in the movement of time. The poet seizes flash-like objects for ever : once seized, they are never submerged—if we may cite a Shakespearean phrase—

In the dark backward and abysm of time.

Also, the contrast between the Divine Consciousness and the time-process is brought out by "sudden". The character of time is transitoriness, momentariness : nothing stands still, all life is a succession of infinitesimal brevities, a series of suddennesses. This constant evanescence is vividly counterposed to Eternity by the concrete figure of the sudden kingfisher. The kingfisher in its incredibly swift flight is a symbol of all time. A slower-moving object would have failed to drive home both the perpetuation that the poet achieves and the archetypal divinity he serves, and his service of that eternity is struck out most clear for us by the marked terminal position of "sudden".

We may add that if "sudden" had come in the next line, the poetic stroke would have been diminished. Suppose Sri Aurobindo had written :

I caught for some deep eye that is eternal
The sudden kingfisher's flash to a darkling pool.

Here we have eternity in one line and time in another. Do we not blur their contrast a little by this sheer division ? Have you heard of Kohler's experiments

to ascertain the psychology of apes ? One experiment puts a banana outside a chimpanzee's cage, exactly in front of the animal but beyond his arm's reach. To the right of the chimpanzee, outside the case, a stick is put. The ape looks straight at the banana and then turns his head to look at the stick. The means of getting at the banana and pulling it into the cage is there but it needs another look than the one which takes in the banana. The animal is found unable to co-ordinate the two looks and arrive at a logical procedure for getting hold of the fruit, as it would if the stick were in a line with the banana. We feel rather like the chimpanzee if "eternal" is in line one and the expression suggesting the temporal is in line two. The needed contrast which would kindle up the significance of the poetic vision gets a trifle weakened : there is a slight loss of immediacy, a slight failure in the meaningful fusion of the objects presented: the revelatory intuition is retarded and we have to reach the revelation by a bit of thought-effort : the technique is not fully co-operative with the vision.

We may draw attention to some other defects also. At first sight one may feel that the whole phenomenon of the kingfisher is shown in its completeness in a single line, the second, and that this is a poetic gain. But consider the metrical rhythm of the line. Too many syllables—12 in fact—are crowded together, creating a dancing wavering rhythm which serves ill the simple straight swift motion of the bird. Again, what stands in central focus now is the flash and not the kingfisher. Many different things may be said to give a flash : a sort of generality is caught through the flashing, a less distinct less individualised and hence less concrete symbol is conjured up. The mention of the kingfisher seems hardly significant and inevitable : this particular bird with its special size, shape, colour, gesture appears somewhat wasted and correspondingly wasted is the pool which can have vital importance only if not the flash but the kingfisher with its habit of food-hunting in watery spots holds the chief place.

This point, as well as to some extent the point in regard to the metre, would be valid even if Sri Aurobindo wrote :

I caught for some eternal eye the flashing
Of the sudden kingfisher to a darkling pool.

The sole advantage over the other version would be that the contrast between eternity and time would be more forceful by the retention of a word charged with momentariness in the very line where "some eternal eye" figures. But then force would be lessened in the intended contrast between "flashing" and "darkling". Besides, to put the "flashing" before the "sudden kingfisher" is not so logical or so artistic as the other way round. The adjective for the kingfisher becomes unimpressive and almost superfluous after the intensity of "flash-

ing” : also the act of flashing and the quality of suddenness grow two separate things instead of the former emerging from the latter and being the latter itself in an intense manifestation. The alliteration of the “f”-sounds and the “sh”-sounds in the two words “flashing” and “kingfisher” loses its expressive inevitability. In the phrase “kingfisher flashing” the alliteration in the second word brings out, as it were, a power already there in the bird so that the act of flashing is the natural and spontaneous flow of the kingfisher’s being and is prepared, rendered unavoidable, made the true gesture of it. If “flashing” precedes “kingfisher” we have something blurted out before its time, and if the precedence is too far ahead the alliteration itself goes to waste.

Sri Aurobindo’s arrangement of all the words is the most felicitous and the sort of enjambment he achieves is also happier than any other; for no other can be so marked as an adjective divorced from its noun—“sudden” poised for the fraction of a second apart from “kingfisher”—but carrying us on imperatively to what it qualifies. This enjambment suggests that, though momentariness is here, there is no cessation of the movement itself : we are hurried forward, pressed forward to the next line, so that we have a continuous movement of momentarinesses. Such a movement serves Sri Aurobindo’s subject very appropriately, since the subject is not the kingfisher sitting out on a tree its series of moments that follow one another, but the kingfisher in motion in the time-flux, the kingfisher flashing. The suggestion of “flashing” is anticipated and prepared by the enjambed technique working through “sudden”. Further, the whole last foot in which the adjective stands is what is called an amphibrach: the foot consists of three syllables—“the sudden”—with only the central syllable stressed. Metrically it is like the last foot of the Shakespearean verse already quoted :

The poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling...

Sri Aurobindo¹ has called Shakespeare’s last foot “a spacious amphibrach like a long plunge of a wave” and remarked about the entire line’s structure of four stressed intrinsically long vowels and one stressed vowel that is intrinsically short, all of them forming a run of two iambs, a pyrrhic, a spondee and an amphibrach : “no more expressive rhythm could have been contrived to convey potently the power, the excitement and the amplitude of the poet’s vision.” Our amphibrach is not spacious : its vowel is not quantitatively long like the *o* in “rolling” : the vowel here is a short *u* and even the final syllable “en” is almost a half-syllable. The amphibrach is a rather compressed one, but

¹ *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol II, p. 330.

there is enough of the unstressed third syllable to make with the stressed one preceding it a falling movement. Here too is a plunge, though not of a high-risen wave : it is a packed rather than a spacious plunge and as such it is quite in conformity with the small bird that the kingfisher is, and the falling movement is in perfect tune with the kingfisher's act of flying down from a tree to a pool. "Flashing" here implies not only a swift movement but also a downward one and, just as the enjambment anticipates and prepares the former, the feminine ending anticipates and prepares the latter. However, the swift downward movement of the small kingfisher would hardly be hinted so well by the amphibrach enjambment if the last two syllables of the foot were not the significant word "sudden".

Now we reach the kingfisher itself. We shall not dwell on the metrical technique of the line given to its activity—except to make two remarks. The word "kingfisher" at the start of the line has two stresses, a main on "king" and a minor on "fish", but both fall on short vowels, and both the vowels are the same short *i*. So we have a suggestion at once of brevity and force, insignificance and insistence, a bird small but dynamic, an object tiny yet attention-grIPPING — in sum, the diminutive diver and hunter with the little body and long beak and bright plumage and proud crest. At the end of the line we have the word "pool", a word with a long vowel-sound which especially evokes a sense of something significant deep down to which the kingfisher dives. So much for the purely metrical technique. Now for a few aspects of the verbal technique.

"Darkling" after "flashing" and before "pool" is an interesting effect in the picture of the kingfisher. It means being in the dark, being hidden, and its immediate function is to tell us that the pool was in a place of shadows, that it was a sort of secrecy. But the sound of the word, the combination of *r* and *k* and *l*, calls up the vision of a liquid glimmer-gloom, as it were, and makes the word the most apt adjective for a hidden or shadowed thing which is a pool. And then there is the play it makes with the preceding present participle "flashing", "Flashing" in itself blends the impression of lightning with the impression of a sweep and swish of wings through the air—again the aptest term for the rapid leap of colourful bird-life. But its connection with "darkling" presents our thought simultaneously with two facts that go beyond the mere account of a bird diving for its fishy food. We see something intensely luminous dropping into something mysterious. It is a vision of keen beauty disappearing—but not to be swallowed up and lost. A sense we get as of a masterful plunge of brightness into a dark profundity. There is not exactly the exquisite casuality of Nashe's

Brightness falls from the air

but a sort of dangerous adventure in which life laughingly dares darkness and plucks its prey from it. There is evanescence, no doubt, the time-touch, yet within the evanescence beats a triumph. This vision of life arises as though we were being shown what the phenomena of ordinary existence would look like when they are caught by the poet for some eternal eye and given their ultimate interpretation—or rather we have at once those phenomena and the deeper version of them that is their truth in eternity.

Further, you may notice that the whole event described here is so much like the essential poetic experience itself. An airy colourfulness drops with a winged burst of revelatory light into a hidden depth in order to bring up from this depth some life-nourishing secret. We have the poetic intuition falling into the poet's inner being and capturing its contents for the poet's self-expression. And just remember that a darkling pool closely resembles an eye waiting with in-drawn expectant stillness for a shining disclosure from above which will lay bare to that receptivity what lies within the dreamer's own vigilant soul, what hides there to feed with its mysterious life the light that fell from on high.

Indeed a many-aspected statement is present in Sri Aurobindo's picture, and its relevance to the poetic process is completed by the next line which I have joined on to these two :

And metred the rhythm-beats of infinity.

The poet is primarily a seer, but his instrument for seizing his vision and communicating it is the word : it is by the inspired sound that he creates a form for his intuitive sight. The full Vedic description of the poetic tribe is *kavayah satyaśrutāḥ*, which Sri Aurobindo elucidates as "seers and hearers of the poetic truth and poetic word". The inspired sound is implicit in the poetic act—and, just as the poet's vision must ultimately have behind it the working of some eternal eye, the poet's word must ultimately have behind it the working of some eternal ear. The ultimate home of the poetic process is the spiritual *Akash*, the Self-space of the Spirit, the Divine Consciousness's infinity of self-extension. And this infinity has its creative vibrations that are at the basis of all cosmos. These vibrations are to be caught, however distantly or indirectly, by the sound of poetry. In terms of our own quotation, what the poet metricises when he captures in his verse the kingfisher's downward flight and its descending wing-wafts, its plunging beat of pinions, is the rhythm-beats of the spacious ether of the Eternal Being who is the secret substance, one of whose vibrant materialisations is the kingfisher.

We may, however, question the verb "metred". Modernists believe that

metre is an artificial shackle on poetry from which they want to escape into what they call "free verse". But actually no verse can be free without ceasing to be verse: if there is no regulating principle of a distinguishable kind, however subtle be its regulation, we have the laxer movement of prose, and if that laxer movement tries to pass off as poetry by some device like cutting itself up into long and short lines and sprinkling a few out-of-the-way locutions on a run of commonly turned words, then we do not have real verse but a pretentious and ineffectual falsity, about whose relation to prose we shall have to say, even at the risk of an atrocious and well-worn pun, that it is not prose but *worse* ! Poetry must have not only intensity of vision and intensity of word : it must have also intensity of rhythm. And how is rhythm to be intense without having a central cadence in the midst of variations, a base of harmonic recurrences over which modulations play, a base which is never overlaid with too much modulation but rings out its uniformity through the diversity. In the older literatures, metre tended to be of a set form. But to be of set form is not the essence of metre. It was so because thus alone something in the older consciousness, the strong sense of order, of *dharma*, got represented in art. When the consciousness changes and becomes more individualised, more complex, as in modern times, the metre may follow suit. Every age can make its own metrical designs and our age may devise or discover less apparent regularities and complicate or subtilise its schemes of sound. There is no harm in that, though in an epoch of individuality we cannot insist that an individual who still finds something of the older metres a natural mould for his mood-movements should mechanically conform to the new non-conformity ! All must have a right to be individual—and if people want to be boldly experimental in prosody they may do so, but the soul of metre must not be lost—or else poetry in the truest connotation will get lost with it. Even what is termed "free verse" is, when it is still true poetry, a broad pattern of returning effects, a pattern rounded off and swaying under a dextrous disguise as a single whole—and it is true poetry precisely by being not really free but just differently bound than the older poetic creations.

My own penchant is for metre and I grant some point to an amusing exaggeration by George Gissing. Gissing expressed horror of "miserable men who do not know—who have never even heard of—the minuter differences between Dochmiacs and Antispasts". If you happen to be those miserable men I may tell you that a Dochmiac is a five-syllabled Greek foot composed of short-long-long-short-long and an Antispast is a four-syllabled Greek foot consisting of short-long-long-short. But I am afraid I cannot tell you more minute differences than that the former has one final long in excess of the latter, and if there is a yet minuter difference I myself shall have to live in the misery of ignorance. What, however, I do know I may concretely impart to you

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by illustrating a Dochmiac and an Antispast through a compliment to our horror-stricken ecstatic of metre :

“An all-wise delight | is George Gissing’s.”

Perhaps the compliment seems too high-pitched. But that there is an essence of truth in it will be conceded if we track metre to its origin in the Divine Ananda, the Delight of the All-wise. Sri Aurobindo has stated very well the truth about metre. “All creation,” he writes,¹ “proceeds on a basis of oneness and sameness with a superstructure of diversity, and there is the highest creation where is the intensest power of basic unity and sameness and on that supporting basis the intensest power of appropriate and governed diversity. Metre was in the thought of the Vedic poets the reproduction in speech of great creative world-rhythms; it is not a mere formal construction, though it may be made by the mind into even such a lifeless form : but even that lifeless form or convention, when genius and inspiration breathe the force of life into it, becomes again what it was meant to be, it becomes itself and serves its own true and great purpose. There is an intonation of poetry which is different from the flatter and looser intonation of prose, and with it a heightened or gathered intensity of language, a deepened vibrating intensity of rhythm, an intense inspiration in the thought substance. One leaps up with this rhythmic spring or flies upon these wings of rhythmic exaltation to a higher scale of consciousness which expresses things common with an uncommon power both of vision and of utterance and things uncommon with their own native and revealing accent; it expresses them, as no mere prose speech can do, with a certain kind of deep appealing intimacy of truth which poetic rhythm alone gives to expressive form and power of language : the greater this element, the greater is the poetry. The essence of this power can be there without metre, but metre is its spontaneous form, raises it to its acme. The tradition of metre is not a vain and foolish convention followed by the great poets of the past in a primitive ignorance unconscious of their own bondage; it is in spite of its appearance of human convention a law of Nature, an innermost mind-nature, a highest speech-nature.”

The verb “metred”, therefore, in the last line of our quotation may be held to be perfectly in order, especially in a context where infinity is said to be the visioner of the finite and the creator of poetry through the human soul.

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

¹ *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. II, pp. 345-46

SRI AUROBINDO'S *PERSEUS THE DELIVERER*

A COMMENTARY

I

Perseus, The Deliverer embodies Sri Aurobindo's vision of cosmic evolution from a state of crude and evil religion based on fear and division and violent cruelty presided over by an Undivine and even Antidivine occult power to the condition of a pure and refined worship of a divine light, a compassionate, calm and benignant Force with its law of love and union in relationship with and mastery over the forces of Nature. In the words of Perseus :

“Then let the shrine
That looked out from earth's breast into the sunlight,
Be cleansed of its red memory of blood,
And the dread Form that lived within its precincts
Transfigure into a bright compassionate God
Whose strength shall aid men tossed upon the seas.
Give succour to the shipwrecked mariner.
A noble centre of a people's worship,
To Zeus and great Athene build a temple
Between your sky-topped hills and Ocean's vasts :
Her might shall guard your lives and save your land.
In your human image of her deity
A light of reason and calm celestial force
And a wise tranquil government of life,
Order and beauty and harmonious thoughts
And, ruling the waves of impulse, high-throned will
Incorporate in marble, the carved and white
Ideal of a young uplifted race.
For these are her gifts to those who worship her.”

This evolution is willed by the Supreme above in the higher planes of consciousness but it has to be worked out in and through a struggle in the world of human beings and occult forces with their human instruments and champions.

For through the shocks of difficulty and death
Man shall attain his godhead.

All the major and minor types of characters of complex human nature are presented in the play and described first in their reactions to the old order, then in a state of gradual preparation and finally acclimatization to the new order. The amorphous and heterogeneous, the conservative and the deeply rooted, the transitional and the half-way housed, the revolutionary and the already new-born, the uprooted and the sceptical, the witty and the humorous, and the eternally and spontaneously childlike are depicted with remarkable individuality and characteristic mutual responses and orientations to the coming light. And the final impression of the drama is the spectacle of humanity with its bewildering variety of personalities progressing through endless stadia of consciousness to higher and higher reaches of Light, with whatever travail and suffering but guided always by the chosen instruments and harbingers of ever new realisations, the whole of this evolutionary endeavour being carried on by the secret Universal and Transcendent Divine Consciousness.

II

It is a well-known fact recorded in all great occult traditions and verified by any earnest attempt at cultivation of the power of subliminal vision that behind events and things of this external world there are forces and behind these again controlling and directing them beings and personalities. These forces and presences can and do pour into human vessels supernatural energies which bring about unprecedented and supernormal results which seem to abrogate and supersede and annul or keep in suspension the so-called inevitable laws of nature. Such are the miraculous interventions and achievements of the occult which are perfectly intelligible to the science of occultism and thoroughly baffling and mysterious to the material sciences. In the crucial stages of human evolution when a new and higher consciousness has to be established on the earth there is always a special and continuous precipitation and play of the occult personalities sanctified in tradition by the name of Gods. All such Gods are only emanations of the One Divine Consciousness, delegated with some special power and quality of consciousness. Pallas Athene of Greek tradition, corresponding to Maheshwari of the Indian Tantra, is thus the 'Daughter of the Omnipotent' whom He made from His being to lead and discipline

MOTHER INDIA

The immortal spirit of man, till it attain
To order and magnificent mastery
Of all his outward world.

White and beautiful, strong and divinely compassionate in her nature, She works for the establishment of a life of love and unity and power of self-mastery and world-mastery by the light of Reason and Intuitive Wisdom. A quiet strength which remains unperturbed even in the thick of the most tumultuous action and rush of battle is the signature of her movements. She is the Virgin formidable in beauty, disturber of the ancient world. No wonder Poseidon exclaims :

“How art thou white and beautiful and calm,
Yet clothed in tumult ! Heaven above thee shakes
Wounded with lightnings, goddess, and the sea
Flees from thy dreadful tranquil feet. Thy calm
Troubles me : who art thou, dweller in the light ?”

Poseidon is the son of Cronos and so is not of the mild and later gods, but of that elder world, and old Atlantis raised him crimson altars and his huge nostrils keep that scent of blood for which they quiver. He is indeed a Fallen God who has plunged from Olympian heights of Light into this triple world of Ignorance and has become the God of the sea keeping the men of the different parts of the world apart and divided. He has aligned himself with the anti-divine forces determined to prolong the reign of the Inconscience with its iron laws and mechanically repetitive movements and to continue the empire of the mutually devouring small vital forces. Perseus accosts him :

“O thou grim calmness imaged like a man
That frown’st above the altar ! dire Poseidon !
Art thou that god indeed who smooths the sea
With one finger, and when it is thy will,
Rufflest the oceans with thy casual breathing ?
Art thou not rather, lord, some murderous
And red imagination of this people,
The shadow of a soul that dreamed of blood
And took this dimness ?”

To oppose the descending Light as long as it is possible at all is his *swadharmā*. He will not listen to Athene’s entreaties to desist from blood and be glad of

kindlier gifts and suffer men to live. And so we have the battle between the Divine and the Antidivine which is to be decided by the conflict between their champions—Perseus and the sea-dragon.

III

Perseus is the chosen instrument of manifestation of the Divine Mother, Pallas Athene. He is the perfect Vibhuti who receives and executes the divine will and feels a self-existent delight in the process. Every one of his actions is prompted by the Goddess from the inmost sanctuary of his heart :

“A presence sits within my heart that sees
Each moment's need and finds the road to meet it.”

He is the Olympian's son

Whom Danaë in her strong brazen tower,
Acrisius' daughter, bore, by heavenly gold
Lapped into slumber : for of that shining rain
He is the beautiful offspring.

The aegis which if uncovered will blind men with lightnings, the sword called Herpe which can pierce the earth and Hades and the winged shoes which can carry him through pellucid air are Athene's gifts to him to help and save men and women in distress. He has seen snow-regions monstrous underneath the moon and Gorgon-caverns dim and has passed through hazardous enterprises in inhuman realms of dire cruelty and monstrosity. But he has come out of all these terrible experiences unpolluted and safe and triumphantly victorious because of the benignant and unfailing Grace of the Virgin Goddess. And this has made him a completely mature vehicle of the Divine, though remaining a mortal with all his semi-divine origin and strength. *Cf.*

Though great Athene breathes Olympian strength
• Into my arm sometimes, I am no more
Than a brief mortal.

He has, no doubt, a divine disgust of human frailty, of mean self-centredness, and so he leaves Smerdas to his fate 'because he showed too much the sordid fear that pities only itself.' 'His spotless radiance abhors the tarnish of our frailer natures'. But the wail of misery moves his heart and he says :

MOTHER INDIA

“You are grown dear to me,
You smiling weeping human faces, brightly
Who move, who live, not like those stony masks
And Gorgon visions of that monstrous world
Beyond the snows.”

He is indeed the deliverer, not merely the saviour of the lives of people from the jaws of Death, of the Babylonian merchants and Andromeda and the members of her family, but the real saviour of the souls of a whole race committed to the crude religion of Poseidon-worship. And this act of saving is done with the least consciousness of dreadful self-righteousness but only with the realisation that in helping another in body and soul one is helping oneself and the act itself is a vindication of the glory of the Divine Mother, for it is her Power which saves and succours, heals and delivers, and the only and sufficient delight is in being a faithful and surrendered instrument of Her Force. *Cf.*

“Say nothing, King ; in silence praise the Gods.
Let this not trouble you, my friends. Proceed
As if no interruption had disturbed you.”

and

“If any hereafter ask what perfect sculptor
Chiselled these forms in Syria’s royal court,
Say then, “Athene, child omnipotent
Of the Olympian, hewed by Perseus’ hand
In one divine and careless stroke these statues
To her give glory.”

It is only natural that he should feel in Andromeda his proper mate in life for she shares with him this secret knowledge of the fundamental unity and identity of all human consciousness and the heroic courage to live and if necessary to die in order to live in that awareness. ‘Athene has not led him to these happy shores at random.’

(To be continued)

M. V. SEETARAMAN

ON THE EDGE OF THE BUSH

THE Australian Bush had a beauty all of its own. It was still unblemished by 'trespassing artificers' who like nothing more than to scatter bridges, railways and roads, tyrannise the landscape and proclaim the region theirs.

There was a sweetness in the morning air, fresh and pure and wholesome as a ripened apple ready to be plucked.

One always woke to the merriment of birds and one could feel the joyousness of wild things which exulted simply because they were alive.

What luxury it was to lie there for a space and listen to this music-box of Nature. It was at once restful and arresting; the sleep-refreshed mind drank in the melody while the body still relaxed in a delicious languor. Yet, not for long, because the invitation to the wide and open could not be long resisted; and the glistening morn stood at the doorstep waiting to be acknowledged.

The tall white trunks of the eucalypt would be etched against the stirring blue of the sky, and away and beyond as far as the eye could see there would be bush and scrubland alternating with desert, unrelieved, until on the horizon the eye would meet the blue shadows of a distant hill.

Of a sudden, the parrot-like rosellas would start their chatter as if in amazement at their own so-brilliant plumage and they would flash entertainingly as they fluttered about the trees. Or perchance one might see something that looked for all the world like a child's 'teddy-bear', the cuddlesome Koala as it hunted in the gum-trees for the tastiest and most succulent leaves.

Down by the gully there would be plump, big-eyed rabbits, comfortable and unafraid as they gambolled about the rippling water, and maybe they would be joined by a wandering kangaroo looking as quaint and as improbable as a creature out of *Alice in Wonderland*.

All the while despite this stirring life there would be a brooding silence, a mantle of quiet lulling the mind into a restful passivity. Nature smiled and bade us cease our fret.

Some people say the bush is primitive. I call it simple. Those growing things, those simple things seem somehow closer to reality than we; perhaps it is because they aren't clever enough to blind themselves with their own sophistry. They pity our sophistication and heal us with their simplicity.

Always are they ready to welcome us, to quietly renew that tender kinship which we in our proud supremacy have scorned. Subtly they steal into the heart and cleanse it yet again of the poison of the world. The troubled or hungry soul is rested and fed by the silence of the bush, and harshness and bitterness fade like a fantastic dream: it knows that whatever made these marvels must be Good.

GODFREY

BEYOND TIME

WITH thee if I could fly, o time,
Or beyond thee if I could climb !
Each wink of an eye thou passest by !
What makes me linger, tell me why ?

At each false move I fall behind;
Each step I gain, to thee I bind—
But yet I see thee sweep away
Leaving me behind in thy infinite play.

Time, thou art near but yet unseen,
Thou art the world's invisible screen.
Beyond thee a grander world I know,
To which we mortals cannot go.

It is the world of Peace divine.
With Beauty and Love that ever shine.
None ever reached there with desire—
Only the heart burnt pure in Fire.

SUHASH

A ROPE IS HANGING FROM HEAVEN

EARTH-KETTLES of gloom on fire,
The fire in the womb of the sea,
The sea on the wings of the wind,
The wind-whisper in the breath of the sun;
Earth-ingots the sun-gold of God.

RENUKADAS DESHPANDE

Author's Note : The first line says that the gloom, symbolically standing for the Inconscience, is because the fire of the Divine Gnosis is. The fire, the seer-will, standing behind the creation, the waters of existence, summed up in 'sea', sustains and guides it to the higher planes of consciousness. The wind, the light and force of the higher mind enveloping this existence, links it up to the Sun of Truth-consciousness. In fact it acts as a paraclete between the higher Superconscience and the lower Subconscience and Inconscience, and makes a mutual communication between the two possible. With this two-way traffic the earth-clay proves to be the ingot of God's gold.

THE MOTHER*

A SILVER cry climbs up the stark abyss;
A golden Grace from the highest peak responds.
Their sky-embrace declares our hope of Dawn.

In nought save pathways of the Light, the Truth,
Shall Grace laugh endlessly from morn to eve—
Ever will it shine away from ignorance
And falsehood's shade errant, indomitable,
For else it stands defeated in its goal
If it slaked the naked thirst of eyelessness.

The topless Force of the golden Absolute
Runs through the core of the Light and Truth alone.
The descending Feet of the Force pinnaced
And its enormous opening here below
Alone can act in the blinded Nature without
And shear the abysmal knotted, teeming roots.
Surrender wide, self-baring to the Force—
At every step are our being's highest need.
Ever the Truth descending must be our choice,
Quitting the Falsehoods of mind and life and clay.
Their mights and shapes are kings of human kind.

Our total parts must swim in surrender gleam.
The white reply of the soul and inner ways,
The wide acceptance of the loftier mind,
The submission of the life's arrogant moods,
The consciousness of all our subtler sheaths—
These by themselves gaze not on victory's face.
Even in our outmost surfaces of sod
Where cravings abide sullen, like many waves,

* A versification of the substance of Chapter One in Sri Aurobindo's book of the same title.

MOTHER INDIA

The dun pell-mell of ease and wiles and lusts
Must become an open fane to the light of God.

Mingled with thy skyward prayer-offering
And thy pure submission's cry silent and pure,
If multitudinous claims of lower life
Tarnish thy yearning with huge and grey demands
Or behind thy devotion's chime of selflessness
And genuine white ache towards the Vast
The naked 'I' stands obdurate, supreme,
Then vain shall be thy endeavour and thy claim
To godliness beyond the gates of dust.

Does a portion pine in thee for the Truth august
And another for the blind and hostile Powers?
Then hurl aside the fiery hope from thy soul
That thou shalt harbour the Grace beyond surmise.
A hallowed fane the burning Presence demands
If ever thy bosom craves Its timeless breath.

And when the Might miraculously leans
To thee and on thy spirit's silent caves,
Bestowing a larger boon of griefless change,
Veil not thy visage from its surprising ray,
Nor weep to clasp anew the falsehood's force,
Expelled from thy nature's sun-thrilled soul-expanse.
Blame not the tireless Grace, the descending fire
For error and ill have claimed thy life's domain.
A fruitless bungling is then thy fate and end.

While seeking for the sovereign verity
Thou unbarrest thy gates to lesser potencies,
Desiring the darkneses expunged from thy deep,
The gloom-stark powers shall seize thy wavering soul ;
The high harbinger-grace from thee shall then recede.
Command thy eyes to seize their core and throw
Them down into the land of wide nowhere.

Sunder the lofty tree of thy fancy sweet.
The dire opposites of light and gloom,

THE MOTHER

The flaming truth and the blind ignorance
Cannot become together thy bosom's fane.
Matchlessly abide in the unshaded gleam ;
And all that walls thy gigantic march to the height
Cast thou aside like a vague unwanted dream.

The Divinity shall answer not thy call.
The eyeless demands and all its vacant needs
That light and grace abide despite revolt.
Unfulfilling the fiat of the Sun,
Thou shalt receive not its large gloried outpour.
A surrender true to all its eternal blaze
Is all the prescient Godhead from nature claims.
Supremely free art thou in thy cosmic game.
The light divine imposes no claim on thy toil.
Harshly no shackles bind thy steps released,
Till thou art changed, transformed irrevocably
And thou hast leaped into the arms of the Sun.
Stark disbelief can be thy errant guide.
Thou art free to move on passion's flood and grieve
And cast away for ever the sovereign Power.
A free architect of all thy fate art thou.
A toil unseeing is not the height's demand.
Become an instrument guided by the Vast,
A channel-gleam led by the summit gleam
A restive error runs through human souls.
A gulf between a surrender immaculate
And a waned indolence dark they fail to make.
No permanence and bliss unchanged and true
Can be the offspring of the tired sloth.
Ruthless, august, bold must he be—alone
Illumed by the bare and single Truth and Gleam,
A priest and devotee of a light unborn
Moved by the winged will of the One, the Unknown.
The inner fighter must seek no compromise pale,
No striding disobedience curb his soul.
A real servant shall he be of the Vast and God.

Harbouring the single pointing faith like a flame,
A veerless lamp no death can sway or snuff,

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Treading despair and discords under their strides
They alone shall gaze at the triumphant Sun
And rise and face the world-transforming Call.

“MADAL”

STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

STUDY No. 2. *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*

(A) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Antony and Cleopatra (composed between 1607-08) is a play of developed personalities. Antony, a senior partner of the Triumvirate at Rome, is a practised commander on the field, a diplomat on the chess-board of politics, and wide-awake to the lure of Cleopatra.

The snares of the Egyptian Queen are not mean or vulgar. She draws by her vital glamour, strikes by exchanging glances, invites by retreating lips. She is the matured Siren of the East. Octavius is the possessor of the Empire of the West, bold and vigorous. Octavia's still eyes, modest demeanour and balanced judgement display a woman of commanding and engaging effectiveness. Lepidus, Agrippa, and Maecenas, are men of trained discernment. Enobarbus, Iras, and Charmian, the attendants of Cleopatra, possess the shrewdness of ripened years.

A majesty lingers about the atriums of Rome and an Egyptian mysticism about the cloisters of Alexandria. In Rome are the streets of business and in Alexandria the barges of the Nile. The dynamism of the West and the gorgeousness of the East meet in this play. War is the care of the first and love the business of the second. Octavius is aspiring Power, Cleopatra aspiring Beauty, Antony the tension between the two.

(B) THE THEATRE OF ACTION

The theatre of the action of *Antony and Cleopatra* covers the world of Imperial Rome, the Mediterranean Basin, Egypt and its outlying provinces including Syria. In Rome are solved the crucial diplomatic tangles of the contending Triumvirs Octavius, Lepidus, and Antony; in Misenum are the negotiations of Sextus Pompey who holds the sweep of the seas, in Athens is the farewell of Antony to Octavius as he departs for the East. In Alexandria is the trap of Cleopatra, in Syria the Parthian campaign, and in Actium the fall of Antony and Cleopatra. The Western pivot of the action is Rome, the Eastern Alexandria. The Mediterranean Basin is the lake which decides the

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issue of the Empire. There is action and interaction between the West and the East. The West is the world of alarms, the East the world of indolent ease. The dust of Parthia subsides in the dust of Egypt. The wide arch of the ranged Empire, Rome and her stately hills, Tiber's fluent stream are distant echoes on the waters of the Nile. Yet an urgent summons brings Antony to the mansions of Octavius and Lepidus. Octavius, Lepidus, Antony and Pompey meet in the Mediterranean. The action hurries to Athens. The groves of the Academy yield to the halls of Alexandria. At Actium Augustus Caesar links the two arms of the extensive empire. In respect of rapidity of its changing scenes the range and latitude of action, *Antony and Cleopatra* has no rival in the works of Shakespeare.

(C) THE DRAMATIC MOVEMENT

Antony and Cleopatra is an experiment in the dramatic unities of Time, Place, and Character. A period of ten years, from the death of Fulvia (40 B. C.) to the battle of Actium (31 B.C.) is brought under a single focus in Five Acts. Dramatic action in Time is distributed and does not fall within "the single circuit of the sun" as implied in the *Poetics* of Aristotle or as practised on the Greek stage.

The time-movements of this play are breath-taking in their sweep. The crisis of the Triumvirate in Rome, the Treaty of Brundisium and Misenum, the failure of Antony in the East, the schemes of Cleopatra in Egypt for the capture of the Eastern provinces of the Empire, and the final phases of the battle of Actium and the fall of Antony and Cleopatra, are fused in inspirational heat into one point. Dramatic action in Space also ranges over Rome, the Mediterranean Egypt and the eastern dependencies of the Empire. The change of place and scene is achieved with extreme acceleration. Ancient Tragedy required a single Tragic Character for the purposes of dramatic unity. The hero and the heroine here form one tragic character. There is therefore a double action or Praxis, a double fall or Peripeteia, and a double Katharsis or Transcendence. Thus the law of the Unities of Time, Place and Character is loosened and enlarged.

(D) THE PLAY OF TENSION

The drama of *Antony and Cleopatra* rests upon the tension of three types of Forces — the Dynamic Vital, the Aesthetic Vital, and the Harmonising Vital. The first is represented by Octavius, Lepidus and Pompey, the second by Cleopatra and the third by Octavia. The Dynamic Vital is self-

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assertion and self-aggrandisement, the symbol of the statesmen of Imperial Rome. It is a cold, clear, steel-like precision of action not susceptible of Beauty or Love. The Aesthetic Vital holds by a charm. It discards strength; for its sinews are subtle. It works by glamour and entices by touch, taste and scent. It strangles with refining fingers, it tortures with twinges of niceties. The Harmonising Vital is the balanced power of action without the self of action, the balanced power of Beauty without the self of glamour. Antony stands at a crucial poise between the Dynamic Vital world of Rome and the Aesthetic Vital world of Cleopatra. He is drawn to the first by the natural instincts of his lineage and profession of arms. Hence his easy and almost unasked consent to the marriage with Octavia. The Triumvir in search of Power denies his mistress. In Egypt Antony is an Egyptian. He abandons the Empire in the clasp of Cleopatra. He forsakes the arrows of Parthia for Aphrodite on the barges of the Nile. In Athens, he finds equilibrium in the eyes of Octavia. The pull of Cleopatra is stronger than the pull of Octavius or Octavia. He sinks into an unRoman lassitude. He loses grip of the dominant urge. Cleopatra's beauty is her own undoing. Octavius, in the last stage of the play, is the balancing Force of the Empire who extinguishes the light of both lovers and who emerges as the Saviour of the Roman world.

(E) THE LOVE OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA—AN INTERPRETATION

Neither Antony nor Cleopatra are in the hey-day of their youth. Both have passed the meridian of life. Antony is married first to Fulvia and secondly to Octavia. Is he in love with Cleopatra? Is Cleopatra, bearing children to an Egyptian husband, engaged in the seduction of Julius Caesar, Antony and possibly Octavius, a schemer for the reins of Empire or an enchantress of the pleasures of the flesh? Is her mesmerism *amour*? Antony is not Romeo and Cleopatra is not Juliet.

What is the nature of the kiss that severs and unites? Antony is experienced. He is pinned in the toils of Cleopatra but not caught. When she scolds, he dissembles:

Ant: "Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay."

Cleopatra is also wise and penetrates the untruth:

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Cleo :“Excellent falsehood !
Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her ?
I’ll seem the fool I am not.”

At the very commencement of the play, Antony is ready to break the glamour of Cleopatra :

Ant : “These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
Or lose myself in dotage.”

Antony is fully conscious of Cleopatra’s supremacy towering over his passion and the fulfilment of his great career :

Ant :“Egypt, thou knewest too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
And thou shouldst tow me after: o’er my spirit
The full supremacy thou knew’st.”

He is wholly disillusioned of her charms :

Ant:“Betray’d I am.
O this false soul of Egypt ! this grave charm,
Whose eye beck’d forth my wars and call’d them home
Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end,
Like a right gipsy hath at fast and loose
Beguiled me to the very heart of loss.”

At the last, “a man of steel”, he comes uncaught from her snare:

Cleo :“Lord of lords !
O infinite Virtue, comest thou smiling from
The world’s great snare uncaught ?”

Cleopatra is also aware of his double nature :

Cleo : “Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,
The other way’s a Mars.”

Antony’s heart is also fixed upon the still and modest Octavia :

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Ant : "Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome,
Forborne the getting of a lawful race,
And by a gem of women, to be abused
By one that looks on feeders ?"

Cleopatra is not oblivious of the power of Octavia :

Cleo : "Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour
Demuring upon me."

The course of their affairs leaves the initial impression of the absence of love between the imperial ruler and the Egyptian Charmer. It is necessary to grasp that their love is in a double dimension. In the vital plane Antony clashes with Cleopatra as she seeks empire and domination. She deserts him for Octavius. In the psychic dimension, when the power of Antony and the fascination of Cleopatra have faded, when their disillusionment is complete, in death their souls are united :

Ant : "I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until,
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips."

Cleopatra's response is prompt :

Cleo : . "And welcome, welcome ! die, where thou hast lived :
Quicken with kissing : had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out."

Cleopatra, disrobed of the glamour of sex-hood, marble-constant from head to foot, proves her title of wife :

Cleo : "Husband, I come :
Now to that name my courage prove my title !
I am fire and air, my other elements
I give to baser life."

(To be continued)

SYED MEHDI IMAM